

# Veteran Football Clubs as Veritable Source of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure in Cameroon

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**Abstract:-** The emergence of veteran football clubs in Cameroon as a prominent avenue of sports and leisure has been remarkable. This trend has attracted participation from both young individuals and adults, extending beyond sports to encompass socialization, economic advancement, and even political endeavours. This study employs primary and secondary sources and utilizes a qualitative research design to explore the activities of football veteran clubs in Cameroon, which serve as significant contributors to hospitality and leisure in the country. The study's findings demonstrate that veteran clubs serve as venues for sporting activities, particularly football, as well as touristic attractions, leisure pursuits, social interactions, and opportunities for discipline.

**Keywords:-** Veteran, Tourism, Hospitality, Leisure, Socialization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important economic sector with the potential to contribute significantly to the development of many countries worldwide (Wihbongale and Akumboh, 2023, p.146; Wihbongale and Nkongwibuen, 2023, p.74). The same can be said of sports as evident in the development sports has brought to many countries. Thus, the link between sports and tourism has been widely discussed in recent decades, with different authors having an avalanche of views on the subject (Chalip and Costa, 2005, 218; Gammon and Robinson, 1991, p.11; Getz, 2003, p.49). Sports tourism starts from an intersection between two specific areas—sport and tourism (Higham and Hinch, 2018). A good number of studies on sports tourism have focused on sports events (SEs) and, in particular, the economic and socio-economic impact they have on tourism (Kwiatkowski and Könecke, 2017, p.464; Preuss, 2005, p.281; Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Green, B. C., and Scott, 2011). SEs represent a global phenomenon with countless events involving many people and having the potential to achieve economic benefit (Preuss, 2005). Much progress has been made in understanding how SEs should be managed (Getz and Page, 2016, p.593) and how to transfer the knowledge gained (Goldblatt, 2014; O'Toole, 2011) Previous studies have looked at the intersection between SEs and tourism (Chalip and Fairley, 2019, p.155; Stokes, 2006, p. 682) and have analyzed the potential for destinations not only

to provide their visitors with unique experiences by hosting SEs (Chen, Ji and Funk, 2010, p. 239) but also to attract new tourist groups with SEs (McCartney, 2005, p. 113) Others have explored how SEs can strengthen a destination's image (Chalip, and Costa, 2005; Hahm, J., Tasci, A. D., and Breiter, 2018, 755). This present study dwells on football by veteran football clubs in Cameroon as a major source of tourism, hospitality and leisure in the country.

In Cameroon, veteran football clubs serve as a genuine source of hospitality and leisure. These clubs provide a welcoming and enjoyable environment for individuals seeking recreational activities and leisure pursuits. They offer a space where people can engage in their passion for football while also fostering a sense of camaraderie and communality. Additionally, these clubs contribute to the overall leisure landscape of Cameroon by organizing events, tournaments, and friendly matches that attract participants and spectators. Their presence adds vibrancy and excitement to the local sports scene, making them an integral part of the country's hospitality and leisure offerings.

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon have a rich history and have become an integral part of the country's football culture. The concept of veteran clubs in Cameroon can be traced to the 1980s when former professional football players started organizing themselves into teams to continue playing the sport after retirement. These clubs were initially formed by players who had represented Cameroon at the national level or had successful careers in professional football.

One of the earliest and most prominent veteran clubs in Cameroon is the *Les Vétérans du Cameroun* (Veterans of Cameroon) (Some of the renowned players who have been associated with the club include: Roger Milla, Thomas N'Kono and François Omam-Biyik: These are just a few examples of notable players associated with "Les Vétérans du Cameroun" club). Founded in 1982, this club brought together retired footballers who had represented Cameroon in international competitions such as the Africa Cup of Nations and the FIFA World Cup. The club aimed to provide a platform for these former players to stay connected to the sport, relive their footballing days, and maintain their physical fitness (Che G., Per. Com. 2023). Other football veteran clubs in Cameroon include, Houston Veteran, Alakuma Veteran,

Tiko United, Askini Veteran, Bui Strikers veteran, Makepe village veteran, Stars of BOCOM veteran in Douala and many others. Veteran football clubs are generally found in all cities and towns of Cameroon.

The popularity of football veteran clubs grew rapidly in Cameroon, with more retired players forming their own clubs across the country. These clubs allowed former footballers to continue playing the game, showcase their skills, and engage in friendly competitions with other veteran teams. They also became avenues for socialization, networking, and promoting camaraderie among former players and all those who have love for the game. Football veteran clubs in Cameroon have not only focused on the sport but have also expanded their activities to include community development initiatives. Many of these clubs have organized charity matches, football clinics for young players, and other events aimed at giving back to society (Che, G., Per. Com. 2023).

Today, football veteran clubs in Cameroon continue to thrive and attract participation from both retired players and football enthusiasts. They provide a platform for former players to stay connected to the sport, maintain their passion for football, and contribute to the development of football culture in the country.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF FOOTBALL VETERAN CLUBS IN CAMEROON

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon are typically organized at the local and regional levels. The organization of these clubs can vary, but there are some common elements in their structure and operations such as formation, leadership, membership, training and matches, events and activities, and Affiliation and Recognition (Mbah, C., Per. Com. 2023).

### ➤ *Club Formation*

Football veteran clubs are typically formed by retired football players who have a shared passion for the sport. Former professional players, national team representatives, or even local players with significant experience may come together to establish a club. These players often have a common background or connection, such as having played for the same professional team or representing Cameroon at the international level. In recent years, there has been a shift with those forming veteran clubs to include those who have love for the game but have never been professional players. This mostly include a group of friends, and subsequently grows with the influx of other members (Fehsenfeld, 2015, p.31).

### ➤ *Club Leadership*

Football veteran clubs usually have a leadership structure consisting of elected or appointed officials. This may include positions such as a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and other committee members. The leadership team is responsible for overseeing the club's activities, organizing

events, managing finances, and making decisions regarding the club's direction as well as keeping discipline and order within the group especially during meeting hours. This is an important organ of the football veteran clubs. The success of any veteran football club in Cameroon owes a lot to its leadership. Some veteran clubs have gone through difficult periods because of its leadership. A good example is Stars of Bocom Douala which almost collapsed when its leaders especially the president became nonchalant towards club activities. It was only survived by the initiative of some diehard members who forcefully elected a new bureau of leaders. However, the former executive had purportedly embezzled a huge chunk of the clubs' funds (Mbah. A., Per. Com, 2023). Within veteran clubs, there are wealthy individuals who despite the leadership in the club, exert so much influence. Their words often go unchallenged as they bear a chunk of the financial burden of the club. This places them within the hierarchy of the club. There is a strict hierarchy and you do not want to make the mistake of underestimating who is in power. The academic R. Price labelled this the 'Big Man Small Boy Syndrome'. The Big Man controls and gives orders, the Small Boy obeys and does not dare to speak his mind (Price, 1974, p.1).

### ➤ *Membership*

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon have a somewhat universal membership system. Former players who meet the eligibility criteria, such as having retired from professional football or having represented Cameroon at various levels, can become members of the club (Arnold, 2010). Membership may require paying a fee or adhering to specific criteria set by the club. With the growing popularity for football and love for the game, the membership in football veteran clubs in Cameroon has gradually shifted to include non-professional footballers. People who love the game have joined veteran clubs. Some members do not play the game but engage in other activities of the club especially as these clubs have a lot of fun in their activities such as drinking, dancing and singing. The official age for belonging to a veteran club is 35 years and above (Cameroon Football Federation, 2023) however, in the recent years and with the proliferation of veteran clubs in Cameroon, this age has not been respected to the latter. This has seen many youths far below that age joining veteran clubs especially for the fun of belonging to it and the benefit which accrue. However, there have equally been problems associated with many youths below 35years who join veteran football clubs in Cameroon. Some of them are unable to meet up with the financial requirements of the club while others have not been respectful to elders which has led to commotion in most instances (Ade. M, Per. Com. 2023). Aku Prosper paints a picture of people who became members of veteran clubs without any professional history:

In 2020, I was transferred to Douala, a place I had never loved or dreamt of ever staying in because of many factors among which was heat. I was frustrated and bored in my early

days there. I had no friends and knew no one with whom I could spend my off-duty moments. After about 5 months, I saw a guy who was from playing football and out of curiosity, I asked him where he was from playing. He was a member of Stars of Bocom and so he told me of their playing days, which were Thursday and Saturdays. So, I went to the field dressed and ready to play. The guys asked if I wanted to play with them, I accepted and I was included in the game. After 2 hours of playing, the match ended and I followed them to their gathering spot, (They commonly call it meeting house. All veteran clubs in Cameroon have such meeting spots and it is usually a bar where they buy drinks. They deliberate on many things here including the running of the veteran club and its future activities. It is well structured as any other organization with a president and other executive members) after deliberations then came the introduction of new members. I introduced myself, paid my registration of two thousand francs and thus became a full member till date. I have been taking part in all their activities and to tell you the truth, I think that is one of the most important decisions I took in my life. The club has made me to love Douala and even my stay so much so that I can hardly stay a week out of Douala (Aku, P., Per. Com. 2023).

This is the view of someone who found it relatively very easy to join a veteran club in Douala Cameroon, and has since then enjoyed his stay in the city. That portrays the fact that, the veteran clubs are always ready and prepared to welcome new members, whether strangers or not.

#### ➤ *Training and Matches*

Football veteran clubs organize regular training sessions and friendly matches among their members. These sessions provide an opportunity for former players to stay fit, maintain their skills, and enjoy playing the game. Matches may be organized within the club or against other veteran clubs, promoting friendly competition and conviviality. This has been the main pull factor of most people who join veteran clubs in Cameroon. Training days usually fall on non-working days like Saturdays and Sundays or when work gets interrupted in the early hours of the day such as routine city clean up days. For example, on Thursdays in the city of Douala. An exceptional case is in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon in which Monday has been declared a non-working day by separatists' fighters in the regions. Some veteran clubs have exploited such a day because the other days like Saturdays, are working days in those regions. They fondly call the activities on such days "the Monday show" (Teko, Y, Per. Com. 2023).

#### ➤ *Events and Activities*

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon often organize various events and activities. These include charity matches, tournaments, (Cameroon Football Federation, 2022) social gatherings, and community development initiatives. Such events do not only promote the club and its members but also

serve as platforms for giving back to the community and fostering social connections (Manirakiza, 2010, p.118). Inviting other veteran clubs in other words hosting other clubs as it is commonly referred to is one of the most important activities of these veteran clubs. In such situations, members all contribute an amount which is unanimously accepted. This amount is used for food, drinks and other miscellaneous expenses for the hosting. There is usually a football match and merriment at the end of the day extending into the night (Ndam, M., Per. Com, 2023).

#### ➤ *Affiliation and Recognition*

Some veteran clubs may seek affiliation with local football authorities or national veteran football associations. This affiliation can provide the club with certain benefits, such as access to tournaments, resources, and recognition within the football community. Notably, these clubs are registered with the football governing body of the country; *Federation Camerounaise de Football* (FECAFOOT) before they are recognized as veteran clubs. Another very important aspect of veteran football clubs in Cameroon is discipline among its members. Members are seriously punished if they behave inappropriately in society or within the club. Punishment is mostly in the form of fines and in severe cases, expulsion. If a member is seen fighting in the society for example, he/she is punished by the club, and in situations where the member cannot pay the fine, he/she is excommunicated until the completion of the fine. This has instilled some form of responsible behavior among members as they know they are watched at all levels (Molua, D., Per. Com. 2023). It is important to note that the organization of football veteran clubs in Cameroon may vary from club to club, and some clubs may have additional or unique structures and practices.

### III. TOURISM, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY

These veteran clubs not only act as places for sports but also promote other aspects of the economy like hospitality and leisure. Veteran football clubs promote leisure and hospitality in Cameroon in several ways:

#### ➤ *Firstly, through Recreational Activities:*

Veteran football clubs provide opportunities for retired players and football enthusiasts to engage in recreational activities (Robert and Dennis, 2010, p.939) . These clubs organize friendly matches, training sessions, and tournaments, allowing participants to enjoy the sport in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. This promotes leisure and recreational pursuits among club members and fosters a sense of friendship and fun. For example, the match between Stars of Bocom and Atiakom Veteran club which took place in Douala, CEBEC field on 21 May 2023. This was a crowd pulling event (Ageh, M., Per.Com. 2023) and showed the motivations behind football fandom, the social aspects of attending matches, and the role of football in facilitating leisure experiences for fans (Jackson, S., and Andrews: 2017, p. 4)

➤ *Organization of Social Gatherings*

Veteran football clubs often organize social gatherings and events that go beyond football. These can include barbecues, picnics, and social outings where members and their families come together to socialize and enjoy leisure activities. These events create a sense of community and provide opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment outside of the football pitch. Some of these veteran football clubs travel out of their home base to other regions. For example, in February 2023, Bambili Veteran football club visited Limbe and had a great time including a match played against the Limbe host Veteran, Victoria Boys (Ajeh, P., Per. Com. 2023).

➤ *Also, they boost Tourism and Travel*

Veteran football clubs play a role in promoting tourism and travel in Cameroon. When veteran clubs organize matches or tournaments, they often attract participants and visitors from different regions (Cubizolles, Sylvain. 2015, p.22) This led to increased travel and tourism as players and their supporters explore new regions, visit local attractions, and contribute to the local economy through their spending (Dorian, 2020). Also, football veteran clubs are found in all cities and towns in Cameroon. This makes Cameroon a good destination for visitors and lovers of football as they can play football while on their stay in the country. These veteran clubs are hospitable as they offer opportunities to play the game in as much as the person is dressed to play, joins them in their playing moments. No questions are asked or no registration is demanded on first contact. The new comer or stranger will only be asked a few questions after the game has been played in which the stranger will declare if he/she came for a visit or to stay. In case of the latter option, the conditions of belonging to the club will be outlined. This assures continuous football to all tourists visiting Cameroon as a week cannot go by without them enjoying a beautiful game of football (Abia, C., Per. Com. 2023). This buttresses the mentality which the external world has about Cameroon as a great footballing nation which has produced great footballers Roger Milla, Thomas Nkonou, Samuel Eto'o, and many others. Also, international tourists feel a sense of belonging watching veterans of Cameroon.

➤ *Encouragement of hospitality:* Veteran football clubs also collaborate with local businesses in the hospitality industry. For instance, hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality establishments provide accommodation and catering services for tournaments and events organized by the clubs (Abia, C., Per. Com. 2023). This partnership benefits both the clubs and the local businesses by promoting tourism, generating revenue, and creating employment opportunities (Ngwa, F., Per. Com, 2023). One vendor of alcoholic beverages in Bamenda had this to say:

One of the greatest things that happened to my business was that Alakuma football veteran club started using it as their meeting point or house. Since then, my sales have increased.

There are days that I sell more than 20 crates of beer just to them. The best moment is when they have exchange matches with a different veteran club visiting, I sell even more than 40 crates of beer. Ordinarily, this is a feat I had not attained ever since I started operating my bar. That made me to even join the club alongside some of my friends. When one of the members has a birthday, it is another opportunity for me to make great sales. Other businesses around also benefit like my neighbor who sells food (pepper soup). (Ngwa, F., Per. Com, 2023).

The testimony is just one of many of others to show the influence of veteran football clubs in Cameroon to their businesses. Worthy of note is that, all the veteran clubs in Cameroon have meeting venues which are bars or host bars and mostly located around vibrant and economic avenues. This makes other business around the area especially restaurants to benefit as most of the veteran members turn to eat before drinking alcohol.

Furthermore, they involve in Community initiatives: Veteran football clubs often engage in community development initiatives and projects. These include organizing football clinics, coaching programs, and youth engagement activities. By promoting football and engaging with the community, veteran clubs contribute to the hospitality aspect of Cameroon's leisure industry, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. (Ngwa, F., Per. Com, 2023).

There is equally Cultural Exchange: Veteran football clubs can facilitate cultural exchange through friendly matches and tournaments involving teams from different regions or even from other countries. These events provide an opportunity for players and supporters to experience different cultures, traditions, and cuisines, promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation (Donald Getz and Stephen, 2016, p. 593). This has been common as veteran clubs in Cameroon have interchange of visits. There is a clause which mandates all veteran football clubs to return hosting rites or invitations to clubs which have hosted them. This has seen the members visiting different parts of the country and experiencing new cultures (Atangua, P., Per. Com. 2023).

Overall, veteran football clubs in Cameroon contribute to the promotion of leisure and hospitality by providing recreational activities, organizing social gatherings, promoting tourism, engaging with the community, fostering cultural exchange, and collaborating with local hospitality businesses. These activities create an environment that encourages leisure, socialization, and hospitality within the football community and beyond.

#### IV. ADVANTAGES OF FOOTBALL VETERAN CLUBS IN CAMEROON

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon offer several advantages and benefits to both individuals and the broader community. Here are some advantages of football veteran clubs in Cameroon:

Firstly, Football veteran clubs provide retired players with an avenue to continue participating in the sport they love. These clubs offer a platform for former players to stay active, keep their skills alive, and enjoy playing football in a more recreational and less competitive setting.

Again, engaging in regular football activities through veteran clubs promotes physical fitness and overall health. Playing football helps players maintain their cardiovascular fitness, agility, and strength, contributing to a healthier lifestyle (Sala, E., Per. Com. 2023). There are many ways in which regular physical activity and good fitness contribute to optimal health and wellness. First, they can aid in disease/illness prevention. There is considerable evidence that the risk of hypokinetic conditions can be greatly reduced among people who do regular physical activity and achieve good physical fitness. Virtually all chronic disease that plague the society are considered to be hypokinetic, though some are related more to inactivity than others (Ben, 2016).

Secondly, physical activity and fitness can be a significant contributor to disease/illness treatment. Even with the best disease-prevention practices, some people will become ill. Regular exercise and good fitness have been shown to be effective in alleviating symptoms and aiding rehabilitation after illness for such hypokinetic conditions as diabetes, heart attack, backpain and others.

Football veteran clubs foster social connections and camaraderie among retired players. These clubs bring together individuals with a shared passion for football, creating a sense of community and belonging. Players can forge new friendships, reminisce about their playing days, and create lasting bonds through their involvement in the club (Mbah, A. Per. Com, 2023). Fans too equally build great bonds amongst themselves and also with players as there is emotional attachment, social interactions, and a sense of identity that fans derive from their engagement with football (Smith and Stewart, 2017, p12).

Veteran clubs often provide mentorship opportunities for younger players and aspiring football talents. Retired players pass on their knowledge, skills, and experiences to the next generation, contributing to the development of football talent in Cameroon (Blaise, A. Per. Com, 2023).

Football veteran clubs in Cameroon frequently engage in community development initiatives. They organize charity

matches, tournaments, and events that promote social causes and contribute to local development. These activities can include fundraising for charitable organizations, supporting youth football programs, and promoting social cohesion. As social cohesion is seen as closely connected to social relations and individual attitudes or behaviors within those social relations, programmes consciously provide opportunities for mutual interactions and the development of the perceived skills needed to promote social cohesion. For one, this means establishing regular sporting activities that target various community members and emphasizing an open atmosphere. These activities seek to bring different groups together and allow participants to form bonds across ethnic or geographic divides (Louis, 2022), such as provided by veteran football clubs in Cameroon.

Veteran clubs play a significant role in promoting and preserving football culture in Cameroon. They help maintain the passion for football across generations, celebrate the achievements of Cameroonian players, and contribute to the overall growth and development of the sport in the country (Sapi, P. Per. Com. 2023).

Participating in football activities through veteran clubs can have positive effects on mental well-being. It provides retirees with a sense of purpose, enjoyment, and a means of stress relief. The social interactions and sense of belonging found in these clubs can also contribute to improved mental health (Sala, E. Per. Com, 2023).

Overall, football veteran clubs in Cameroon offer retired players an opportunity to stay connected to the sport, maintain physical fitness, foster social connections, and contribute to their communities. They play a vital role in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle while preserving and advancing football culture in the country.

#### V. DISADVANTAGES OF FOOTBALL VETERAN CLUBS IN CAMEROON

While football veteran clubs in Cameroon have numerous advantages, there can also be certain disadvantages associated with them. Here are some potential disadvantages of football veteran clubs in Cameroon:

Firstly, engaging in physical activities like football carries the risk of injuries, especially for older players as risk for injury seems to increase with age. The intensity and physical demands of the game may pose a higher risk of strains, sprains, and other injuries for veteran players. It is important for clubs to prioritize safety measures and ensure proper warm-up, conditioning, and medical support to minimize the risk of injuries (Martin, 2007, p.15). This view is corroborated by Árnason *et al* who found that ageing was associated with injury in general in male elite players, what

more of veteran football players (Arnason, Sigurdsson, Gudmundsson, Holme, Engebretsen and Bahr, 2004, p5).

Also, some Football veteran clubs in Cameroon face challenges in terms of limited resources. This includes financial constraints, lack of proper infrastructure, and limited access to training facilities. These limitations impact the quality of training sessions, equipment availability, and overall club operations (Sapi, P. Per. Com. 2023). Some members fail to meet up with their financial obligations towards the club. Veteran football club is a social gathering and as such, they involve in many social activities like joining their members in celebration of success, birth and other positive events, as well as in sad moments like death. All these entails financial contributions in which most veteran constitutions stipulate a fixed amount. However, some members always fail in meeting to with these contributions thereby dragging the association behind. Some members have the attitude to disappear when it comes to contribution or buying drinks making the burden to fall on some which may discourage them or make them suffer from donor fatigue. In most instances, the losing team is supposed to buy at least a crate of beer after a football match but some members have the attitude of running away after their team loses. This hampers the smooth functioning of the association, but however, this equally exposes the weaknesses of the club's hierarchy (Authors observation in different veteran Clubs like Stars of BOCOM Douala and Bambili Veteran ).

Some football veteran clubs lack a well-defined organizational structure or leadership. This leads to challenges in decision-making, coordination of activities, and overall management of the club. It is important for clubs to establish clear roles and responsibilities, as well as effective communication channels, to ensure smooth operations. (Mbah, A. Per. Com. 2023).

Some Veteran clubs have membership criteria or requirements that limit participation. This exclusivity results in limited access for individuals who have the desire to join but do not meet the eligibility criteria. It is important for clubs to strike a balance between maintaining the veteran nature of the club and promoting inclusivity within the community.

While veteran clubs provide opportunities for retired players, there is a limited focus on youth development and nurturing young talent. This impacts the long-term growth and sustainability of football in Cameroon. It is crucial for clubs to find a balance between catering to retired players and investing in young players' development.

Alcohol consumption in veteran clubs is always high. Although, these brings pleasure, it has turned most of its members who are not strong in alcohol to be drunkards. Sometimes, they can start drinking from 9am to late in the night and his has made some of the members to misbehave in

society like insulting people especially girls and fighting. Although this -attracts punishment from the club, it however still takes place. A case in point was in February 2023, when a member of stars of BOCOM veteran Club held the president of the club for a fight in drunkenness. The timely intervention of other members prevented the situation from escalating. It also promotes sexual promiscuity among members beginning from the kind of songs that being sang, to the level at which sexual promiscuity is being promoted. For example, as a law in most veteran clubs, members are not allowed to bring their wives to veteran outings but their concubines, or girlfriends. This encourages marital infidelity (Eke, J. Per. Com. 2024).

Non registered Football veteran clubs in Cameroon face challenges in terms of recognition and support from football authorities, sponsors, and the wider community. This lack of recognition affects the club's ability to secure resources, sponsorship deals, and opportunities for growth and development.

It's important to note that these disadvantages are not applicable to all football veteran clubs in Cameroon, as each club has its own unique circumstances and challenges. However, by addressing these potential disadvantages, clubs can work towards maximizing their benefits and creating a positive impact within their community.

## VI. WAY FORWARD FOR FOOTBALL VETERAN CLUBS IN CAMEROON

To ensure a positive future for football veteran clubs in Cameroon, several steps can be taken. Here are some ways forward:

To begin, Football veteran clubs should focus on establishing a strong organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities. This includes electing capable leaders, implementing transparent decision-making processes, and improving communication channels within the club. A well-structured organization can enhance the effectiveness of club operations and promote growth.

Also, encouraging collaboration and networking among football veteran clubs can be beneficial. Clubs can share resources, knowledge, and best practices, creating a supportive network within the veteran football community. Collaboration can lead to joint events, tournaments, and initiatives that benefit all clubs involved.

Furthermore, to secure the future of football in Cameroon, veteran clubs should actively engage in youth development programs. This can include organizing coaching clinics, talent identification initiatives, and supporting local youth football academies. By nurturing young talent, veteran clubs contribute to the growth and sustainability of football in the country. This is backed by some human rights development goals such as:

- Right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; (United Nations, 1976, Article 12).
- Right to education directed at the fullest development of human personality (United Nations, 1976, Article 13).
- Right to take part in cultural life (United Nations, 1976, Article 15).
- Right to rest and leisure (Universal Declaration of Human Rights at Article 24).
- Right for children to engage in play and recreational activities (United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, Article 31).
- Women's right to participate in recreational activities and sports (United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1981, Article 13) and
- Right of persons with disabilities to participate in sport on an equal basis with others (United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008, Article 30).

In addition, seeking sponsorship and establishing partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and football authorities can provide much-needed financial and logistical support. Sponsorship deals can help secure resources for the club's activities, infrastructure development, and training equipment. Partnerships with football authorities can provide access to tournaments, coaching resources, and other developmental opportunities.

To add, Football veteran clubs should actively engage with the local community. This can involve organizing outreach programs, charity events, and football clinics for youth in underserved areas. By giving back to the community, clubs can strengthen their reputation, gain community support, and attract new talent and resources (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003).

Adopting technology can enhance the operations and visibility of football veteran clubs. This can include leveraging social media platforms for promotion, creating a club website for communication and updates, and utilizing digital tools for training and match analysis. Embracing technology can help clubs reach a wider audience and improve overall efficiency.

Finally, Football veteran clubs should actively seek recognition and advocacy from football authorities and relevant stakeholders. This can involve engaging with local football federations, veteran football associations, and government bodies to promote the interests and needs of veteran clubs. Increased recognition can lead to more resources, support, and opportunities for growth.

By embracing these strategies, football veteran clubs in Cameroon can enhance their organization, contribute to the development of football at various levels, and create a

sustainable and thriving future for the veteran football community in the country.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study has examined veteran football clubs in Cameroon, ranging from their origin, functioning, advantages and disadvantages as well as proposing a way forward. The findings revealed that, there has been a proliferation of veteran football clubs in Cameroon which has seen its membership grow and diverting from the original trajectory of just retired professional football players, to including all those who have a love for the game and can meet the requirements of belonging. Also, it has revealed that veteran football clubs are found in all cities and towns, and act as a source of leisure and hospitality in Cameroon. So, football lovers visiting Cameroon will always have a place to play the game or watch a beautiful game of football giving the hospitable nature of these clubs as well as the leisure they offer.

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