Iba-iba: An Indigenous Humanitarian Practice among the Balondo of South West Cameroon, c.1700-2019

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Abstract

This article examines *iba-iba*, an indigenous humanitarian practice among the Balondo people of Southwest Cameroon, tracing its development from the precolonial period (c.1700) to the present. Rooted in collective values of reciprocity, solidarity, and mutual responsibility, *iba-iba* has long served as a locally sustained mechanism for responding to hardship. This study looks at how *iba-iba* has historically responded to a wide range of social needs, resulting from disasters such as fire outbreaks, death, displacement, school fees, medical care, and periods of food scarcity, largely without dependence on state institutions or international humanitarian agencies. The study adopts a qualitative research design, and within it a historical methodology that combines oral history, ethnographic observation, and archival research. The study traces both continuity and change in the indigenous humanitarian practices of the Balondo from the colonial era to the present. Primary data were generated through field interviews with Balondo elders, women leaders, and youth, conducted in the Balondo language (Londo), Pidgin English, and English. The findings reveal that *iba-iba* is just one of the many Balondo mutual-aid institutions of the balondo, including *icheche* (compulsory contributions), *njange* (rotating savings associations), *erio* (collective labour), and *ereni* (shared meals), which together constitute an integrated communal system for managing vulnerability and sustaining social cohesion. Findings also reveal that in moments of crisis, including the Bakassi conflict and the ongoing Anglophone crisis, *iba-iba* functioned as an informal but reliable support mechanism for internally displaced persons. By situating the Balondo indigenous system of care known as *iba-iba*, this article questions dominant humanitarian frameworks that privilege externally driven humanitarian interventions, and instead argues that *iba-iba* represents a historically embedded, community-based model of welfare and emergency response that remains both resilient and locally meaningful. In doing so, the study contributes to decolonial debates by centering African epistemologies and locally grounded knowledge in discussions of humanitarianism.

Keywords

Iba-iba, Balondo, indigenous humanitarianism, oral history, cultural resilience, mutual aid, Cameroon

Introduction

African societies have long demonstrated deeply rooted traditions of mutual aid, social solidarity, and communal responsibility that challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives of humanitarianism. Throughout the African continent, different communities have developed different systems of care, long before external contact with European colonizers and the subsequent introduction of Western aid models. Scholars such as Dipoko (1984), Nyamnjoh (2013), and Tabe (2010), have emphasized that African methods of ensuring social welfare are rooted in spiritual, moral, and communal values that supports the wellbeing of all members. These methods were neither incidental nor informal, but at the core of the organization of precolonial African life.

The main objective of this study is to examine the practice of *iba-iba*, which is an indigenous humanitarian practice among the Balondo people of Southwest Cameroon. Emanating from indigenous ethics and practices of responsibility and reciprocity, *iba-iba* operates as a locally organized system of support among the Balondo that is activated during moments of crisis. During such cases, members of the community contribute two items each such as food, tools, clothing, or money, to assist individuals or households which were affected by disaster or hardship. Rather than functioning as a voluntary act of charity, *iba-iba* is understood as a moral and spiritual responsibility grounded in principles of reciprocity, mutual dependence, and collective endurance.

Although systems of this kind have long structured everyday life in many African societies, they rarely feature in dominant humanitarian literature. Contemporary humanitarian discourse continues to favor institutionalized, donor-led models that are shaped by Western political and religious traditions and that often overlook or marginalize locally embedded forms of care and obligation. The assumption that humanitarianism originated in Europe or the Global North marginalizes African agency and obscures the rich traditions of care that have sustained communities across the continent. Specifically, this study seeks to:

> Examine the historical origins, cultural significance, and key principles of *iba-iba* among the Balondo of Southwest Cameroon.
>
> Analyze the functioning and impact of *iba-iba* as an indigenous humanitarian system in fostering community cohesion and resilience.
>
> Explore how recognizing indigenous practices like *iba-iba* challenges Western narratives about the origins and development of humanitarianism in Africa.

In challenging this narrative, the study of *iba-iba* brings to the fore Africa's longstanding humanitarian philosophies and practices. This article thus joins broader efforts to decolonize humanitarian thought by centering African epistemologies and revealing how local practices not only endure but remain essential in the face of contemporary crises such as displacement, war, and economic insecurity.

Conceptual Framework and Relevance

The dominant models of humanitarianism that shape global aid systems today, are typically institutional, bureaucratic, and rooted in Western liberal and secular values. These models often operate through formal organizations – international NGOs, donor agencies, and multilateral institutions – and are guided by Universalist assumptions about human need, suffering, and the mechanisms through which, relief should be provided. As Barnett (2011) and Fassin (2007) note, such frameworks have historically presented the Global South as a site of suffering to be saved by external intervention, thereby reinforcing asymmetrical power relations and silencing local voices.

By contrast, *iba-iba* reflects a fundamentally different humanitarian logic – one that emerges from within the community and is shaped by the spiritual, moral, and ecological understandings of wellbeing. Kemedjio (2024) notes that African systems of mutual aid operate within the framework of "moral economies," in which care is structured around cultural meaning, relational obligation, and spiritual responsibility rather than externally imposed indicators or donor requirements. In

such situations, assistance is not treated as a discretionary or professionalized service. Rather, it is understood as a way of life and informed by broader cosmological and ontological understandings of humanity and community.

Drawing from the works of decolonial scholars like Mudimbe (1988), Ramose (1999), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), and Lynch (2022), this article sees *iba-iba* as an alternative form of humanitarian practice. Seen in this way, *iba-iba* does not agree with the standardization and impersonality that characterize many contemporary aid regimes. Instead, it points toward a pluriversal ethics of care that recognizes the coexistence of multiple ways of knowing, being, and sustaining life. According to Lynch (2022), African humanitarian practices cannot be adequately interpreted through secular, linear, or technocratic frameworks alone. They must include analytical approaches that consider spiritual interconnectedness linking people, ancestors, and the natural world, to the divine.

Seen from this perspective, *iba-iba* demonstrates that humanitarian action does not have to originate from external institutions or hierarchical structures but can emerge organically from within communities, grounded in shared histories, social obligations, and moral accountability. At a moment when international aid systems face growing challenges of legitimacy, financing, and effectiveness (Moyo, 2009), practices such as *iba-iba* offer important insights into how care might be re-imagined through indigenous logics and African worldviews.

Generally, humanitarian practices in Africa existed long before colonial encounters and cannot be reduced to reactions to Western influence. Throughout the continent, systems of reciprocity, collective responsibility, and mutual assistance have historically defined social life and ensured communal welfare. These practices were influenced by indigenous philosophies that taught harmony, interdependence, and justice, often operating outside the formal legal and bureaucratic structures common with modern states (Mbiti, 1969; Wiredu, 1980; Gyekye, 1997).

The philosophy of Ubuntu, found among many Bantu-speaking societies such as the Zulu, Xhosa, Shona, Luba, and Sotho, offers a well-known illustration of this orientation. Expressed in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (“a person is a person through other persons”), Ubuntu affirms that individual wellbeing is inseparable from the wellbeing of the community (Ramose, 1999; Tutu, 1999). Historically, this ethic was enacted through organized forms of communal labor, shared food production, and structured support during times of crisis, revealing a deeply institutionalized yet non-bureaucratic approach to care (Metz, 2007).

In West and Central Africa, similar communitarian logics shaped everyday life. Among the Tiv of Nigeria, the practice of ya (rotational farming) allowed members of extended families to support each other’s agricultural work (Iroegbu, 1995). The Igbo had igba boi, an apprenticeship system where young men were housed, fed, and trained by wealthier community members – a social investment repaid later through labor or mentorship (Nwosu, 2010). Literature from different parts of Africa show different examples of organized communal labor and mutual aid throughout the continent. Among Yoruba communities, communal work parties called aro, were commonly organized for activities such as harvesting, burial preparations, and house construction. These events also included practical labor with social interaction, reinforcing solidarity and collective responsibility within the community (Akanle, 2009).

In addition, communitarian practices have influenced systems of care and mutual assistance across West and Central Africa, particularly when it comes to ensuring social change and moral guidance. David Parkin (1972) in his early study of urban voluntary associations, noted that such organizations played multiple roles in contexts of rapid social change, offering not only material assistance but also social belonging and moral guidance to their members. One of the most popular expressions of this principle is found in rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs), known by different local names. In Ghana and Nigeria it is known as susu, among the Yoruba, among the Yoruba and njangi in Cameroon (Ardener, 1964; Bascom, 1952).

These associations function through shared trust, reciprocal obligation, and collective accountability. By pooling resources, participants are able to meet significant needs related to farming, trade, education, or migration – needs that might otherwise be difficult to address individually.

Anthropological scholarship has consistently shown that such arrangements reflect a form of economic mutualism embedded in African moral economies rather than practices of formalized charity or externally imposed welfare systems (Guyer, 1997). In addition to their economic functions, these mutual aid groups often serve ceremonial and welfare purposes – organizing communal labor (aro among the Yoruba), providing funeral assistance, and mediating conflicts. In urban settings, they have adapted to new contexts through professional unions, migrant hometown associations, and digital savings groups, demonstrating remarkable flexibility and resilience (Parkin, 1972; Little, 1965). Recently, many njangi and susu groups have increasingly adopted digital tools such as mobile money services and WhatsApp groups to sustain participation and accountability among members who live in distant places. Instead of merely representing the past, these innovations show continuity between long-standing cooperative ethics and contemporary financial technologies, demonstrating how indigenous systems adapt to changing social and economic conditions.

Existing literature suggests that African voluntary associations should not be seen as residual or static survivals from a precolonial past. Rather, they are dynamic social institutions that continue to sustain moral economies of care, reciprocity, and mutual dependence. This literature provides a useful comparative lens for analyzing *iba-iba*, and for situating Balondo humanitarian practices within a broader West and Central African traditional system of collective self-help and relational solidarity. Far from being fixed rituals, these practices have historically modified and adapted in response to shifting ecological pressures, livelihood strategies, and social transformations. Be it through shared agricultural labor, food redistribution, or communal healing practices, African humanitarian traditions have been rooted in lived experience and directed toward collective survival (Gyekye, 1996; Nyamnjoh, 2013).

Colonial rule greatly influenced many African social systems. For example the introduction of European legal regimes, monetized economies, and individualized land tenure undermined the communal foundations upon which indigenous welfare practices were established. Missionaries and colonial administrators often referred to African systems of care as “backward” or “unscientific,” while at the same time promoting Western models of charity and relief as universal standards (Mamdani, 1996; Mudimbe, 1988). Despite these interventions, indigenous institutions continued to thrive. As several scholars have shown, many survived by reworking their organizational forms and moral logics to fit new political and economic realities (Ake, 1993).

Sylvia Tamale has offered a sustained critique of the ways Western epistemologies have historically marginalized African modes of knowing, caring, and social organization. In calling for the recovery and affirmation of indigenous knowledge systems, Tamale (2020) situates such efforts within a broader struggle for epistemic justice and decolonization – an argument that resonates strongly with the persistence and adaptability of practices like *iba-iba*. She emphasizes the need to re-center African ontologies – rooted in community, spirituality, and relationality – in order to dismantle colonial hierarchies embedded in global institutions, including those in health, law, and humanitarianism. This perspective is highly relevant to the study of *iba-iba*, which, like the indigenous systems Tamale champions, operates on the basis of communal solidarity, ancestral obligation, and moral reciprocity. *Iba-iba* challenges the technocratic and depersonalized models of care imposed by colonial and postcolonial aid systems, offering instead a localized, relational, and spiritually grounded response to human need. In this sense, *iba-iba* is not only a system of mutual aid – it is a decolonial praxis that reasserts the legitimacy of African knowledge and the capacity of African communities to care for their own through indigenous frameworks.

It is from this wider understanding of African humanitarian systems and practices that *iba-iba* can be most adequately analyzed. Similar to systems such as Ubuntu, igba boi, and aro, *iba-iba* operates not just as a cultural practice but as an active and socially embedded form of protection, solidarity, and care. Through this *iba-iba*, caregiving and resource sharing are organized in ways that draw on ancestral obligations, moral reciprocity, and spiritual responsibility instead of relying on external aid mechanisms.

Viewed in this way, *iba-iba* illustrates how African societies have historically developed complex and context-sensitive approaches to welfare and crisis response. These approaches are grounded in local histories and moral worlds, demonstrating that systems of humanitarian care can emerge from within communities themselves rather than being imported from outside.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected through a combination of archival research, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic observation. Files were consulted from the Buea National Archives to trace early references to *iba-iba* and also to examine how colonial authorities documented and misrepresented indigenous social support systems. These files included assessment and intelligent reports by German and British colonial administrators (1890s – 1960s) on a wide range of issues, including indigenous social structures and humanitarian practices. Early twentieth-century administrative documents showing how colonial policies disrupted local systems of mutual aid were also consulted. I have combined historical and ethnographic methods to examine the contemporary practice and historical changes and adaptation of *iba-iba*.

Fieldwork was conducted between November 2023 and December 2024 in five Balondo villages including Mbongo, Lobe Town, Ekondo Titi, Kumbe and Funge. The main aim of the fieldwork was to record how *iba-iba* is practiced in the present and at the same time identifying the changes and continuities that have taken place over time. Eighteen participants were purposively selected to reflect different ages and social roles within the community. These included elderly persons of 65 years and above (widely recognized as custodians of oral tradition; community leaders and council members involved in organizing communal assistance), and middle-aged and younger adults (approximately 30 – 50 years) who actively participate in *iba-iba* and could explain its contemporary significance.

Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews which lasted between 45 minutes and one and a half hours. The interviews were conducted in English, Pidgin English, and the Balondo language in order to ensure both linguistic precision and originality. For the fact that some participants were not comfortable with electronic recording devices, interviews were documented through detailed handwritten notes taken during and immediately after each session. Although this method was time-consuming, it fostered a more relaxed and conversational atmosphere and reduced participants' sense of surveillance. Interview notes were later typed and, where possible, cross-checked with participants for accuracy.

Apart from the individual interviews, I also organized three focus group discussions were, each involving at least six participants. These discussions encouraged collective reflection on both historical and present-day experiences of *iba-iba*. In one of the focus group discussions, for example, participants argued whether the cooperative rebuilding of a storm-damaged house still constituted *iba-iba* when the people were compensated with food at the end of the exercise. Such exchanges allowed participants to question, refine, and expand the interpretations that had emerged earlier during interviews. This contributed to a more dialogical and co-produced understanding of the practice.

Given the importance of oral tradition in African historiography, oral histories were also collected from six elderly participants aged between 70 and 80. These elders recalled how *iba-iba* functioned during their youth, which provided original indigenous categories for interpreting social reciprocity and obligation. Their testimonies helped to fill in gaps and address silences in colonial archival records and were also instrumental for tracing how *iba-iba* has adapted to colonial and postcolonial socio-economic transformations. As one elder remarked, "When your neighbor's house caught fire, you did not wait for him to call – *iba-iba* was what made us human."

I adopted a reflexive approach throughout the research process, acknowledging that my own Balondo background shaped both access to the field and my interpretations. My position as both community insider and researcher facilitated trust, openness, and access to information that might have been difficult for an external researcher to obtain. At the same time, this positionality required ongoing negotiation, particularly in moments when younger participants challenged interpretations offered by elders (Headland, Pike & Harris, 1990).

In order to address the potential for interpretive bias, I continuously engaged in self-reflection and triangulated data across multiple sources, including oral testimonies, archival materials, and participant narratives. Preliminary interpretations were shared with participants during informal validation meetings, allowing them to clarify, contest, or refine my analyses. This dual positioning – both emic (insider) and etic (analytical observer) – enabled a nuanced reading of *iba-iba* as both lived social practice and cultural text, while remaining grounded in Balondo epistemologies and broader debates in indigenous scholarship (Smith, 2012; Chilisa, 2020).

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in three overlapping stages: archival interpretation, thematic interpretation of interviews, and comparative synthesis across sources. Interview and focus group notes were read line by line to identify recurring expressions and metaphors used to describe *iba-iba*. This analysis revealed three interrelated themes that capture its core dimensions: communal obligation, resource redistribution, and spiritual duty. Phrases such as "*rikonjoh riokoh risa kataka romba*" ("one hand cannot tie a bundle") and "*mokiteni nwa ndabo*" ("household togetherness") frequently appeared and informed the theme of communal obligation. On this point, one elder reflected, "When my neighbor's house was destroyed by storm, we all helped without asking" (Besumbu Christopher, 60), while another emphasized reciprocity: "If you received help, you had to return it when the need arose" (Ekale Ekomo, 84).

Narratives about sharing fishing catches, repairing canoes, or rebuilding homes after fire outbreaks illustrated the theme of resource redistribution. As participants explained, "After my harvest, I always give part of my crops to those who have none" (Etona Cecelia, 80), and "When someone's house was damaged, neighbors came together to rebuild it. Everyone contributed what they could" (Naseri Vincent, 75). The moral and spiritual dimensions of *iba-iba* also emerged clearly in statements such as, "Giving to others pleases Obase; we are not helping for ourselves alone" (Ndena Paul, 63) and "You cannot pray to God when you do not share with others; sharing is part of our duty" (Ikando Justine, 79). I revisited interpretations of key expressions and narratives through follow-up conversations with participants, allowing them to clarify meanings and respond to my preliminary readings. This process helped ensure that the analysis largely depended on participants' own understandings. Taken together, these reflections illustrate how *iba-iba* operates not only as a social arrangement but also as an ethical framework that shapes everyday humanitarian practice within the Balondo community.

The themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions were read alongside archival sources in order to identify patterns of continuity and change over time. For example, missionary records often described indigenous generosity using the language of "charity," contrary to oral accounts in which *iba-iba* is understood as a moral and spiritual responsibility rather than an act of pity. Placing these sources in dialogue exposed the ways colonial and missionary discourses attempted to recast local humanitarian ethics, even as Balondo practices continued to affirm mutual aid as a shared moral obligation.

One of the central analytical challenges concerned the translation of idioms from the Balondo language into English without compromising their cultural significance. Certain expressions required collective reflection with participants to capture both their ethical force and their spiritual resonance. An example frequently discussed was "*osadaka oma uba nwana nyongoh mbusa*" ("You cannot enjoy your meal while your brother has nothing to eat"), a phrase that conveys responsibility,

kinship, and moral restraint simultaneously. By bringing archival materials, oral histories, and ethnographic observations into conversation, the analysis privileges Balondo voices and categories, ensuring that interpretations are anchored in lived experience rather than in written records alone.

The Balondo People: History and Settlement

The Balondo are a Bantu-speaking ethnic group located primarily in the Ndian Division of Cameroon's South West Region and in parts of the Cross River State in Nigeria, where they are known as the Efut. In Cameroon, they have seventeen rural settlements distributed across three major geographical areas known as Mbusa, Mesaka, and Boso. These areas fall within Ekondo Titi, Bamusso, and Isangele Sub-Divisions of Cameroon (Nebengu, 1990; Akak, 1998; Ardener, 1996; Nanji & Ndille, 2024). The present geographical distribution of the Balondo people is a reflection of a long history of movement, ecological adjustment, and sociopolitical organization shaped by both internal developments and external influences. Oral and archival sources consistently point to the Congo region as the origin of the Balondo. From there, Balondo groups are said to have migrated northwards, passing through areas around Kribi and Douala before eventually settling in the Rio del Rey region of present day South West Cameroon (Buea National Archives, No. Ae 20, 1923).

The same oral and archival sources hold that, the earliest known settlement of the Balondo was Ekondo ya Ikeni. The name is associated with the ikeni plant (Newbouldia laevis), which features prominently in Balondo cosmology and ritual practice. Its use as a place name signals more than a simple geographical marker; it reflects ideas of spiritual protection, territorial belonging, and ancestral presence that continue to inform Balondo understandings of place and identity. However, the presence of crocodiles in this swampy location led them to migrate inland, establishing new settlements such as Illor, Funge, Lobe, Meme and Illoani. The migration of the Balondo was also motivated by the availability of fishing grounds and arable land, demonstrating the intimate relationship between livelihood and geography in their cultural history (Nanji & Ndille, 2024).

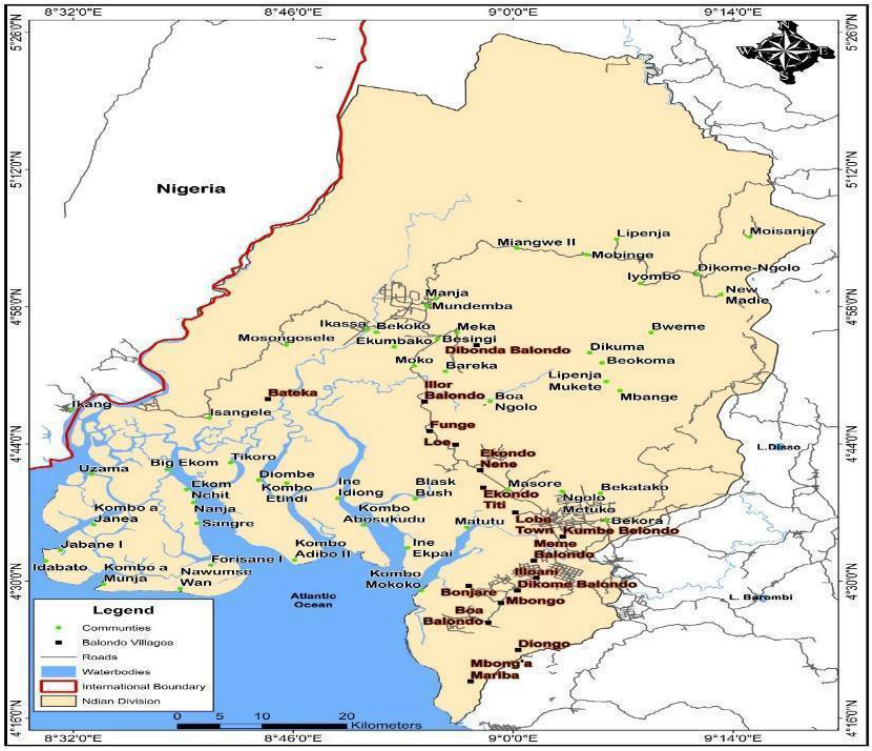
Balondo territory covers substantial portions of the Ndian Division spreading across three subdivisions including; Ekondo Titi, Bamusso, Isangele Sub Divisions. The Balondo area is bordered by the Ngolo, Bima, and Batanga communities to the north; Bakole to the south; the Isangele fishing ports to the west; and Balue, Mbonge, and Ekombe to the east. This territory is characterized by dense equatorial rainforest and extensive mangrove swamps, sustained by river systems such as the Meme and the Moko. Climatically, the region falls within the equatorial zone, with a prolonged rainy season from approximately March to October and annual rainfall levels exceeding 3,000 mm (Suh, 1982).

These environmental conditions have played a decisive role in shaping Balondo livelihoods over time. Fishing, small-scale farming, and hunting were not only economic activities but practices that were closely tied to seasonal rhythms and ecological constraints. The need for sustainable management of forest and water resources encouraged forms of social organization that emphasized balance, cooperation, and interdependence between people and their environment.

The organization of villages among the Balondo were also influenced by ecological considerations. Villages were typically established to ensure access to both waterways and forest resources, allowing households to remain largely self-sufficient while maintaining strong connections with neighboring communities. Such spatial arrangements reinforced social practices centered on communal labor, shared access to resources, and collective responsibility – principles that also underpin *iba-iba* and other indigenous forms of mutual assistance.

Things have however changed in recent decades, as these patterns of life have now come under increasing strain. Deforestation, environmental change, and ongoing political instability – most notably the Anglophone Crisis – have disrupted both livelihoods and social networks, placing additional pressure on indigenous systems of care and cooperation. Despite all these constraints, indigenous humanitarian practices have remained remarkably resilient. The continuity of *iba-iba* and related practices across centuries speaks to the enduring relevance of Balondo social organization and their adaptive strategies in the face of adversity.

Map of Ndian Division showing the 17 Balondo settlements



Source: Department of Geography, University of Buea, 2022.

Iba-iba: Meaning, Structure, and Operation

The term *iba-iba* in Londo, the language of the Balondo people, literally translates to "two-two" and refers to the principle that each member of a community contributes two items – be they food, tools, clothing, or, in recent times, money – to support someone facing hardship (Michael Monya, 73). Michael Monya, a respected elder from Lobe Town explained the symbolic meaning behind the "two-two given" in the following words; "People ask, why always two? One is for your body, the other is for your heart. If I give you two plantains, you eat one and you know the second is not from pity but from love. That is why it's called *iba-iba*" (Michael Monya, 73).

It is a culturally embedded system of emergency response activated when a crisis strikes: fire outbreaks, sudden illnesses, deaths, or displacement. Unlike conventional humanitarianism, which often depends on formal institutions and external intervention, *iba-iba* is decentralized, needs-based, and spiritually anchored within the community's moral and cosmological order. Ekale Ekomo, a respected elder and Sanga Moki (Cup Bearer) of Lobe Town emphasized the spiritual component of *iba-iba* when he held that, "in our time, giving during *iba-iba* was not just kindness – it was sacred. If you refused to give, the spirits of our ancestors would know. You could be punished with sickness or loss. We were taught from childhood that sharing is how we stay connected to the land, to our people, and to our gods".

Iba-iba was organized within the community, with clear roles and responsibilities. Age-grade associations, called *makoroh mata na maba*, usually took charge of gathering and delivering support to those in need. In every Balondo village, there were at least seven of these age sets, which would come together during times of crisis to help affected families. Apart from providing material assistance, age groups played a key role in rebuilding homes and ensuring that those who had suffered received both social and emotional care. As Etona Cecilia, a respected women leader from Illor explained, "*iba-iba* was not something you were invited to do. It was our way of life. When

someone's house burned down, we didn't wait for instructions. We knew what to bring – two yams, two plantains, or even a machete if the man was a farmer. If you didn't bring something, the elders would question your heart" (Etona Cecelia, 80).

Historically, items donated through *iba-iba* were directly tailored to the victim's livelihood. For instance, a farmer whose house was destroyed would receive machetes, hoes, and planting materials; a fisherman would be offered nets, hooks, or dugout paddles. Women who smoked fish or meat in open fires – common sources of accidental house fires – were given replacement foodstuffs and utensils. Like Stephen Itor Itor, a renowned custodian of Balondo history explained, "Most of the fires happened when women were smoking fish or meat. In the past, our homes were made of thatch and dry bamboo. If a spark caught, the entire house could burn down. But people did not dwell on the loss for long. We immediately began *iba-iba*. Everyone knew who had cassava, fishing nets, or thatching materials, and we would rebuild as if nothing had happened" (Stephen Itor Itor, 66).

When a house was destroyed, *iba-iba* involved more than just replacing material items. The community came together to reconstruct homes, with men taking the lead in building while women prepared meals to support them throughout the work. This was captured perfectly by Ndana Paul, an elder from Illor who held that, "our age groups were like small governments. Each had a duty. One group cut trees, one molded bricks, and another fetched water. After a disaster, we would rebuild a house in one week. We did not wait for the chief. We moved as brothers" (Ndena Paul Ndena, 63). Iyaiya Bridget Mosongo, a retired teacher from Dibonda Balondo also explained that, "when a house was lost, the men built – but we, the women, carried that house with our backs. We cooked every day for them. We sent our daughters to help the woman clean her new place. We gave wrappers, pots, even our own beds. Because a woman without support becomes a ghost in her own home" (Iyaiya Bridget Mosongo, 70).

The introduction of colonial currency in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought about a significant transformation. Money began to supplement physical items, with individuals contributing two pennies or cents, and later up to 500 or 1,000 CFA francs, depending on the economic context (Iyaiya Bridget Mosongo, 70). The example above shows how *iba-iba* can adapt to changing circumstances while still upholding its core principle of collective responsibility. The system was not formal or regular, rather it occurred as needed, organized spontaneously whenever the community faced hardship. This flexibility has helped *iba-iba* to remain meaningful and useful in today's Balondo society. For instance, in 2019, when separatist fighters set fire to homes in Lobe Town, villagers quickly mobilized *iba-iba*, gathering food, clothing, bedding, and farming tools to support those affected. These acts were not merely transactional but expressions of solidarity, empathy, and cultural duty (Justine Ikando Mulango, 79).

What distinguishes *iba-iba* from Western humanitarian systems is its spiritual dimension. Participation is not optional; it is considered a moral and ancestral obligation. To fail to give is to risk communal shame or even spiritual repercussions. Naseri Vincent Moto, a respected elder from Mbongo Balondo held that, "even the poorest man gave something. Two spoons of *garri*, a piece of soap – just something. Because he knew tomorrow he might be the one in trouble. That was our insurance, before any bank came" (Naseri Vincent Moto, 75). This ethic of care is not born of charity, but of interconnectedness – a belief that individual wellbeing is inseparable from collective health.

This Balondo practice is not an isolated case, but part of a wider resurgence of African homegrown humanitarian systems that challenge the dominance of externally imposed aid models. Indigenous humanitarian practices across Africa are not isolated; they are often connected and collaborate through shared cultural values, indigenous norms, and networks of mutual aid that extend across communities and regions. These local systems which are based on self-determination and communal solidarity, provide immediate support while also offering sustainable ways to build resilience and promote long-term recovery. According to Boateng (2021), the focus should not simply be on localization, but on restoration – rebuilding and strengthening indigenous mechanisms that were historically weakened by international humanitarian interventions.

Restoration of indigenous humanitarian practices represents a strategic, decolonial approach, in which African states and local actors reclaim agency, reinforce traditional systems, and work together across borders to create continent-wide humanitarian networks. By collaborating in this way, these indigenous practices demonstrate that African solutions, rooted in local realities, can address different humanitarian challenges in a more sustainable and contextually relevant manner than models imposed from outside. In this light *Iba-iba* exemplifies the kind of restorative, self-determined humanitarian logic that Boateng (2021) envisions – where care is anchored not in external aid but in enduring indigenous values and community cohesion.

Related Balondo Humanitarian Practices

While *iba-iba* is the most widely recognized humanitarian practice among the Balondo, it is part of a broader ecosystem of indigenous aid systems that include *icheche, njange, erio,* and *ereni*. Each of these practices addressed different dimensions of human need, from financial hardship and labour shortages to food insecurity and emotional support.

Icheche (Compulsory Contribution)

Icheche refers to the mandatory collection of funds or items to address immediate needs such as medical treatment, school fees, or funeral expenses. *Iba-iba* is often mobilized when a person or family cannot meet an urgent need. Contributions usually come from relatives, neighbors, and extended family, with the effort typically led by a respected elder or the head of an age-grade group (Anjeh Michael, 57). During the colonial and postcolonial periods, *icheche* played an especially important role in helping community members access medical care, particularly as hospitals began to operate in the Balondo region. Besumbu Christopher, a respected elder from Funge Balondo held that, "before hospitals, we used herbs. But when someone was very sick and had to go to Ekondo Titi or Kumba for medical care, we used *icheche*. Even small children gave coins. The money was entrusted with an elder who ensured proper management and accountability. It was not just about healing the body – it showed the sick person that they were loved by everyone" (Besumbu Christopher, 60).

The cost of funerals also relied heavily on *icheche*. It was not common for a single family to bear the full cost of a burial. This is because, multiple households connected to the deceased, contributed collectively to ensure that the burial was conducted with dignity. This practice did not only distribute economic responsibility but reinforced social bonds and collective memory. In cases of illness, burial, or migration, the Balondo practice of *icheche* was initiated. Relatives and age groups contributed livestock, grains, and tokens of currency. The distribution appears to be informal but was strictly regulated by elders and observed with spiritual seriousness (Louis Nasama, 42).

Njange (Rotating Savings and Credit System)

With the monetization of the Balondo economy during the colonial era, communities adapted by creating *njange* (widely known in Cameroon today as njangi) – a rotating savings and credit system. Within each age group or village association, members contributed fixed sums regularly. The pooled amount was then given to one member per cycle, allowing individuals to amass lump sums needed for larger investments like building homes, starting businesses, or paying school fees. *Njange* continues to be one of the most effective grassroots financial tools in the region and reflects an indigenous understanding of cooperative economics. Joseph Owasi shared his experience in the following interview:

> When I was a young man, I joined a *njange* group formed by members of our age grade association known as *Bako Baringa*. Each of us contributed 1000 francs every Sunday. The first year I took my turn, I used the money to start a business. It was from that business that I built my first, second and even third house. We trusted each other; there were no

> papers, just our word and our gatherings. Up to this moment, we still have a *njange* with my brothers from the same age group. We use the money to pay for our children's school needs and others. Banks won't give us loans because their conditions are difficult, but our *njange* has been at the heart of our survival (Joseph Owasi, 55).

The interview above demonstrates that *njange* has been a long-standing economic practice built on trust, communal interdependence, and informal accountability. It also shows how the system has adapted to monetary economies over time while preserving its original indigenous logic of mutual support.

Erio (Collective Labor)

Erio refers to a practice of group labor mobilization. Balondo men or women would designate days to work on each other's farms, clear land, weed crops, or harvest produce. This system allowed individuals to manage large-scale agricultural tasks without hiring labor or risking productivity loss due to individual limitations. During the colonial period, *erio* was instrumental in cultivating oil palm and cocoa – commodities that later became central to the Balondo economy. The communal nature of *erio* ensured that no member was left behind due to lack of manpower. Naseri Vincent explained how the practice of *erio* helped him to establish a palm farm which still sustains him and his family till date:

> Back in the day, when you wanted to open a big farm, you couldn't do it alone. You would call your kin and age-mates. We called it *erio*. You feed them, and they work the whole day. Next time, it's another person's turn. In 1972, *erio* helped me to open up a large oil palm farm that still feeds my family till date. Even now, we sometimes do *erio* to help ease our farm work (Naseri Vincent, 75).

The testimony above shows how *erio* served as a reliable source of cheap labor and as a safety net. It also emphasizes the non-commercial, solidarity-based logic behind the system, reinforcing how Balondo practices diverge from formal, market-oriented humanitarian interventions.

Ereni (Shared Meals)

Food, as both sustenance and symbol, plays a central role in Balondo life. *Ereni* is the practice of preparing and sharing communal meals among neighbours (Justine Ikando, 79). When a woman cooked a meal, she invited others in the vicinity, who might bring along dishes of their own. These shared meals reinforced community ties and ensured that even those who were poor, grieving, or elderly did not go hungry. Widowers and widows, in particular, benefited from this tradition as neighbors brought meals directly to their homes to provide not just food, but emotional support. Justine Ikando, a respected elder and women's leader from Lobe Town explained that, "When a woman lost her husband, we never left her alone. Every day for one month, someone brought her food. We made her laugh. We cleaned her compound. That is *ereni* – not just eating together, but helping the soul to breathe again" (Justine Ikando, 79).

Ereni is not only seen as a comprehensive system of care, but as a practice where sharing food goes beyond mere nourishment to become a source of spiritual and emotional support. According to Justine Ikando "*ereni* is not just eating together, but helping the soul to breathe again." This account shows that communal meals were used to respond to grief and social vulnerability, reflecting a humanitarian model rooted in relational ethics rather than donor-led programs. *Ereni* embodies a deeply rooted sense of responsibility to support the emotional, psychological, and material wellbeing of community members through everyday acts of togetherness. Unlike Western humanitarianism, which often treats aid recipients as passive beneficiaries, *ereni* is proactive, ongoing, and community-driven.

Regina Fembe, a respected women's leader from Ekondo Titi, explained, "We raised each other's children. When a mother died, the child would move from one aunt's house to another. These children were cared for just like the other children in the community." (Regina Fembe, 72). This account extends the meaning of *ereni* beyond sharing meals to a broader system of communal kinship that ensures the wellbeing of vulnerable children. Contrary to conventional humanitarian models that may provide temporary food aid or orphan sponsorships, *ereni* sustains life through continuous relational practices grounded in everyday domestic practices.

The two testimonies above show that *ereni* represents the core principles of *iba-iba*, which is a deeply integrative, spiritual, and emotionally aware practice. It challenges the fragmented and transactional nature of mainstream humanitarian models by emphasizing community solidarity, affective reciprocity, and long-term responsibility over isolated acts of charity. Together, these practices form a constellation of interlinked humanitarian responses. They reflect a holistic worldview in which economic, emotional, and spiritual needs are addressed simultaneously. Their survival into the 21st century, despite external pressures and social change, attests to their functionality and deep cultural roots.

Continuity and Transformation of *Iba-iba*

The humanitarian traditions of the Balondo, particularly *iba-iba*, have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability over centuries. While the practice has retained its core ethos of communal responsibility and collective care, its form, scope, and materials have evolved in response to socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations.

Precolonial and Early Colonial Foundations

Historical records and oral traditions suggest that one of the earliest documented practices of *iba-iba* dates back to the founding of Ekondo Titi in the eighteenth century. Migrants from Ekondo (Nene), led by Namburi nwa Ndem, were welcomed by the Lobe Balondo community. Following Balondo humanitarian traditions, the hosts allocated land for settlement, provided farmland, and granted access to *beburu* (fields cultivated in earlier seasons), so that the newcomers could secure food while preparing their own farms. This humanitarian action of the Balondo people of Lobe led to the founding of the present town of Ekondo Titi (Michael Ekale Ekomo, 84). The gesture of welcoming and supporting the newcomers represents one of the foundational uses of *iba-iba* in land and food sharing, reinforcing the idea that humanitarian action was not just material but also moral.

Colonial Transformations: From Goods to Money

With the arrival of German and later British colonial rule, significant shifts occurred. With the introduction of currency into local economies, access to health care, formal education, and administrative services increasingly depended on money. In response, *iba-iba* evolved to include modest cash contributions alongside food and tools, often beginning with small amounts such as two pennies or cents. As time went on monetary contributions increased. During the 1990s, individuals contributed around 200 CFA francs, and by 2019, contributions moved to between 500 and 1,000 CFA francs (Michael Monya, 73).The opening of the Native Authority School in Boa Balondo in 1923, and its eventual relocation to Lobe Town in 1937, further reshaped *iba-iba* (Buea National Archives, No Ae 20, 1923). This is because students from distant villages needed housing, food, and learning materials. Host families and entire communities responded by offering shelter and feeding arrangements through an extended version of *iba-iba*, showcasing the practice's flexibility in the face of modern education needs (Naseri Vincent, 75). The extension of the Native Authority School to Lobe Town occasioned much strain on families. Yet, local chiefs and residents provided housing and rations to student boarders, through a system they described as '*iba-iba*' – a form of communal pooling of food and firewood (Stephen Itor Itor, 66). After the introduction of Western education in the Balondo land, many families sponsored their children to school through *icheche*. This fact was

confirmed by Nawango Achia who is the current traditional ruler of Ekondo Titi that, "Aside from my biological parents, my uncles and other family members contributed money through *icheche* to send me to school" (Nawango Achia, 57).

Postcolonial Adaptations: Crisis and Community Resilience

Iba-iba has proven especially vital in the face of postcolonial crises such as civil conflict and displacement. The Bakassi conflict and the recent Anglophone conflict are perfect examples to illustrate how *iba-iba* adapted in the post-colonial period. To begin with the Bakassi conflict (1993 – 2008), which arose from the Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute, the fighting led to the displacement of populations from several villages across Isangele and other parts of the Bakassi Peninsula. While residents from multiple communities were affected, many people from Bateka chose to seek refuge outside the peninsula, particularly in Balondo villages such as Illor, Mbongo, Ekondo Titi, Kumbe Balondo, and Lobe Town. These host communities provided shelter, food, and financial assistance to the displaced persons. Though international aid would eventually reach the area, the initial survival of the displaced populations depended largely on indigenous humanitarian mechanisms such as *iba-iba*. Some IDPs were later permanently integrated into their host communities, building homes and forming new families.

Secondly, the Anglophone Crisis which began in 2016, brought renewed violence and displacement. In December 2019, armed separatist fighters attacked Lobe Town, burning down three houses and rendering several families homeless. Njong Kingsly Ateh, a farmer and arson victim explained his experience as follows: "They burnt my house down in 2019. I had only one trouser left. But the next morning, I saw people coming – each with two things. A woman gave me a pot. A boy brought a wrapper. My age group gave me cash. That is the day I truly knew I was part of this village" (Njong Kingsley Ateh, 42).

Once again, *iba-iba* was mobilized swiftly. Community members contributed items such as clothing, machetes, blankets, and pots, and age-grade associations gathered funds to help victims rebuild. For example, the Njassarui Emeri age group contributed 2,000 francs per member to support Njong Kingsley, while the Njimereki age group provided similar assistance to Wilfred Itor, both victims of arson. These actions demonstrate *iba-iba*'s enduring significance as a rapid and contextually responsive safety net.

Cross-Ethnic Humanitarianism

Significantly, the Balondo did not limit *iba-iba* to their own ethnic group. Neighbouring communities – including the Ngolo, Balue, Barombi, and Ekombe – were frequent beneficiaries of Balondo humanitarian generosity, especially during moments of crisis. One notable instance occurred during Nakeri's resistance against German colonial forces, when the Balondo of Lobe Town received and supported displaced persons from surrounding areas (Motale, 2024). As Nangoh Joseph, the traditional ruler of Loe Balondo village, recalled: "During Nakeri's resistance against the Germans, people from Ngolo, Batanga, Bakoko and Monyange Balue ran into our town. They had nothing – only the clothes they wore. But we treated them like our own people. We gave them farmland, shelter, and even wives. That is our Balondo spirit. *Iba-iba* is not only for Balondo; it is for any human being in pain." (Nangoh Joseph, 81).

Beyond the colonial era, interview narratives indicate that cross-ethnic expressions of *iba-iba* have continued into the post-independence period. For example, Etona Cecilia (80) recalled that in the 1970s, when heavy floods destroyed farms in the Ngolo village of Beoko and Itoki, "Balondo women sent palm oil, cocoyam, and dried fish to help them start again." Similarly, Netonda Francis (76) explained that during the 1990s Bakassi crisis, "displaced persons from Oron and Amoto (Isangele) were accommodated in Balondo homes in Illor, Ekondo Titi and Mbongo where they received food and clothing. We never asked where they came from." These recollections highlight how *iba-iba* operates not merely as kinship reciprocity but as a broader humanitarian ethic grounded in shared humanity rather than bloodline or dialect.

This cross-ethnic generosity has also manifested in contemporary development contexts. Through inter-village *iba-iba* initiatives, Balondo youth associations have partnered with neighboring communities to support the education of vulnerable children, and organize health campaigns. For instance, Balondo youths spearheaded the Ndian youth scholarship initiative which was launched in July 2023 where financial contributions were made and scholarship was awarded to students from all the ethnic groups in Ndian Division (Louis Nasama, 42). Such examples demonstrate that *iba-iba* continues to function as a moral bridge, facilitating inter-community solidarity in the face of shared vulnerability.

In addition, during the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), numerous refugees fled across the border into Balondo towns and villages. Large numbers of displaced people from Igbo, Efik, Ijaw, and Ibibio communities were received in Balondo settlements such as Ekondo Titi, Mbongo, Funge, Illor, and Loe. As Francis Netonda (76) and Joseph Ambang (81) recalled, many of these families were not only given shelter but were also gradually incorporated into local social and economic life through marriage, trade, and shared farming. They noted that this movement of refugees helps to explain the enduring Nigerian presence found in several Balondo communities today. Such accounts further demonstrate that *iba-iba* extends beyond ethnic identity to embrace a universal sense of humanitarian responsibility.

Analytically, this dimension of *iba-iba* challenges reductionist understandings of African humanitarianism as merely kin-based or ethnocentric. Instead, it embodies what anthropologists describe as a relational humanism – a worldview in which personhood and moral obligation extend beyond lineage boundaries. By extending to non-indigenes, the Balondo indigenous humanitarian approach demonstrates an inclusive ethic of coexistence that existed long before formal humanitarian institutions. This orientation is similar with wider traditions of mutual aid and reciprocity across West and Central Africa – such as the Igbo concept of igwebuike or the Swahili notion of ujamaa – while remaining grounded in its own local history and social practices.

In addition, the extension of *iba-iba* to other ethnic groups strengthen the idea that Balondo humanitarianism has always been expansive in scope and universalist in moral outlook. It operates as an indigenous form of diplomacy and peace building, forging bonds between communities through shared care and collective survival. In present-day contexts which is marked by displacements and ethnic tensions, practices like *iba-iba* continue to offer inclusive approaches of solidarity grounded in moral responsibility rather than externally driven aid systems. In this sense, *iba-iba* stands as a practical example of African humanitarian practice – one capable of embracing diversity, responding to crisis, and sustaining coexistence across ethnic boundaries.

Integration of Modern Technologies

While the fundamental principles of *iba-iba* remain unchanged, younger generations have begun integrating mobile money platforms and social media into its organization. Contributions can now be sent via mobile transfers, and calls for help are often disseminated through WhatsApp and Facebook groups. As Louis Nasama Netomba, President General of the Balondo Youths Development Association and member of the Njassarui Emeri age group explained in an interview: “Today, we use WhatsApp to organize *iba-iba*. When Mr. Njong Kingsley’s house was burnt in 2019, we posted his picture in our age group forum. Within hours, we had raised over 200,000 francs. Some sent money via MTN Mobile Money, others delivered goods directly. Old practice, new method” (Louis Nasama, 42). This modernization has enhanced the speed and scope of response, especially among urban-based Balondo diaspora.

Interview data reveal that these technological integrations have transformed both the speed and scale of *iba-iba* mobilization. According to Ndena Paul Ndena (63), “Before, we had to walk from village to village to tell people who needed help. Now, one message on WhatsApp reaches everyone in minutes. Even those abroad send money immediately.” Similarly, Mosongo Bridget Iyaiya (70) noted that digital communication has reconnected younger Balondo living in cities to village life: “Our children in Yaoundé or Limbe don’t forget home anymore. They contribute every time something

happens. The phone has become our new drum." These testimonies illustrate how digital platforms have become extensions of traditional communication tools – fulfilling the same function as the village gong or messenger in mobilizing collective action.

From an analytical perspective, the integration of modern technologies into *iba-iba* reflects a continuity-in-transformation dynamic. Although the medium has changed, the moral and social logic of *iba-iba* – mutual obligation, collective responsibility, and spiritual duty – remains intact. This mixed process reflects a broader Africanist scholarship which shows that digital technologies often strengthen, rather than displace, indigenous moral economies. The use of new tools therefore is a form of adaptation and resilience, which allows *iba-iba* to remain relevant within an increasingly mobile and interconnected society.

Digital coordination using mobile phones and the internet has also helped *iba-iba* to break geographical barriers into the diaspora, enabling Balondo people living in cities and abroad to continue participating in community welfare. As Njong Kingsley Ateh (42) observed, "Distance is no longer a barrier, we still feel part of *iba-iba* even from distant plaes. The phone reminds us that our community is one family." These trans-local and international connections has helped to sustain emotional and moral ties between the homeland and the diaspora, underscoring that *iba-iba* is not confined by physical boundaries.

That notwithstanding, the over reliance on digital platforms has introduced new concerns around transparency, accountability, and generational authority. Many elders do not master these digital tools which are been manipulated and controlled by the youth. This situation has made it difficult the elders to effectively oversee contributions. As Michael Ekale Ekomo (84) noted, "We appreciate how quickly young people respond, but sometimes they do not report everything to the elders and we cannot check their activities because many of us do not master the digital platforms. *Iba-iba* must still follow our customs." Such reflections point to the need for dialogue between traditional leaders and digitally adept youth, to ensure that innovation supports rather than undermines established governance structures.

Overall, the incorporation of modern technologies into *iba-iba* highlights the flexibility and endurance of Balondo humanitarian ethics. By adapting collective care to digital spaces, younger generations are not abandoning ancestral values but extending them – creating what can be understood as a form of "digital *iba-iba*," where mobile money and WhatsApp groups become contemporary tools for compassion, reciprocity, and communal belonging.

Conclusion

The humanitarian practice of *iba-iba* among the Balondo people of Southwest Cameroon is a powerful testament to Africa's indigenous systems of care, mutual aid, and resilience. Rooted in communal ethics, spiritual obligation, and relational accountability, *iba-iba* has operated for centuries as a homegrown mechanism for responding to crises – be they natural disasters, displacement, or economic hardship. Its endurance from the 18th century to the present affirms not only its practical utility but its deep cultural significance.

Contrary to Euro-American humanitarian approaches that prioritize institutional response, donor frameworks, and bureaucratic efficiency, *iba-iba* functions as a non-institutional, community-driven system rooted in indigenous values. It is inspired by spiritual and moral obligation and not by programs, and it responds to specific needs rather than predefined targets. While Western humanitarian approaches have often regarded the Global South as a passive recipient of aid, *iba-iba* affirms African agency and dignity by demonstrating how communities have cared for one another on their own terms.

One of the greatest strengths of *iba-iba* is its flexibility and capacity to adapt. As the Balondo society moved from subsistence livelihoods to monetized economies, and from colonial disruption to postcolonial crises, the practice adapted to address the new realities without losing its ethical foundation. It has incorporated mobile money and digital communication technologies while at the same time continuing to rely on age-grade associations and kinship networks. It has also

expanded beyond ethnic boundaries to support displaced persons and victims of conflict, reflecting a humanitarian vision grounded in reciprocity and interdependence rather than charity. At a moment when international aid systems face growing questions of legitimacy and sustainability, *iba-iba* stands firm as an alternative way of imagining humanitarian action. It demonstrates that effective care does not necessarily depend on institutionalized professional, or external validation, but on shared responsibility, local knowledge, and a collective determination to respond to hardship.

Apart from documenting *iba-iba*, this study contributes to broader efforts to decolonize humanitarian scholarship. By focusing on African systems of knowledge and practice, it questions the idea that African societies are always dependent or deficient. It calls for a reorientation of humanitarian discourse and calls for the recognition and supports of indigenous practices such as *iba-iba* not as peripheral supplements to external aid, but as complete and viable alternatives in their own right. In doing so, the article affirms that Africa is not merely a recipient of humanitarianism, but a real source of humanitarian thought, ethics, and innovation.

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Interviews

Name of interviewee	Age	Occupation	Place	Date
Anje Michael Netomba	57	Elder	Mbongo	13/12/2024
Besumbu Christopher	60	Elder	Funge Balondo	6/12/2024
Ekale Ekomo Michael	84	Sanga Moki (Traditional Prime Minister) of Lobe Town	Lobe Town	23/12/2016
Etona Cecilia	80	Elder	Illor	01/12/2021
Ikando Justine	79	Women leader	Lobe Town	5/12/2024
Itor Stephen Itor	66	Elder	Lobe Town	30/11/2021
Itor Wilfred Arro	40	Farmer and victim of arson	Lobe Town	01/12/2024.
Monya Michael Otu	73	Elder	Lobe Town	05/12/2024
Mosongo Bridget Iyaiya	70	Women leader	Ekondo Titi	07/12/2024.
Nangoh Joseph Ambang	81	Traditional ruler of Loe Balondo	Buea	24/11/2024
Nanji Regina Fembe	72	Women leader	Ekondo Titi	7/12/2024
Naseri Vincent Moto	75	Elder	Mbongo	29/11/2024
Nawango Manfred Achia	57	Traditional ruler of Ekondo Titi	Buea	22/11/2024
Ndena Paul Ndena	63	Elder	Illor	29/11/2024
Netomba Louis Nasama	42	Balondo youths leader	Limbe	14/09/2024.
Netonda Francis	76	Elder	Illor	30/11/2021
Njong Kingsley Ateh	42	Farmer and victim of arson	Lobe Town	02/12/2024.
Owasi Joseph Nakende	55	Elder	Lobe Town	28/11/2024