

## **Cameroon's Educational System: A comparative Analysis and modern day relevance to the development of human capital**

Education is, undoubtedly, a significant determinant of the economic situation of a country; critical to growth prospects, productivity and the competitiveness of its labor force in the international arena. This implies the need for adaptability to meet growing international labor demands in terms of developing modules that respond to the ever increasing economic, business, governance and leadership needs to the ability of being able to foresee and preempt upcoming global challenges. In recent decades, many African countries have come to realize the crucial role that the educational sector plays in the economy, and are responding with significant investment. Other countries have been lagging behind.

In recent years, both the private sector and the government of Cameroon have made huge investments in the overall infrastructural development of educational institutions in Cameroon. Such developments include the establishment of new faculties within universities, the creation of new universities and other institutions of higher learning, the recruitment of new instructors to boost the teacher-student ratio and an increase in the operational budget of institutions of higher learning. All are a bid to respond to the growing domestic and international demand for quality graduates within the country, in particular, and the Central African sub-region as a whole. Despite this investing, very important questions remain to be answered.



Some of these questions include:

- Has the overall quality of graduates been improved and do they meet the needs (in terms of skills and expertise) of the business environment of the country?
- How competitive are graduates from educational institutes in Cameroon Vis a Vis their counterparts from other African nations?

To provide relevant answers, a detailed examination of the stakeholders (public and private) needs to be examined.



implication is that the lack of one-to-one encounters result in unsolved study-related problems. Additionally, unlike their private counterparts, state universities have limited internet connectivity, making research and access to useful online material difficult. In an information age where decisions are made in real time and based on analysis of life streaming data, the one thing an institution of higher learning cannot afford to be lacking is uninterrupted internet connectivity.

Given all of these public university shortcomings, the less-than-perfect private sector has been able to fill the gap in the development of the relevant human capital with highly sought skills both within and out of Cameroon.



This is a clarion call for action on the part of the state to make the necessary reforms. Improving the quality of education in Cameroon will go a long way to set not just the country's standard but the standard for other nations of the region; The response to the needs of both government and private enterprises. Actions such as, but not limited to:

- Professionalize all state university programs not only in name and but course contents.
- Liaise with the private sector; formulate and shape course content for different programs with consideration to areas of interest. Establish partnerships with reputable universities, both within Africa and out of Africa, and promote the development of exchange visits by lecturers. This will help improve teaching methods.
- Establish a Public-Private partnership whereby students will be required to undergo internships in private companies. Students will gain specific job skills that are directly transferable to paid employment upon graduation.
- Promote the April 2001 National Assembly law which called on Private enterprises and public organs to work together to provide coordinated training opportunities for students beyond the secondary school level of education.
- Finally, in the words of Professor *Michel Tchotsoua* during a recent symposium on industrialization in Cameroon organized by the Foretia foundation (held on April 21, 2016), the strategy of education has to be ...”*Formation Opérationnelle*”, Stakeholders take into consideration current projects going on within the economy, as well as long term labor needs, before forming modules of university courses. By doing this, in the long term, there won't be any need to hire foreign experts to execute or maintain projects in Cameroon. These jobs will be done more cost effectively by Cameroonians.

It is only when the government considers and acts on these suggestions and those of from studies of other international bodies that public sector education will begin to be representative of what it is intended to be the human capital needs of the job market within and beyond Cameroon.

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