

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
APPRAISAL STAGE**

Report No.: PIDA1182

Project Name	CAMEROON--Equity and Quality for Improved Learning Project (P133338)
Region	AFRICA
Country	Cameroon
Sector(s)	Primary education (100%)
Theme(s)	Managing for development results (10%), Education for all (90%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P133338
Borrower(s)	Government of Cameroon
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Basic Education
Environmental Category	C-Not Required
Date PID Prepared/Updated	18-Sep-2013
Date PID Approved/Disclosed	25-Nov-2013
Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion	27-Nov-2013
Estimated Date of Board Approval	31-Mar-2014
Decision	

I. Project Context

Country Context

1. Cameroon is a lower middle income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$1,165 in 2012. Economic growth has been modest over the past decade and was further negatively affected by the global crisis that led to weaker demand for Cameroon's non-oil exports, such as timber, rubber and cotton. The economy has rebounded in recent years, with real GDP growth reaching 4.7 percent in 2012. Cameroon is a relatively small oil producer and the main drivers of economic growth come from the non-oil economy, while oil activities continue to decline due to depleting reserves, aging equipment, and postponement of new oil development projects due to the global economic slowdown.

2. In 2012 Cameroon had an estimated population of 21 million. While the annual population growth rate is high (more than 2 percent), real GDP per capita has grown by only 1 percent annually on average during the last decade. Poverty rates declined between 1996 and 2001 by some 13 percentage points, but have since stagnated at around 40 percent. Further, national average poverty figures mask major regional disparities. While 56 percent of the population was residing in urban areas in 2007—87 percent of the poor were living in rural areas. Further, there is a growing income gap between regions, urban and rural areas, and between rich and poor. Between 2001 and

2007, poverty rates increased in four regions (Adamaoua, Far North, North, and East) with the two northern regions seeing the biggest increase and human development indicators (including access to schooling, primary completion rates (PCR), literacy, access to water and sanitation and life expectancy) registering slower growth in these regions than in other parts of the country. The Government's Document de la stratégie d'éducation et de la formation 2013-2020 (education sector strategy 2013-2020) states that gender disparity (a comparison of girls versus boys) was relatively lower in 2012 than in prior years. Spatial/geographic disparities by rural and urban areas and poverty-based gender disparities have also become more pronounced. There are pockets of low access to education, and low retention rates characterized by growing dropout rates during the primary education cycle 3.

3. In 2012, Cameroon was largely off-track for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see Table 1). Recent data indicate that the MDG for universal primary schooling, which was once considered possible to achieve, is not feasible. Gender parity index declined from 0.88 in 2004 to 0.85 in 2010. Further, it is possible that the lack of progress in the MDGs pertaining to water and sanitation, the absence of teaching and learning materials, school re-entry support structures for girls is affecting education enrolment and attainment for out-of-school children (girls, vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities) and life expectancy in general. The World Bank Country Assistance Strategy (CAS; 2010) identified Cameroon's central challenge to be that of stimulating a healthy rate of growth, and ensuring that growth is equitably shared. Debt relief in 2006 helped Cameroon become more debt sustainable and increased fiscal space for Government spending linked to poverty reduction. Cameroon is one of the least aid-dependent countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and works with a relatively small number of development partners (DPs).

4. Cameroon officially announced a progressive approach to decentralization in 1996. However, the decentralization law was only promulgated in 2004. The legal framework envisages progressive decentralization with the concentration of administrative powers being transferred to the regions by 2017. Accordingly, the central Government is in the process of transferring financial and human resources to the regional and sub-regional levels. The Government's 2010 Strategy Document for Growth and Employment (Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance et l'Emploi 2010–DSCE) sets out decentralization as the basis for promoting improved governance and line ministries have been instructed to take into account decentralized administration in their respective sector strategies. This vision document emphasizes a shift away from poverty reduction to one of growth as the source of prosperity and employment, premised on income redistribution and poverty reduction. Government's strategic objective is to ensure a well-educated human resources base in support of Cameroon's quest to emerge as a strong middle-income economy by 2035. This strategic objective is communicated in various national strategic documents, including the vision documents Cameroun émergent à l'horizon 2035 and the DSCE.

Sectoral and institutional Context

5. Between 2007 and 2011 Cameroon made some progress with respect to access to and completion of primary education although girls' completion rate has grown less significantly in the Zones d'Éducation Prioritaires (ZEP) (see Table 2). Specifically, there have been notable increases in the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) and the PCR (across genders) and a reduction in the repetition rate. There have been improvements in the ZEP (particularly the Far North, North, Adamaoua, North-West, and East regions, the disadvantaged pockets of the urban, peri-urban areas, and the frontier parts of the country). However, the rate of progress has been much slower than in the rest of the

country. For example, the PCR increased from 51 percent in 2007 to 63.1 percent in 2011, with the figures for girls' education being 38 percent in 2007 and only 42.6 percent in 2010. The 2016 target set out in the new education sector strategy 2013-2020 is ambitious at 84.1 percent for the ZEP by inter-regional comparisons.

6. A new vision and education sector strategy. In August 2013 the Government of Cameroon and DPs endorsed a new strategy entitled Document de Stratégie du Secteur de l'Éducation et de la Formation (DSSEF, 2013-2020). The DSSEF underpins the overarching policies for the education sector as stated in the Constitution, the legislation Loi d'Orientation de l'éducation en 1998, the Loi d'Orientation de l'enseignement supérieur de 2001, the MDGs, the key pillars of the DSCE, and DPs engagement in and support for the sector. The DSSEF embodies a continuum of the policies outlined in the Government's Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation (SSE, 2006) and focuses on access and equity, quality and relevance, sector governance, management, financing mechanisms for education and training, as well as the institutional aspects, and the modalities for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the ESS 2006 implementation.

7. Decentralization features prominently in the Government's new sector strategy for education, the DSSEF. Decentralization is a key feature of the DSSEF. A decentralized approach is currently used in the construction/rehabilitation of schools and the administration of Government's "minimum subsidy to schools" (paquet minimum) for free primary education (gratuité). The DSSEF proposes to further reinforce decentralization by transferring education planning to the regional level and to formalize the relationships between parent-teachers associations (PTA) and the local education administration. School-based management is included in the 1998 Loi d'orientation de l'éducation. In 2001/2002 the Government instituted school management committees (SMCs) (conseils d'écoles/établissements). The SMCs are in charge of supervising, counseling, and evaluating the operations of schools. However, the DSSEF 2013-2020 acknowledges that the SMCs are not functional. This is due to limited capacity, lack of understanding about the rules, regulations, and procedures of the Association des parents d'élèves et des Enseignants [APEE; Parents-Teachers Association (PTA)], the local education administration, lack of access to appropriate information, and the lack of support from deconcentrated education administration. The DSSEF emphasizes the importance of the SMCs, and plans to strengthen SMCs' capacity by providing information on public resources and education through workshops.

8. Cameroon faces specific challenges in the education sector:

(i) The education system is characterized by a fragmented institutional context with five ministries in charge, one for each of the education sub-sectors: primary, secondary, technical & vocational, higher education, and the fifth, the Ministry of Youth that is responsible for policies and strategies relating specifically to youth affairs; (ii) Public resource mobilization for the education sector depends to a large extent on macroeconomic factors, in particular, (i) global economic growth;

(ii) Fiscal and other exogenous pressures from the Government. However, a portion of additional resources for primary education could also be generated from an inter-sectoral arbitrage in favor of the education sector;

(iii) Sectoral Financing shows the country to be significantly below regional average. From an international comparative perspective, the GDP per capita allocation for education at 3.2 percent in Cameroon in 2011 shows that the country is below the regional average of 4.4 percent and in those

countries that are more advanced outside Sub-Saharan Africa. Total education spending as a percentage of total national spending showed a steady upward trend from 13.9 percent in 1995 to 25.8 percent in 2003;

(iv) Sub-sectoral financing reveals a stark picture, with secondary education receiving a relatively large allocation in 2011 compared to primary or higher education. The explanation is in part due to the growing numbers enrolling in secondary education. To this extent it could be inferred that efforts to universalize primary education is showing progress. However, a countervailing factor is the practical evidence that primary education is not really free in Cameroon despite Government's pronouncement that it is so;

(v) Moderate public spending on education falls short of target, resulting in high unit cost of education. There is a large difference in the unit cost of primary education compared to ECD and the first cycle of general secondary education. Efficiency in public spending at secondary education level requires serious review;

(vi) A striking feature of the education system in Cameroon is the high out-of-pocket expenses at 42 percent of total education expenditure compared to 21 percent in Sénégal and 13 percent in Niger. Schooling is officially "free" (gratuité). However, poverty prevents many families from being able to afford the high direct out-of-pocket spending for primary schooling. This is one of the main reasons for not sending their children to school or for children dropping out of school. This phenomenon is due to low efficiency of public spending, the need for households to pay for textbooks and for teachers in many instances, and other indirect costs (e.g., uniforms, exam fees, transportation) that are passed on to parents;

(vii) There has been a surge in primary school enrolments, but girls' school participation lags behind that of boys. Over the past 15 years, the education sector has experienced a strong expansion in school enrolments at all levels of education. Total enrolments across all levels are now over 5.7 million students, of which almost 3.6 million attend primary school. In 2010-11, the GER was 17 percent in pre-primary, 109 percent in primary, 58 percent in lower secondary, and 38 percent in upper secondary;

(viii) Primary completion rate has also improved at a rapid pace in recent years, but is still well below what is needed to attain universal primary schooling. In 2011, the primary completion rate was in the range of between 71.5 and 81.3 percent, depending on the source of data used. Despite the fact that schooling is officially free, many families—particularly the poor—cite high costs of schooling as one of the main reasons for dropout;

(ix) There are wide disparities in school attendance based on gender and socio-economic characteristics. Net attendance for rural girls is only about 65 percent, compared with 79 percent for rural boys. The gender gap is narrower in urban areas, where school attendance is high for all children. The gender parity index for primary completers has remained around 0.85 since the late 1980s;

(x) The Zones d' Education Prioritaires (ZEP) and rural areas have weaker service delivery and human development outcomes. The 2006 Education Sector Strategy identified certain geographical areas as priority for Government support to raise schooling access, attainment, and achievement, as they were lagging behind the rest of the country in education outcomes. The ZEP are comprised of

four provinces (Far North, North, Adamaoua, East) and certain “pockets of low levels of school participation in the largest cities”, and of the border regions;

(xi) Overall the status of education service delivery is weak. Cameroon has relatively weak service delivery indicators and significant regional disparities;

(xii) There is a shortage of teachers that is affecting the quality of education service delivery;

(xiii) There is a severe shortage of teaching and learning materials. On average only an estimated 11 percent of students at primary education level had access to textbooks in 2009/10. The pupil-textbooks ratio in Cameroon at 12:1 is the lowest ratio among Sub-Saharan African countries;

(xiv) There is no national assessments framework with formative student learning evaluations. Student learning achievement is mainly tested at the end of the primary and secondary education cycles through high-stakes exams. There currently exists no formative evaluation of learning achievements. Cameroon has participated in several rounds of PASEC and recently carried out a national EGRA. The Government is keen on administering an EGMA in the near future;

(xv) The status of school infrastructure is poor. Girls’ education is particularly affected by the lack of proximity of schools to their homes, poverty, family obligations, early marriage, and absence of latrines and water points in many schools; and

(xvi) The quality of education statistics is weak and poor. The education management information system (EMIS) in Cameroon is complicated by the fact that there are five ministries of education, each of which collects data for the own sub-sector. There is considerable variability in the completeness and reliability of data collected by different ministries. The EMIS for primary education is perhaps the most complete and longest-running.

II. Proposed Development Objectives

The objective of the project is to improve the equity and quality of primary education service delivery with an emphasis on disadvantaged areas.

III. Project Description

Component Name

Improving the equity and quality of primary education service delivery

Comments (optional)

Component Name

Building institutional capacity for improved service delivery

Comments (optional)

IV. Financing (*in USD Million*)

Total Project Cost:	55.80	Total Bank Financing:	0.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		

For Loans/Credits/Others	Amount
Borrower	2.50
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	53.30
Total	55.80

V. Implementation

Project implementation is based on the following design:

Component 1. Improving the equity and quality of primary education service delivery (US\$48.3 million)

Sub-Component 1.1 Increasing teacher availability in disadvantaged areas (US\$31.4 million)

9. The project would extend a final phase of support for the Contract Teachers Program (CTP) by financing a portion of the CTP salaries on the condition that government recruits more contract teachers intra-regionally or converts existing maîtres des parents to contract teacher cadre, with specific recruitment targets defined for two-three most disadvantaged areas in each region, and for the share of female teachers. New CTP recruits will have to be trained teachers as per the existing requirements of that program. The sub-component would also include strengthening of teacher quality under the CTP and address teacher absenteeism and on-the-job performance. Finally, the project would help to strengthen the CTP administration further, a process already initiated under the previous GPE project (then EFA-FTI) which also provided support for the CTP. This sub-component builds on the strong foundation set up through the previous project.

10. Cameroon has demonstrated its ability and willingness to pursue a results-based financing approach through the previous EFA-FTI project. There is every reason to build on the reform that is already in place, and consider a disbursement linked indicator approach to financing contract teachers' salaries. Continued financing for one more phases would be based on: (i) an analysis of the continued relevance, strengths and weaknesses of the CTP; (ii) identification of opportunities for strengthening teacher quality, reducing absenteeism, and raising on-the-job performance; (iii) addressing the internal control issues raised in the Special Audit undertaken for the previous GPE financing of the CTP; (iv) an institutional assessment of the management capacity of the CTP; and (v) an assessment of the CTP attrition and redistribution issues. A covenant is proposed to be introduced in legal agreement to prevent the horizontal attrition of teachers to other sub-sectors of education for a period of at least 5 years after being recruited as a contract teacher.

Sub-Component 1.2 Provide teaching and learning materials for Primary Grades 1-3 (US\$13.3 million)

11. This sub-component would focus on the competitive procurement and distribution of teaching and learning materials in basic French, English, and Mathematics for primary grades 1, 2 and 3. This is in keeping with the project objective of improving learning outcomes, and the choice to focus on early grade reading and numeracy and application of EGRA and EGMA in Sub-component 1.5. The approach to financing this sub-component would also be based on process based disbursement linked indicators. The indicators would be pegged to the achievement of milestones. The sub-component design is based on lessons from earlier projects and drawing on the experiences of other

development partners in providing teaching and learning materials support. A rapid results strategy (RRS) approach could be put in place for the signing of contracts between MINEDUB, the publishers, and the distributors or the publishing, production and distribution of the teaching and learning materials. The project is designed to serve as a demonstration effect for putting in place renewable books, lower the price of textbooks at the early grades to make them more affordable for the government/parents to purchase, and to support improved learning outcomes. Through implementation the project design would inform reforms and help to finalize the draft teaching and learning materials policy. Textbooks would be provided to all public schools in Cameroon, especially to the disadvantaged areas and the ZEP.

Sub-Component 1.3 Capacity development for teachers and inspectors (US\$1.1 million)

12. The objective is to train teachers and school management in the use of the new teaching and learning materials to be distributed through the Project. Specifically, the sub-component would include the preparation of a national plan for pre-service training in the ENIEG and in-service capacity development for teachers and inspectors. The content of the national plan would be linked to grades 1, 2 and 3 book titles, the use of the new teaching materials, and the preparation, administration, and grading of students' tests (early grade reading and early grade mathematics). The teacher training would be rolled out progressively over the project implementation period, and teacher performance would be evaluated through third party verification mechanisms.

Sub-Component 1.4 Support for girls' education (US\$1.1 million)

13. The objective is to improve equity in access and retention of girls in primary education. The Project would finance advocacy, content and capacity development through gender-oriented campaigns, and the preparation and the proactive dissemination of awareness campaigns towards promoting lifeskills training. The Project would complement the ongoing work on girls' education being undertaken by other development partners in country. Specifically, the Project would finance the production of lifeskills pamphlets, posters, publicity material, multimedia dissemination options (radio, television) as teaching and learning materials (financed under Sub-Component 1.2 in the amount of an estimated US\$1 million) and disseminating them widely.

Sub-Component 1.5 Student learning assessment (US\$1.4 million)

14. The objective is to assist the Government to prepare a National Assessment Framework including a formative evaluation system by instituting the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGMA) as tools for measuring learning outcomes for early grade students. These would also be used to monitor the achievement of the two PDO indicators on learning outcomes in disadvantaged areas. The project will finance EGRA and EGMA exercises at the end of school years 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Component 2. Building institutional capacity for improved service delivery (US\$4.9 million)

Sub-Component 2.1 Improving information, governance and accountability, and monitoring and evaluation capacity (US\$3.3 million)

15. The objective is to support the geo-referencing of schools in the country, linking the school report cards (tableau de bord), and preparing the architecture for the unification of the Education

Management Information System (EMIS) for the five ministries of education. In addition, key governance action plan activities would include: (i) a budget transparency strategy (adaptation of budget transparency templates), making it compulsory for schools to complete the template and have them published on school notice boards throughout the academic year for communities/parents to access information, making it systematic to have the names of teachers recruited as well as PTA teachers converted to contract teachers read over the public regional radio, and making it compulsory systematically for schools to present and discuss their respective budget transparency templates at school management meetings and recording the minutes of the meetings for third party verification; and (ii) monitoring and evaluation of the Project interventions.

Sub-Component 2.2 Building knowledge for improved service delivery and learning (US\$1.7 million)

16. The objective is to support the preparation of key studies that will help to set the stage for moving Cameroon to the next stage of building human capital for growth and competitiveness. Key studies and strategies proposed would be on the following topics: (i) basic education (education fondamentale), including pre-school education or early childhood development; (ii) skills development for the labor market; (iii) adult literacy (alphabetisation), dropouts and inclusive education (i.e., handicapped, and vulnerable children who are out-of-school) (les non-scolarisés); and (iv) study on higher education reform based on extracting the analysis of introducing education fondamentale which is expected to change the flow of students in the system to higher levels of education.

VI. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01		x
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		x
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x
Pest Management OP 4.09		x
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		x
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		x
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		x
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x

Comments (optional)

The proposed project does not include any civil works and no environmental issues are expected.

VII. Contact point

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