

Strategic Plan 2014-2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. CONTEXT

Why a strategic Plan?
Methodology

2. THE ORGANIZATION

Historic
Management

Distinctive Competencies
Competitive Advantages
Stakeholders

Access to Resources
External Environment
Major Issue

3. COMMUNITY VISION, VALUES AND MISSION

Community Vision

Values

Organizational Mission

4. OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Overall Goal/Ultimate Outcome
Expected results/Intermediate Outcomes
Organizational mission

5. ORGANIZATIONAL VISION AND STRATEGIES

Organizational Vision

Strategies

Activities - 2014 Operational Plan

Strategies - A 5 year plan

ANNEXES:

I. Details on methodology
II. History

III. External Scan

Touching lives Foundation (TOLIFO) At a Glance

1. CONTEXT

Why a strategic Plan?

Henry Mintzberg, former president of the Strategic Management Society, points out that "strategy cannot be planned because planning is about analysis and strategy is about synthesis." Failure to recognize this basic distinction accounts for the frequent failure of such exercises, as does an excessive focus on technical detail, lack of suitable leadership, and perhaps most important, failure to align technology to institutional mission and priorities.

Strategic planning involves a structure or framework, a set of procedures (both formal and informal), and of course content. Beyond these basic elements, the underlying assumptions about strategic planning are that the future can be anticipated, forecasted, managed or even controlled, and that the best way to do so is to have a formal and integrated plan about it in place. The process of planning itself may turn out to be more important than the results, and that process requires, as Mintzberg suggests, both analysis and synthesis.

Planning simply introduces a formal "discipline" for conducting long-term thinking about an institution, and for recognizing opportunities in and for minimizing risks from the external and internal environments.

Among the hundreds available, perhaps the most well-known model of strategic planning has the SWOT (for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) appraisal of internal and external environments as its centerpiece. But whatever the model, following decades of research across hundreds of organizations, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of strategic planning is mixed at best. So, why plan? Again, the answer may lie in the process itself; like the ritual rain dance, planning improves the dancing, if not the weather.

It is important to understand the limitations as well as the possibilities of strategic planning. A strategic plan is not a wish list, a report card or a marketing tool. It is certainly not a magic bullet or a quick cure for everything that ails an organization - especially if the plan winds up on the shelf. What a strategic plan can do is shed light on an organization's unique strengths and relevant weaknesses, enabling it to pinpoint new opportunities or the causes of current or projected problems. If board and staff are committed to its implementation, a strategic plan can provide an invaluable blueprint for growth and revitalization, enabling an organization to take stock of where it is, determine where it wants to go and chart a course to get there.

For many years, **Touching-Lives-Foundation** (TOLIFO) has worked with annual action plans being that the organization had not been registered as such within the ambit of the law in Cameroon. This process was finally done this year 2013 which allows the management to re-strategise as an important tool that guides the organization forward. Thus the need to take stock and set the course for the next 5 years was identified as of primary importance to the Board of Directors. Every year, operational plans shall be developed based on strategic plan of TOLIFO.

The next 5 years will be exciting to TOLIFO as it progresses towards national and international recognition for best practices in all endeavours. TOLIFO works exclusively in the interests of its beneficiaries by providing services, projects and programmes that meet their needs and ensure their active participation in the development of their communities.

Touching-Lives-Foundation is pleased to present its strategic plan for 2014-2018. A strategic plan serves as a guideline throughout the length of a period - it can be modified as needs be. That is, at the end of every year, it will be reviewed and adjusted, if required, by incorporating recommendations from a thorough evaluation of all activities that took place during the year.

Methodology

This strategic plan is a result of a participative planning process involving, at different stages, staff, Board members, local and non local partners and community-based organizations that are members of TOLIFO. Several activities took place during the course of a 3 weeks period:

- Environmental scan: Review of internal documents, review and analysis derived from responses to a questionnaire distributed to staff and non-local members and from discussions with local partners and members.
- 2. SWOT analysis: Analysis of strengths and weaknesses (internal scan) as well as opportunities and threats (external scan) which resulted in two documents: Recommendations and list of opportunities and threats facing TOLIFO.

A working session with management and Board members of TOLIFO on strategic planning took place on December 4th-6th, 2013. At this working session, three teams composed of staff members were formed to ensure proper restitution and to organize planning sessions to develop the 2014 operational plan.

For more details on the methodology, consult Annexe 1: Details on Methodology

2.) THE ORGANIZATION

Historic

Created in 2003, TOLIFO received its legal status in 2013. TOLIFO is a Women's and Youth's Centered Organization operating in the South-West Region of Cameroon Organization supports under-privileged groups on Health and Orphans & Vulnerable Children issues, Gender and Sustainable development, Capacity building and information through participatory approaches and advocacy.

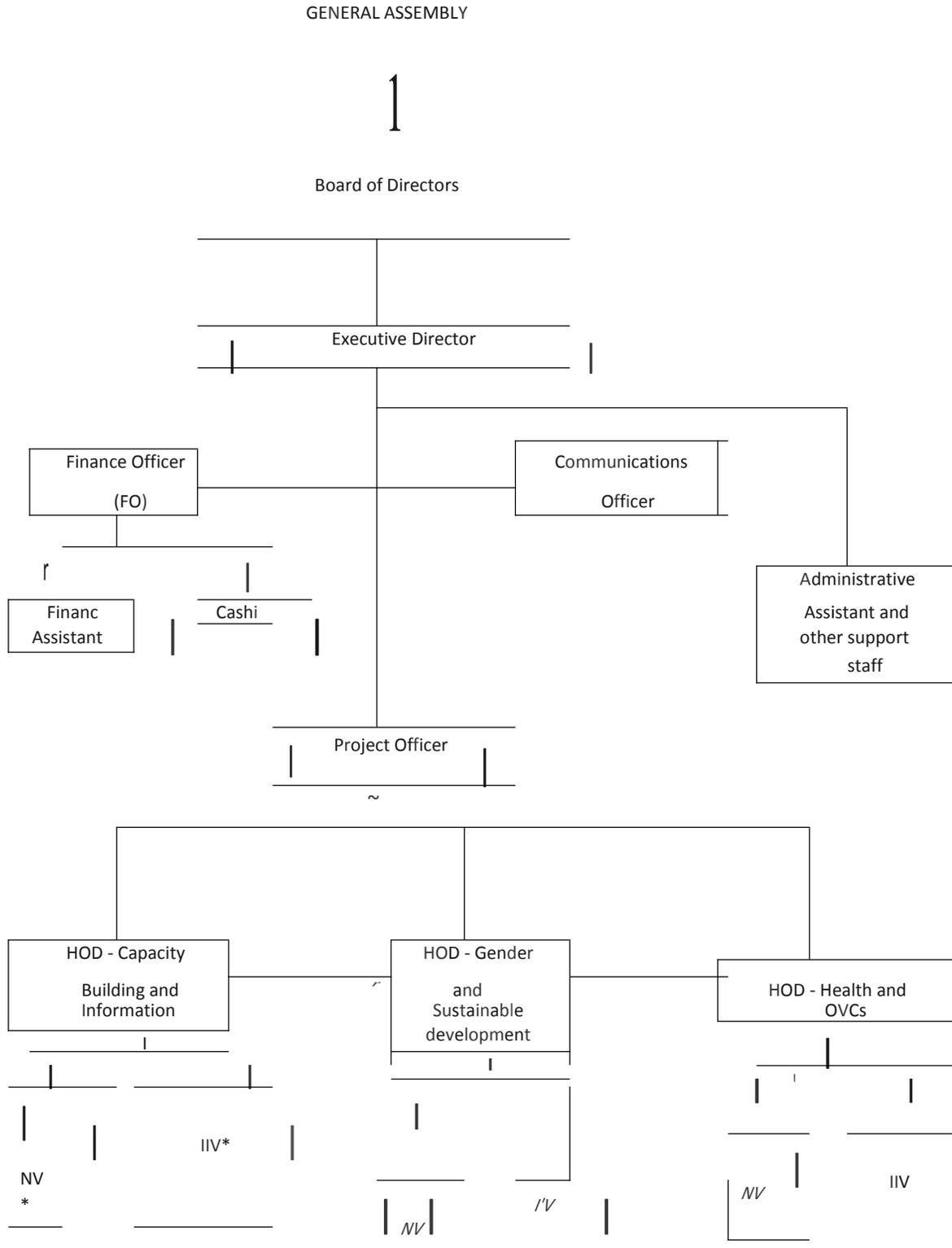
Its Head Office is located in Bonduma and operational in 2 of 6 divisions of the South-West Region.

An explicit history of the Organization is presented in Annex 2: History. Plans are however, underway to scale up activities to other affect areas such as Ndian division and Kupe Muanenguba divisions of the South-West region, as well as in the North-West region.

Management

TOLIFO is governed by an annual general meeting and a Board of directors who are chosen based on competencies and needs of the organization.

An Executive Board ensures the day-to-day running of the organization with a staff capacity of people divided in departments headed by managers: administrative assistant, communication officers and financial officer. The managers are answerable directly to the executive director. The organizational chart displays the relation between staff members. All positions as earmarked in the chart shall be filled up progressively as the need arises.



Main areas of intervention/ Distinctive competencies

- Promotion and provision of care and support and advocacy to Orphans and Vulnerable Children and People living With HIV and AIDS (PIWHAs)
- Support and transform the lives of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) by delivering a comprehensive, integrated intervention package of health, economic, education, social services, and opportunities to infants through 18-year-olds, as well as their adult caregivers using a community-based approach
- Provide training and on-the-job mentoring to older OVCs and caregivers
- Mobilizing community support to raise awareness; reduce stigma, discrimination, and isolation of OVCs and PIWHAs
- Carry out HIV and AIDS mobilization and sensitization
- Sustainable management of natural resources (Non Timber Forest Products)
- Setting-up and running Training Centers in remote rural areas so as to uplift the educational and economic standards of the deprived sections of society, and eliminate their prevailing bad social customs, illiteracy, dowry system, child marriage, fanaticism etc.
- Establishing and running various Welfare and promote de-addiction, welfare of senior citizens, physically and mentally handicapped persons and overall human development;
- Implementing and researching on projects relating to Councils & Social Welfare and Rural Development;
- Creating awareness and implementing various projects on Public Health and Family Welfare and organizing Awareness Movement for population control;
- Make rural women self-reliant by organizing, training and promoting their Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
- Bring about social awareness and taking steps, with the cooperation of Administration as well as public, against corruption, injustice, atrocities and wrongful acts;
- Imparting training to socially and economically backward communities, women, youth and landless/small farmers, for the proper exploitation of natural resources and develop non-agriculture sources of income. Facilitating the creation, organizing them into Small Saving Groups and providing training on effective groups (group dynamics);

Competitive advantages

- Good track record with vulnerable and underprivileged people and with people living in hard-to-reach areas: results achieved speak for themselves
- In-house training is carried out to build the capacities of national and international volunteers and ensure that staff work in cohesion
- Need-based and demand driven organization with a participatory management approach - decisions are jointly taken

Stakeholders

Partners: Private and public sector, international aid agencies and other organizations

Members: Community-based Organizations and individuals who are sensitive to Touching-Lives-Foundation's activities

Beneficiaries: Orphans and Vulnerable Children, People living With HIV and AIDS, Women (widows, single mothers, etc), Youth (school dropouts, young inmates, etc) , Physically challenged people, Indigenous people, and Hard to reach communities

Access to resources

Immediate resources, raised from membership registration, are available but they are minimal and can barely support the basic operational costs. Despite this, TOLIFO has been able to carry out several projects that lead to interesting and lasting results for beneficiaries: human expertise can easily be reached through organizations that provide volunteers, consultants, and community facilitators. Some material resources come from projects and international volunteers. Financial resources come from projects, programs and international partners who support with financial/material resources from fundraising, proposal writing, member registration, donations and grants, and partnership building

Therefore, TOLIFO is adept in mobilizing external funds. However, because resources are project driven, they do not ensure sustainability of the organization in the long term. This important issue will be addressed in other section of this document.

External environment

International

There exist numerous international funding bodies that finance development projects for which parameters are under TOLIFO's mandate. In order to react to increasing local competition, TOLIFO will deploy more efforts to proposal writing, self-sustained project establishment, information technology tools development and lobbying strategy. Also, there is opportunity to recruit international workers and consultants who volunteer through different funding agencies or on their own. Touching-Lives-Foundation has extensive experience dealing with international volunteers and will continue to recruit international workforce, recognizing that solutions may be maladapted and communication for capacity building may be difficult at times.

Political

Acknowledging that centralization of government treasury, policies and operations has led to market failures and corruption, the government of Cameroon is trying to decentralize its processes at state council level, thereby promoting good governance and better control over resources. For TOLIFO this means there may be additional resources available at the local level as well as further opportunities to be more effective in defending beneficiaries' interests to local authorities. Even though decentralization will not happen overnight,

TOLIFO is already lobbying for partnerships with councils. As well, the identification and development of more collaborative types will become increasingly important as decentralization becomes more a reality:

Upcoming Regional and Presidential elections may slow down TOLIFO's activities. However, TOLIFO will keep abreast of debates and adapt to changes in policies. In order to protect the interests of its beneficiaries, TOLIFO is advocating for free and fair elections.

In Cameroon, there exist several informal groupings. Poor waste management and poor sanitary measures as well as wide spread diseases, mainly due to the absence of town development planning and development.

Policies, and poor legislation on widowhood, elderly and the physically challenged are rife in Cameroon. Several families are threatened to be displaced without relocation. TOLIFO understands this mostly affects underprivileged groups and intends to seek collaboration to develop projects and sensitize populations on land occupation, ratification of international charters on people's rights, basic waste management techniques, sanitation and hygiene.

Economic

It is becoming progressively more difficult to harness competition. As a result, duplication of activities and services are observed throughout the region which, in turn may harm beneficiaries. This is the main reason that motivates TOLIFO to delimit its areas of intervention and specialize in activities where competitive advantages are observed.

Strikes may happen and there is a need to sensitize population on conflict prevention and resolution.

There seems to be a poor implementation of *government* policy on agriculture, livestock, small and medium size enterprises, vocational training and youth employment, and other related sectors. There are several opportunities to work with bilateral partners to organize farmers in value chain production (capacity building) and contribute to the modernization of agriculture, livestock, green enterprises, culture and arts, environment and agro-forestry development (wealth creation).

There also the need to develop partnerships with the west for the benefit of the less privileged in various sectors and aspects of life that will go about to improve on the living standards of TOLIFO's beneficiary communities.

Due to extremely poor infrastructure conditions, there may be corporation development opportunities and international investment capacity that may lead to inadequate implementation of services. It is, therefore, important for TOLIFO to develop projects for remote areas to partner organizations that are working on communication and transport issues and advocates for development and/or maintenance of transport systems.

Natural

Natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, landslides and floods and fire outbreaks are inevitable. While these events may slow down activities, TOLIFO recognizes the need to train people on catastrophes and emergency management as well as create awareness on sanitation and hygiene issues resulting from these natural disasters.

Major issues

Touching-Lives-Foundation strives to solve the following environmental issues

In Cameroon, especially in the South-West Region, low household incomes, discrimination, gender inequalities and poor governance.

The staff identified several problems that needed to be addressed by TOLIFO through its work. They were subsequently analyzed by management and Board of directors.

What are the major causes of:

- Juvenile Delinquency
- Poor living standards
- Limited access to education

- Poor health and high prevalence of HIV and AIDS

3.) COMMUNITY VISION, VALUES AND MISSION

Community Vision

TOLIFO is committed to providing excellent, affordable healthcare and other socio-economic services that support our mission; keep a strong, well-respected identity among all of our core constituencies and fully integrate into the national/regional community through alliances with other organizations and leadership in community initiatives.

Core Values

JAS: Justice, Accountability, Service

Organizational Mission

TOLIFO endeavor to bring excellent healthcare, modern communication technologies and other socio-economic services, provide capacity building, information and advocacy to underprivileged and marginalized groups within the communities using a participatory approach.

Culture

Creativity valued and applied and in providing useful information in a timely manner to help make well-reasoned decisions.

4.) OVERALL GOAL AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Overall Goal/Ultimate outcome

TOLIFO will be good stewards of her financial resources and provides for the growth and development of her services socially and economically, enabling her to continue serving underprivileged and marginalized group.

Expected results /Intermediate outcomes

Capacity building and Information

The capacities of vulnerable and marginalized groups are strengthened to ensure effective participation in development issues within their community for the improvement of their livelihoods.

Gender and Sustainable Development

Communities adopt gender sensitive approaches and involve more women and youth in decision making processes. Household incomes are improved through establishment of micro-projects and micro-credit operations so that beneficiaries become self-reliant in their communities.

Health and oves

Communities adopt positive behaviors to live a healthy and happier life. Orphans and vulnerable children and people living with HIV/AIDS are integrated into the community and enjoy the same rights and privileges other community members.

S. ORGANIZATIONAL VISION AND STRATEGIES

Vision for the organization

TOLIFO is a self-sustained organization, with skilled staff that work in cohesion to deliver services in the area of health and over, gender and sustainable development, and capacity building and information with approved best practices and pooled resources at national and international levels for the betterment of communities in Cameroon.

Strategies

Key to the success of the overall TO LIFO strategy will be commitment to and ownership of its implementation. The Board has developed an implementation plan in line with the strategic pillars underpinning this strategy: the strategic objectives are set out under each pillar to support and facilitate the delivery of this Plan.

From an analysis of internal environmental scan, the following strategies were adopted by management and Board of directors:

1. GOVERNANCE: TOLIFO will ensure good governance through the following activities:

- Hold at least one general year to align objectives and actions with needs and expectations of members and beneficiaries and to approve financial statements and annual report on activities;
- Reconstitute the Board of directors which will be elected at a general meeting. Build the capacity of the Board on how to provide guidelines throughout the year, ensure that responsibilities are shared, and support the organization in achieving its goals. The Board should be dynamic and hold regular meetings;
- Respect or reformulate articles in the 'Articles of Association of **Touching-Lives-Foundation** Non-Governmental Organization to better reflect activities and functioning of the organization;
- Set up a monitoring and evaluation system using Result-Based Management;
- Improve communication networks, tools and systems so that everybody can be at same level of information: mission, vision, values, activities.

NEW TECHNOLOGY: TOLIFO will take better advantage to new technologies through the following actions, they are not necessarily in order of importance:

- Develop the technology architecture:

install computers and other working devices with up-to-date technologies;

set up Internet for the use of everyone;

install backup and antivirus systems;

ensure security, privacy and that integrity of information are not compromised.

- Develop an electronic filing system with different access permissions according to the role in the office.
- Develop and install a database of contacts (partners, members, orphans and vulnerable children, widows, single mothers, people living with HIV/AIDS, etc).
- Develop database to input information from future social surveys - this could come later when the survey is well designed.
- Ensure the accounting system is secured with different permissions.
- Set up user emaillicenses:director@touchinglivesfoundation.com., john@touchinglivesfoundation.com. Regularly update permission.
- Create a website for the organization, ensure regular updating of the site and make it more dynamic and interactive to ensure community participation and promote social capital.
- Ensure maintenance by either training staff in the office or do troubleshooting online. However, this may not be sustainable. An alternative would be to post a call for proposals and hire someone to do maintenance and troubleshooting.
- Train staff on different systems.
- Develop user manuals.

HUMAN RESOURCES: TOLIFO will capitalize on its experience with human resources at national and international level by:

- Clearly defining and establishing a volunteering program, including incentives, benefit scheme and capacity building, that is fair and equitable for all types of volunteer workers in the office
- Clearly establishing **Touching-Lives-Foundation's** yearly contribution to activities by estimating volunteers' forgone salaries
- Establish job descriptions for each staff
- Establish methods and systems in evaluating staff performance

SUSTAINABILITY: TOLIFO will rethink its organizational structure to develop a social enterprise that will generate revenues to inject into TOLIFO's other activities and capitalise on sustainable strategies (micro-credit program, micro-projects, IT Centre, Solace Centers and capacity building programs)

- Constantly seek new opportunities that will generate income to ensure sustainability
- Construct a permanent edifice and conference hall with up-to-date equipment and furniture marching the standard of the organization.

Monitoring and Reporting

A number of indicators have been identified to support TOLIFO in tracking and monitoring progress against its strategic objectives using a number of key dashboards, including the following:

- Strategic, Governance, KPI and Risk.
- Each dashboard will support TOLIFO in monitoring and reporting progress against agreed deliverables to staff, the Board and wider stakeholder groups.
- Key milestones will be set against actions, which will be phased over the lifetime of the Plan and will support interim reviews to ensure everything is progressing as appropriate.

TOLIFO will assess its strategy and objectives on an on-going basis to ensure that it remains appropriately aligned with the needs of its member organizations and wider stakeholder groups.

ANNEX I: DETAILS ON METHODOLOGY

The following activities took place during the course of a 5 week period

1. Environmental scan

a. Review of internal documents:

- TOLIFO - Annual Action Plans & Recommendations by staff, December 2012
- Annual Reports 2011-2012
- Aggregate Expenses 2011-2012
- Constitution of TOUCHING LIVES FOUNDATION - Nongovernmental organisation (NGO)

b. Review of responses from a questionnaire distributed to staff. Questions were related to the strategic framework as well as TOLIFO internal and external environments. Five staff members completed and returned the questionnaire.

c. Review of responses from a questionnaire sent by electronic mail to non-local partners. Questions mostly related to their relationship with TOLIFO and its external environment. Four out of 08 identified non-local partners completed and returned the questionnaire.

d. Interviews with local partners, Board members and a representative from Community-based organizations member of TOLIFO. Discussions lasted between 30 to 50 minutes and they mainly related to their relationship with TOLIFO and its external environment.

SWOT analysis - from these steps strengths and weaknesses (internal scan) as well as opportunities and threats were analyzed to produce:

A document resulting from analysis the internal environment was prepared and recommendations were derived. A list of opportunities and threats was *also* created and discussed with management and Board members.

Results from these two documents were discussed with management and Board members at a working session. As a result a series of strategies were identified.

A working session with management and Board members of TOLIFO on strategic planning took place on December 4-6, 2013. At this working session three teams composed of staff were formed to ensure proper restitution and to organize planning sessions with staff.

ANNEX III: EXTERNAL SCAN

Responses from staff and other stakeholders relating to TOLIFO external environment were grouped into the following dimensions:

POLITICAL

- True democracy and corruption at all levels in the society
- Discouraging government policies
- Regional election in before 2018 and change in Government priorities
- Centralized system and decentralization
- Absence of town development planning due to government policy

ECONOMIC

- Strike actions such as the students and drivers strikes
- Difficult to harness competition: high competition from other civil society organizations, duplication of activities. emerging of micro-credit organizations
- Price inflation and high unemployment
- Poor infrastructure, especially during rainy season
- Financial constraints and Sustainability in financing activities such as Health facilities, social infrastructures for less privileged, agriculture-livestock (value chain production)
- Absence of organized groups to support development in agriculture and related sectors

SOCIOLOGIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC

- Availability and interest of international and national volunteers
- The mind set is changing in the country - people are thinking differently about government - there is a feeling that civil society can do better
- Extension of prevention services towards the direction of vulnerable groups and groups exposed to risks
- The country must undergo a fundamental change so that health and educational facilities will be made available to everybody
- People must learn to account and be accountable
- lack of trust in government services and people's ignorance
- Water and Sanitary issues

Poor democratic institutions and framework, and corruption at all levels

GEOGRAPHIC & NATURAL

Proximity of University of Buea and other professional schools - easy to recruit volunteers

Proximity of PAN African Institute for Development

Poor access to remote areas for staff recruitment and service delivery

lack of presence in remote area

Volcanic eruption and other hazards

Abundance of rain which destroys roads, flood, erosion, etc

LEGAL

There is law encouraging and state boundaries between civil and public - opportunity to create social economic changes

CULTURAL

Cultural aspects are challenging: some people prefer using natural resources or street medication instead of prescribed drugs; some taboos and beliefs which contradict health and agricultural policies

Change in attitude towards health and social insurance