

BYLAWS

of the

CAMEROONIAN ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON STATE (dba CAWAS)

ARTICLE I

Mission and Purposes

Section 1.1. Name

The name of the organization is CAMEROONIAN ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON STATE AND SHALL BE ABBREVIATED CAWAS.

Section 1.2. Vision

To empower Cameroon immigrants and friends of Cameroon to achieve their full potential in the United States of America by building a strong and visible community based on trust, mutual respect, and collaboration.

Section 1.3. Purpose

The Cameroonian Association of Washington State was formed to support registered Cameroonian immigrants, families, and friends of Cameroon – community members at large – living in Washington. The CAMEROON ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON STATE is a non-profit community organization with open membership. The object of this association shall be (1) to build a stronger community of Cameroon immigrants and friends of Cameroon in the State of Washington; (2) to facilitate the integration of new Cameroon immigrants as well existing immigrants in the State of Washington; (3) to bring positive and unique aspects of Cameroon culture to enrich the diversity and experience in the society of Washington State; (4) to empower members to achieve their full potential in the United States; (5) to promote cultural and educational exchanges between citizens of the State of Washington and citizens of Cameroon.

ARTICLE II

Members

Section 2.1. Eligibility

There shall be only one class of membership:

The membership of this association shall be open to all who express interest in our vision and objectives. To qualify as an active Cameroonian Association of Washington state member, an individual must be an adult who eighteen years or older and has fulfilled their membership requirements: (1) completed the Membership (see appendix) form in full, and (2) paid full membership dues (including Life Insurance) for the current year.

Non-Active members refer to individuals who used to be members of the Association and have either defaulted in their dues, failed to fully complete a membership form, or expelled from the Association for failure to adhere to the code of conduct.

Technically, to remain a member (with rights to membership benefits and voting), each registered individual must be a current member, i.e., has paid their dues for the year and is involved in the Association. We don't encourage non-Active members. A member who has been inactive a previous year can become active again by fully registering and paying their membership dues in the upcoming year.

Cameroonian immigrants in the community at large who are not registered members are not members of CAWAS, period. They could still be invited to CAWAS events, at the discretion of the Association, particularly if those events target the community at large.

Section 2.2. Qualifications

Membership may be granted to any individual who is eighteen years or older who supports the mission and purposes of the organization, and who pays the annual dues as set by the Association. All Members shall obligations and rights (including voting rights) and are eligible to run for any open CAWAS Board office during the general election.

Section 2.3. Non-local members

Membership may not be limited to people living in Washington State. A need to extend membership beyond the state applies to cases where a current member moves to another state or another country due to work requirements (including the military service) or simply has chosen to relocate. The Executive Board will review the case and make a recommendation to the General Assembly of the Association. Care must be put in the review because issues pertaining to (1) Life Insurance coverage and requirements (may vary across states and countries), (2) obligations (e.g. meeting attendance), (3) voting.

Section 2.4. Full Time Student members

Membership is open to the "Full Time Student" category. A full time student is defined as an adult 18 years or older who (1) is enrolled full time in a degree/certificate program, (2) does not hold a full time job, (3) is not already a regular member of CAWAS(*), (4) meets eligibility requirements in section 2.1. with the exception on the level of membership dues. FT Students will be required to pay Life Insurance premiums (\$135.96). The rest of the annual membership fee will be either set to 1/3rd of the full level or waived all together. The group can accept a special payment plan to accommodate the student's budget.

(*) An existing CAWAS member who is not a FT Student member cannot change to a student status during the ongoing fiscal year, since all dues are paid at the beginning of the year or the first two quarters.

Section 2.5. Dues

Dues for members shall be established by the Board of Directors.

The annual membership dues shall be **\$175.00** (one hundred and seventy five dollars) payable at the time of admission for new members or at the beginning of the year or as decided otherwise.

Section 2.6. Benefits

In return for yearly contribution of dues, each member will be entitled to specific benefits as defined by the Association's bylaws and agreed upon by the General Assembly. Some of the core benefits an active member is entitled to are, but not limited to:

- Enrollment to the Life Insurance program and dues paid for a full year
- Free (or reduced fee) access to Association functions and events
- Free copies of the Association's newsletter and E-mail Distribution list
- Free access to the information provided by the Association, example, information on legal advice, immigration, business, housing and real-estate, medical, education and training, etc...
- Access to members contact information & CAWAS email list
- Ability to run for office is a benefit awarded to members only
- Privilege to host a CAWAS Monthly meeting, a non_member can host a CAWAS monthly meeting if and only there is a quorum from the house to grant such member the opportunity to host and if no member had volunteer to host the group during that calendar month.

Section 2.7 Code of Conduct

Strong commitment to the following points is required of each member: (1) the vision and goals of the Association, (2) paying yearly membership dues, (3) regular attendance to general meetings (at least 3 out of six per six month cycle) and other ad hoc meetings, (4) trust in one another in a spirit of friendship and collaboration, (6) tolerance and keeping attitudes that encourage trust in one another, respect of individual privacy, rights, and freedom of expression.

Section 2.8 Termination of Membership

Upon a member becoming ineligible (e.g. failure to pay their annual membership dues or to adhere to CAWAS code of conduct), the CAWAS Executive Board will recommend termination of that member. Termination will then be brought to the attention of the general membership of the Association, who by an affirmative vote of two-thirds majority during a regularly constituted meeting.

Section 2.9. Resignation

Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the Secretary; however, such resignation shall not relieve the member so resigning of the obligation to pay any dues or other charges theretofore accrued and unpaid. In any circumstances, a former member who owes dues to the Association will not be reinstated unless they have paid what they owe in full.

Section 2.10 Reinstatement of Membership

A suspended member or a member who dropped out on their own will, can reapply to reinstate his/her membership provided s/he has fulfilled their duties and obligations, meet current eligibility requirements, and their request have been reviewed by the Executive Board and approved by the general membership if necessary.

ARTICLE III Officers

Section 3.1. Executive Board

The officers of the Association shall be a President, Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Social Coordinator and Community Liaison Officer, Life Insurance Coordinator. These officers shall make the Executive Board and perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws. Unless otherwise ordered by the Board, the President of the Association will be de facto the Chair of the Executive Board.

Section 3.2. Elections

At the regular meeting held on the last Saturday in **February**, an Elections Committee of five members shall be elected by the Association. It shall be the duty of this committee to solicit nominations of new candidates for the offices to be filled at the annual meeting in **April**. The Elections Committee shall work with the Executive Board to encourage members to nominate new candidates. The committee will report the list of nominees at the regular meeting in **March**.

The officers shall be elected by ballot to serve for one year until their successors are elected, and their term of office shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. In order to ensure continuity in the leadership of the Association, the outgoing Executive team shall hold training sessions for all candidates, starting in March. They will also work with the incoming Executive for one to two full months following the elections.

Section 3.3. Term of Office

Officers shall serve a term of **two years**. No member shall hold more than one office at a time, and no member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 3.4. The President

The president shall be the Chief Executive Officer, member of the Executive Board of the Association, and shall execute all policies and regulations established by the Executive Board. In this capacity, the President shall:

1. Preside at all general meetings and at Executive Board Meetings;
2. Have co-signatory power with the Treasurer on checks and any monies deposited or withdrawn from the Association's accounts;
3. Guide and direct the organization in its vision and goals;

4. In instances where disciplinary measures appear appropriate or are recommended, and where no standing committee has jurisdiction, s/he shall bring the incident to the Executive Board for resolution; and
5. Train and assist the incoming President and newly elected officers.

Section 3.5. The Vice President

The Vice President shall be back up to the president whenever s/he is not present. In this capacity the Vice President shall:

1. Assist the President;
2. Oversee the organization's growth and development;
3. Coordinate with standing committees; and
4. Train and assist the incoming Vice President.

Section 3.6. The Secretary

The Secretary shall be the chief recording officer. In this capacity s/he shall:

1. Coordinate record keeping for the Association, including the names and contact information of registered members;
2. Keep minutes of meetings and all important documents (e.g. Bylaws, articles of incorporation, yearly organization reports) in both electronic and printed formats. These documents are considered public must be available at any time upon request;
3. Work closely with the Treasurer to keep a written record of Association's accounts;
4. Work with the President to present an agenda at the meeting and to moderate meetings;
5. The Secretary will also be responsible for sending information to members, for example, date and time of meetings, and directions to meeting places;
6. Turn over all organization records of every type to the incoming secretary.
7. Train and assist the incoming secretary.

Section 3.7. The Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the Chief Financial Officer and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the President or the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall keep proper financial records of all receipts and disbursements, and shall (along with the President) have signatory power for all checks or drafts for expenditures. In this capacity he/she shall:

1. Prepare and submit a current financial report for all meetings of the Executive Board and general meetings;
2. Preside over the Finance Committee;

3. With the President of another designated officer of the Association, the Treasurer shall maintain the Association's bank accounts, stocks, bonds, and other financial resources;
4. Turn over all financial records and receipts of every type to an incoming Treasurer and cooperate with an audit conducted randomly by the Executive Board members; and
5. Train and assist the incoming Treasurer.

Section 3.8. The Social Coordinator and Community Liaison Officer

The Community Liaison Officer will be the chief PR person for the Association. In this capacity, s/he shall:

1. Be responsible in establishing and maintaining active liaison between members and non-members of the Association especially within the Cameroonian immigrant community;
2. Shall be responsible for keeping the community connected and informed: member social events (birth days, graduation, baby showers, births, visiting parents, social gathering etc...), sad events (e.g. loss of a loved one), visiting with members who have been sick or have not been seen for a while, sending get well and well wish cards, etc..
3. Preside over the Community Affairs Committee;
4. Work with the Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and Social Committee to provide any source of publicity, fund raising and event management for the association when the group deems it necessary;.
5. Work with the Community Affairs Committee to interface with various African immigrant organizations in the State of Washington and beyond, city and state government organizations, as well as other organizations to promote networking and exchanges;
6. Working with the Administrative Committee, seek advocacy for the Association in events such as policy brutality against a member, and other violations of the rights of any of the members or members of the community at large;
7. Work with the Planning Committee to promote cultural events, exhibitions, education venues to benefit the community of the State of Washington at large; and
8. Work with the Executive Board to establish and develop exchange programs between the citizens of the State of Washington and the citizens of Cameroon.

Section 3.9. The Life Insurance Coordinator

The Life Insurance Coordinator will be in charge of overseeing the CAWAS Community Life Insurance Program. S/he is overall responsible for the smooth operation of the Life Insurance Program

1. Collect life insurance premiums from members
2. Work with the Treasurer to record premium collection and keep an up-to-date status on payments
3. Make payments to the Life Insurance Provider on behalf of the Association and ensure that payments are made on time.
4. Ensure that the policy is renewed on time
5. Keep member subscribers informed on the details of the LI offerings and all changes to the insurance policy that might affect them
6. Provide information content and information points to members.
7. Look for alternative providers who may give us a better or cheaper offering.

ARTICLE IV

Board of Directors

Section 4.1. Members

The Board of Directors members shall be comprised of officers of the Association (President, Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Community Liaison Officer), chairs of standing committees, and honorary members from the community at large. Members of the board of directors shall serve a term of two (2) years, renewable.

Section 4.2. Selection criteria for external members

The external members of the BD will be selected upon invitation and recommendation. Ideally these are people who can help CAWAS by their influence in the larger community, local and state government, and the private sector. The Executive Board will draw specific selection criteria in addition to the general guidelines stated above.

Section 4.3. Board Chair

The Board of Directors shall have the freedom to elect a chair. In the absence of an elected chair, the President of the Association will assume the role of Chair of the Board of Directors.

Section 4.4. Relationship with the Executive Board

The Board of Directors shall work with the Executive Board to have general supervision of the affairs of the Association between its business meetings, set general direction for the Association, conduct auditing, make recommendations to the Association, and shall perform such other duties as are specified in these bylaws. The Board shall be subject to the orders of the Association, and none of its acts shall conflict with the action taken by the Association.

Section 4.5. Initiatives and Major Decisions

Major initiatives and decisions must be brought to the attention of the Association and agreed upon by way of vote before they are implemented or acted upon by the Executive Board. Such initiatives are, for example, financial commitments, Association's engagement in joint activities with other groups or organizations, change of direction of the Association, major projects.

Section 4.6. Board Meetings

The Board of Directors shall fix a recurrent date for meetings. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Board President and shall be called upon written request of three members of the Board.

ARTICLE V Meetings and Venue

Section 5.0. Annual Meeting

The annual membership meeting of the Association shall be held in [MONTH] of each year. A minimum of 10% of the members present in person or by proxy shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at a membership meeting.

Section 5.1. General Membership Meetings

The Association will hold monthly meetings. The purpose of these meetings is mainly for the conduct of activities of the Association and for purpose of socialization of members to keep a strong sense of community, which is a key objective in CAWAS vision. These meetings will be held the LAST SATURDAY of each month or the following Saturday in some circumstances such as a public holiday (e.g. Thanksgiving) when majority of the membership cannot attend. The Executive Board will make the call and inform the members.

Section 5.2. Extraordinary Meetings

Meetings may be called by the Chairperson or at the request of at least 10% of the members by notice mailed, telephone, to each member not less than thirty (3) days before such meeting.

Section 5.3. Conduct of General Meetings

This section provides general guidelines for the conduct of general meetings of the Association.

1. At least three days before the meeting, the Executive Board will communicate the agenda of the meeting in writing to members of the Association. Members shall be encouraged to think about matters arising and communicate these concerns to the Executive group so that they can include them on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. The agenda should be focused and concise not to drag the meeting for hours. Ideally, the meeting should not last more than three hours.

2. The meeting shall be moderated by one of the presiding officers or a person appointed by the Executive officers. The task of the moderator shall be to steer the meeting effectively and in a timely manner. Having a moderator and keeping a clear and concise agenda will help keep the meeting on track, make it effective, and definitely safeguard it from dragging too long in unproductive discussions.
3. The Executive Board in conjunction with a Social Committee shall provide food and refreshments to members during the meeting and as needed.
4. The meeting should wrap up with a session for matters arising. Members who wish to leave at this point can approach the presiding officer to be excused.

Section 5.4. Quorum

Two thirds of the membership of the Association shall constitute a quorum for the Annual Meeting. Two thirds of present members shall constitute a quorum for other general meetings or extraordinary meetings..

Section 5.5. Time and Venue

Time and venues of general meetings shall be decided by the Executive Board and agreed upon by the majority of members (two thirds). As a guideline, general meeting venues must be chosen to be a neutral place such as a community center, and must not change often.

ARTICLE VI Finances

Section 6.1. Funding

Funding for the Association shall come from (1) collection of member annual dues, (2) individual or corporate donations, (3) grants, (4) fundraising initiatives.

Section 6.2. Bank Account

The Association shall open a bank account or a trust fund.

Section 6.3. Tax Exempt Status

The Executive Board shall diligently work to obtain a tax-exempt status (501c (3)). This will enable potential donors (individual and corporation) to make tax-deductible donations to the Association.

ARTICLE VII
Permanent Committees

[See CAWAS Organization Structure diagrams in Appendix B]. The components that make up CAWAS are shown in these component diagrams, these will be described in specifics at a later time.] These committees are made of individual members who are passionate about the specific areas and are motivated to work for the greater good of the association. In that regard, these are working committees of people, not just sitting spots.

1. LIFE INSURANCE COMMITTEE (LIC)

This committee is in charge of overseeing the Life Insurance Program for CAWAS. Special duties including enrolling members, making premium payments to the provider, collection of dues, life insurance policy matters. The Committee has one chairperson.

2. FINANCES COMMITTEE (FIC)

This committee oversees all financial matters of the Association. It works closely with the Treasurer of CAWAS, who it is recommended be part of this committee.

3. KIDS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE (KAC)

This committee is in charge of organizing kids activities, e.g. education, outings, in meeting activities for the young. The committee has one chairperson.

4. EVENTS COMMITTEE (EvC)

This committee is charge of organizing all CAWAS main events, e.g. the May 20th Cameroon Celebration, End of the Year Party, Summer Picnic, and other activities of a festive nature. The committee has a chairperson and will work closely with the Executive Board.

5. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (MbC)

The membership committee is in charge of membership matters, e.g. discipline, motivation, enrollment, recruitment, orderly conduct of meeting, hosting, food for meetings, joyful member events (e.g. births, baby showers, wedding, graduations, promotions) and sad events (illness, bereavement).

6. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (DC)

The development committee is in charge of driving investment projects for CAWAS, e.g. seeking the purchase of a center, increasing home ownership for CAWAS members, investment opportunities, career and other opportunities.

7. OUTREACH COMMITTEE (OC)

The outreach committee drives CAWAS networking with other organizations (e.g. the Seattle Limber Sister City Association), state and local government, immigration issues, other African immigrant communities (local or nationwide), relations with Cameroon.

ARTICLE VIII
Dissolution

Section 8.1. The Association cannot be dissolved unless the following requirements are met:

1. The Executive Board submits a written request to the membership to dissolve the Association; and
2. A general meeting is called where the membership of the Association votes favorably for the dissolution by at least 2/3rd; and
3. All moneys and property owed by the Association have been duly repaid; and
4. All assets of the Association have been sold or redistributed.

If these conditions are met, the Executive Board can duly file dissolution with Washington State's Secretary of State.

ARTICLE IX
Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Revision history:

04/26/2008 – adoption of the current revised bylaws at the monthly organization meeting.

APPENDIX

A- CAWAS Membership Application Form

This membership form was approved by the CAWAS Membership by a majority vote at a general meeting which took place on Saturday December 6th 2007.

CAWAS Membership Application Form PLEASE INCLUDE THIS FORM WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Membership in CAWAS gives you the following privileges and rights:

Full voting privileges

Access to members contact information & CAWAS email list

Life insurance

Invitations to monthly meetings

Priority registration to special events

Ability to run for office

All CAWAS members are required to host a monthly meeting

All members are required to contribute food and drinks to help support the host

Access to CAWAS fund for the purpose of (i.e. fundraising, charitable donations, etc)

STEP ONE: NAME AND ADDRESS (Please write legibly)

Title: ___ Mr. ___ Mrs. ___ Miss ___ Ms. ___ Dr.

Full name: _____

Your sponsor's Full name: _____

A sponsor is the person who is vouching for you in your process of becoming a member of CAWAS. Your sponsor must be a member in good standing.

Your Contact information:

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip or Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

This is the email that will be used to register you as a member on the exclusive email list. This will allow you to receive and communicate with other members of the group via email.

STEP TWO: DUES PAYMENT

CAWAS Yearly membership dues are US\$175.00* for the 2007-2008 cycle

These dues include mandatory Life Insurance coverage through the Association and CAWAS Fund collection.

The membership dues will be collected in two installments or in full
By CAWAS bylaws, once paid, membership dues are NON-REFUNDABLE for any reason.
Memberships will be processed after your application and payment are received. A receipt will be issued to
you upon receipt of payment by the Treasurer.

*Fees are subject to change with a simple majority vote of the membership.

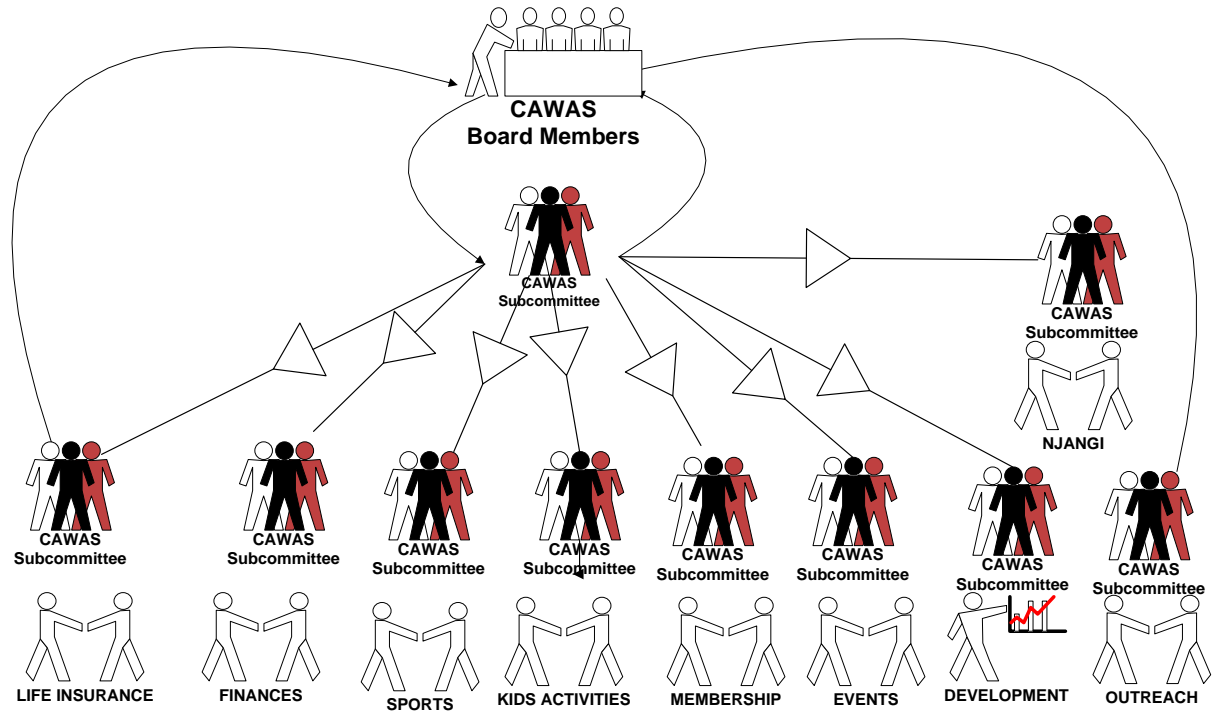
Before signing please acknowledge that you have read and understand the CAWAS Bylaws and Code of
Conduct:
___ Yes ___ No

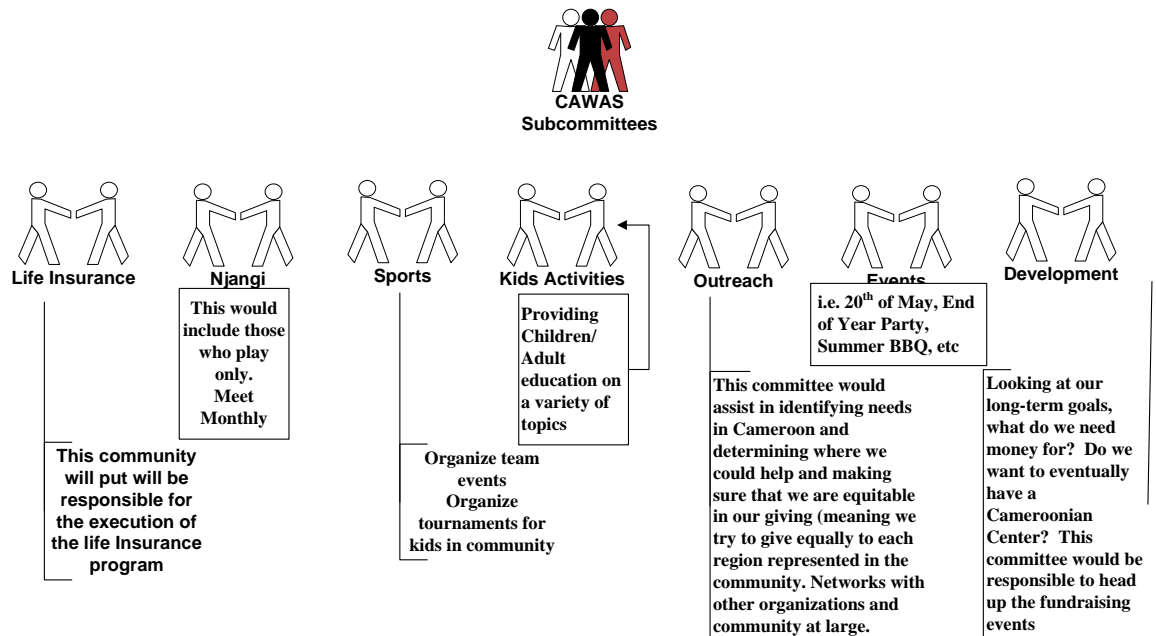
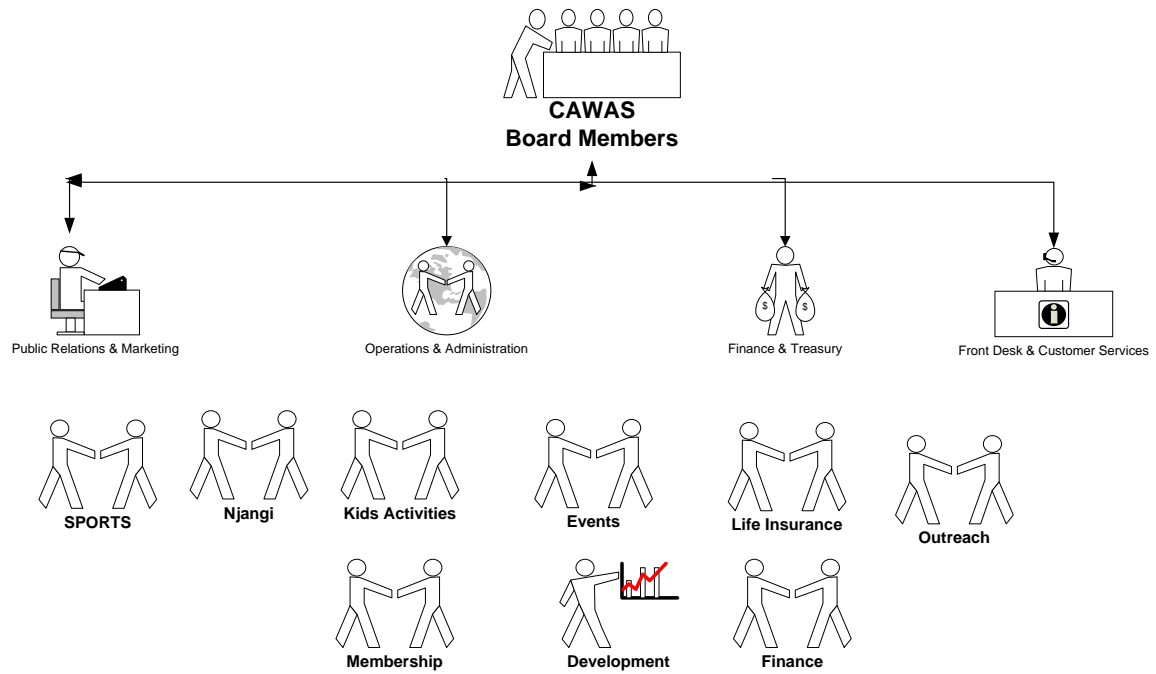
SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

RECEIVED BY (CAWAS Officer): _____

Office Use Only
Date Submitted: _____
Date Approved: _____
Method Of Payment
Cash Check # _____
Amount: _____
Amount Due: _____

B- CAWAS Organizational Structure





Cameroon Community
The Cameroon Association
This would include every registered member

Njangui
The Njangui will remain as optional component.

Sports
Organize team events
Organize tournaments for kids in community

Capital /Investment Campaign
Looking at our long-term goals, what do we need money for? Do we want to eventually have a Cameroonian Center? This committee would be responsible to head up the fundraising efforts. Also organize seminars to educate members who are willing or need to invest, including the purchase of homes and other type of property

Sub-Committees
These could be standing committee as well as those that are specific in nature and may have a short life. The people who take part in the sub-community are members of CAWAS and or board members alike who see an area that they feel they can contribute to

Education
Children Education
Providing information to the children that is age appropriate regarding Cameroon

Member Education
Presentations on issue affecting us, ranging from home ownership, immigration, owning stocks and retirement, computer training

Special Events/Social Committee (i.e. 20th of May, Summer BBQ)

This group would come up with ideas with buy in from the larger community that would support the educating of the “general public” as well provide us (the Cameroon Community) with opportunities to formally gathering

Immigration & Naturalization

This committee focuses exclusively on immigration and naturalization issues facing existing immigrants and new-coming immigrants.

Life Insurance Community
As part of the Membership agreement each member will contribute to a mandatory life insurance plan. This community will oversee the smooth running of that program

Cameroon Relations

This committee would assist in identifying needs in Cameroon and determining where we could help and making sure that we are equitable in our giving (meaning we try to give equally to each region represented in the community)

Community Liaison

This is the committee which will go out there to network with other organizations including (1) African immigrant organizations, (2) state and local government, including lobby to advance the interests of Cameroon immigrants in the State (3) Seattle-Limbe sister city association, (4) Peace Corps and former Cameroon missionary associations, (5) local schools and universities, (6) Churches.

C-CAWAS Community Life Insurance Program
(Document shall go here)