

## Summary of the Cameroon report on the E/T continuum

### The socio-economic context

Cameroon's population reached 20 million in 2011, and since then it has been growing at a rate of 420,000 inhabitants per year. There will thus be high demand for education, which means that the public authorities will have to identify effective responses by opening schools, improving infrastructure and equipment, and allocating new human, financial and material resources. Those under the age of 15 account for 43% of the total population, while those under 25 account for 64.1%. GDP has grown by 5% each year since 2009. GDP per capita has grown by almost 25% in 22 years but at very different rates between 2005 and 2010.

#### 1. Basic data on education among the Cameroon population

According to the INS national statistics institute surveys of 2010, the average number of years of successfully completed education among the population is relatively low: the national average is 8.3 years (8.6 for men, and 7.9 for women). Nationally, those outside school account for 22.1% of the school-age population. Those who have completed primary education account for 30.3%. Those who have been to secondary school account for 39.3% (31.8% in general secondary education and 7.5% in TVET). Very few have reached higher education (8.2%). Illiteracy in Cameroon is thus significantly more prevalent in rural areas (56.5%) than in urban areas (17.3%).

- Enrolment: Gross enrolment at pre-primary level increased from 17.5% in 2006 to 28.8% in 2010. The primary GER was over 100% during the same period. This is due to some people being over the official age and the presence of repeaters. The secondary GER rose from 32% in 2006 to 47% in 2010. The higher education GER higher rose from 6.4% in 2006/2007 to 11.8% in 2010/2011. There is a strong difference between the urban and rural population: 17.8% acquire the BEPC general education certificate in rural areas, compared to 56.4% in urban areas.
- Completion rate: boys have a significant advantage in relation to girls. Thus the average completion rate for girls is 77.4% compared to 83.5% for boys (a difference of 6.1%); and only 33.8% of girls go to upper secondary education compared to 44.3% of boys. Similarly, completion rates vary in different geographical areas, and there is a difference of 22.5% for the primary completion rate (90.7% in urban areas and 68.2% in rural areas), and a difference of 37.2% difference for the secondary completion rate (51.8 and 14.6% respectively).
- Transition rate: on average 9 out of 10 students who started school reach the end of the cycle. At secondary level, 10% of students fail to complete lower secondary school each year and the figure is over 20% at upper secondary level. The national report on education (RESEN) for 2013 states that a significant number of students leave school during the transition between levels. The rate of transition from secondary to higher education is 63%, with 84.4% of secondary school graduates going on to enrol in public higher education establishments.

## **2. Basic data on technical and vocational training**

Vocational education and training account for 2.5% of enrolment in secondary education, which is a very small proportion. Other ministries are involved in vocational training, but most work in this area is done by the informal sector. Most of those aged 15 or over who have had vocational training have had it on the job (67%), and the remainder (26.7%) have been to a centre or training institute. Those who have done a vocational training course at lower secondary level account for 4.5%. A majority of those employed in the informal sector (66.9%) are learning or have learned their trade on their own or through experience. An equally significant proportion of people (24.4%) have been trained in small businesses, while only 5.3% of people in employment learned their trade at a technical or vocational training college. Apprenticeships within informal production units or training centres concerned 8.8% of young people in urban areas and 1.7% in rural areas (8.1% men and 2.6% women).

According to the INS (2010), young people who are neither in education, training or employment constitute the young unemployed, and they currently account for between 3.8% and 5.6% of the total. There are many reasons why they are excluded, including lack of financial resources, academic failure, disease and a preference for learning a trade.

## **3. Causes of the lack of continuity between education and training, and possible ways to remedy the problem**

Recommendations on how to make up for this lack of continuity include to:

- Improve the vocational training provision. The aim would be to encourage provision which meets the needs of the production sector, with qualified trainers, proper equipment, a dynamic relationship between training centre and companies, and sets of skill standards drawn up using a competency-based approach.
- Establish a national certification and qualification framework which will bring about reforms to promote the development and flexibility of education and training systems. It will ensure the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and experience (APEL) and the development of lifelong learning underpinned by the transparency of qualifications.
- Set up adaptation courses in training institutes and centres. Such courses (or classes) should be for applicants who lack the necessary prerequisites for given education and training schemes.
- Develop apprenticeship: the purpose would be to develop a reformed apprenticeship system to assist jobseekers and facilitate the transition from one level of qualification to another.
- Create the financial conditions to improve access to education and training for as many people as possible.

## **4. How to develop the continuum by providing access to lifelong education and training**

The key objectives are to:

- develop basic education built upon a shared reflection among the various ministries concerned;
- promote the regulation of links which brings MINEFOP (the vocational training ministry) together with other ministries;
- improve common governance of financial management and HR management aspects across all sectoral ministries;

- reform curricula and teacher training, etc.

Regarding the direction of education policy, the country's development vision up to 2035 will necessitate a significant redefinition of the tasks assigned to schools and the adoption of the major principles that should govern them. The key task of schools in the future will be to give citizens a comprehensive education at an individual, collective, moral, economic, intellectual, political and civic level. Legislation has been introduced to confer missions upon certain ministries. The draft Vocational Training Framework Act has been drawn up (2016) and submitted to the hierarchy for consideration by Parliament. This Act aims to promote the acquisition of skills needed in order to exercise a profession, encourage the improvement of vocational qualifications and productivity of human resources, and help meet the economy's need for skilled people.

The government, underpinned by its commitments in the Strategy Paper for Growth and Employment (DSCE), has gradually taken significant measures and action to improve training provision, diversify forms of training, improve access to education, improve employability of those trained and build bridges between general and technical education and vocational training, etc.

#### **5. Bringing about the continuum by recognising all forms of knowledge and skills acquisition**

With the support of the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), a reform has been adopted to develop vocational training standards using a competency-based and modular approach. This reform has also led to the introduction of new qualifications, namely the Record of Vocational Qualification (AQP), the Certificate of Vocational Qualification (CQP) and the Diploma of Vocational Qualification (DQP), which reflect skill levels ranging from operative to technician. Nothing has been yet been done for the higher levels.

MINEFOP received support from the European Union and Gip-International (France) to help Cameroon set up a national APEL framework.

The current development of a national certification and qualification framework is clearly linked to the lifelong learning framework. It places qualifications issued by education and vocational training establishments within a wider context and provides for the accreditation of non-formal and informal learning.