FAR NORTH: QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT LAUNCHED

UPCOMING EVENT: Policy Analysis Seminar

EXCERPTS: "Briefing Cameroon’s Internet Refugees"

March 2017
Le système éducatif au Cameroun: où agir ?

Le système éducatif dans un pays est une organisation formelle du parcours scolaire, académique et professionnel. Au Cameroun, le système éducatif est régi par la loi d'orientation de l'éducation n° 98/004 du 14 Avril 1998 (article 17). Il y figure différents niveaux d'enseignement à savoir : l'enseignement maternel ; l'enseignement primaire ; l'enseignement secondaire ; l'enseignement normal ; l'enseignement supérieur composé actuellement de 08 universités (Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II, Douala, Buea, Dschang, N’Gaoundéré, Bamenda, Maroua).

La même loi réaffirme l'option nationale du bilinguisme à travers deux sous-systèmes l'un francophone et l'autre anglophone. Cette particularité du système éducatif au Cameroun s'explique par le fait qu'ayant été sous tutelle de la France et de la Grande-Bretagne, le Cameroun a hérité des deux langues de ces pays, à savoir, le français et l'anglais. Ces deux sous-systèmes coexistent en conservant chacun sa particularité dans les méthodes d'évaluation et de certification. Le premier cycle secondaire général anglophone est sanctionné par le « General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O/L) » et par le BEPC dans le sous-système francophone. Le second cycle est sanctionné par le « General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) » dans le sous-système anglophone et par le Baccalauréat dans le système francophone.

L'État est au cœur du système éducatif au Cameroun. A ce titre il définit et encadre la politique de l'enseignement ; il arrête les programmes et les manuels scolaires officiels ; il donne les autorisations d'ouverture de fonctionnement des établissements et institutions privées et assure le contrôle de la conformité desdits établissements. Chaque type d'enseignement est placé sous l'autorité d'un ministère. Au total, le système éducatif au Cameroun est encadré par 4 ministères : Le Ministère de l'éducation de Base, celui des enseignements secondaires, celui de l'enseignement supérieur, et celui de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle.

Ce système rencontre tout de même plusieurs difficultés. Les récents troubles ayant abouti à la crise anglophone témoignent à suffisance que les deux sous-systèmes ne sont pas aussi faciles à harmoniser. Les autres maux dont souffre le système éducatif du Cameroun sont entre autres le déficit en enseignants avec pour conséquence des effectifs pléthoriques dans les métropoles, l'instabilité des manuels scolaires et l'insuffisance des infrastructures. La liste n'est pas exhaustive.

La Fondation Foretia a fait également de l'éducation un de ses axes prioritaires d'activités, ceci pour contribuer à catalyser le développement en Afrique et particulièrement au Cameroun. En effet, l'éducation est fondamentale pour l'épanouissement de l'individu et la construction de la nation. La jeunesse étant l'un des leviers du développement de demain, il s'avère important d'investir en ce capital humain en le préparant à relever les défis de développement grâce aux connaissances et aux évolutions technologiques. C'est dans ce sens que la Fondation a mis en place des programmes tels que le STEM Prize et le Leadership Program for Young Scholars visant à encourager fortement l'innovation dans l'éducation des jeunes et la rendre plus performante. Elle a également initié des projets de soutien aux enseignants dans des zones reculées afin de lutter contre la désertion et réduire davantage l'analphabétisme au Cameroun.

Par Annette MOGOUM

SONDAGE SUR LA GOUVERNANCE
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GOVERNANCE SURVEY
We are conducting a POLL on Governance in #Cameroon. We need to know your opinion. Please take 4 minutes to complete the POLL. #237
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Start-Up Entrepreneurs: The Driving Force behind Small Businesses (Part 1)

It is universally acknowledged that an entrepreneur is a person who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalise on them. These persons usually start with nothing more than an idea, often a simple one, and then assemble the resources necessary to transform that idea into a sustainable business.

To my opinion, good entrepreneurs are risk avoiders and not risk takers. They appear to be risk takers because they see the market differently than the rest of us do; they see a product or service that will converge with how the culture is changing. Once they change it, they methodically eliminate all the factors that will prevent them from getting to the market. They become risk eliminators.

Exemplary Start-Up Business

Families have survived from the wave of economic hardship in Cameroon by dreaming ideas and putting those ideas in action. The first success factor in starting a small business venture is planning. For instance, if I have 50,000 francs CFA and want to set a call box. The number one success factor is where do I put my umbrella to start selling airtime and letting people making short calls? Or, I may decide to be moving around in a well-conceived neighbourhood. When a location is not well prospected, failure is ultimate. Therefore, the success of every business venture is founded on the market. When you think of starting any business idea, think first of the market. Who are going to be my customers? When once you can define, identify and locate your customers; your business is already about 60% successful. The next success factor will be material resources; money especially. When you know that your resources are limited, go into a venture that is more personal effort oriented. Be prepared to work very hard and for long hours. Less personal effort oriented ventures come later when the venture is already growing. The business starts growing and you will start thinking of delegating some of the tasks and duties to other parties.

Let us take an example of an airtime vendor by the street side. His or her personal efforts are optimized. He or she does not delegate tasks and duties. He or she does everything by himself or herself. He or she sits under an umbrella shade from 6.00 a.m. till about 6.00 p.m. and from Monday to Saturday. What she needs to start the business with is an umbrella for shelter, two mobile phones with dual sim cards of different network providers. One mobile phone for call box and the other for airtime vending.

This writer made preliminary research on how these airtime vendors and call box service providers function and perform. He came out with the result that on the average, they make between 3000 francs to 5000 francs profit each day (with a sample size of 20 persons).

When profits are well ploughed back, the business can start changing its phase. Side products and services can start coming in. Mobile money will come in and telephone identification registration will come in etc. Proper ploughing back profit will diversify the business. Other businesses in other areas will be incorporated. I interviewed someone who told me how he has three commercial motorbikes that bring him 3000 francs each a day. The three commercial motorbikes were acquired from a call box unit under an umbrella shade.

Ploughing Back Profit Concept

The ploughing back profit idea is what sustains and drives the small business to growth. For a person who starts a business with a capital of 50,000 francs CFA as a telephone airtime vendor and a call box attendant, profit is defined as what is gotten in a day after paying back the credit purchased from the telephone network company and after paying for the meal for the day. Most determined starters make sure they do not consume more than a 1000 francs CFA for meals each day. On very bad days, most of them consume 500 francs CFA. Where do you save the money to be ploughed back? In Cameroon today, there are very reputable micro-finance institutions like the cooperative credit unions. Credit unions target bay am sellers and other very petty traders who cannot afford the services of traditional banks. Cooperative credit unions spur small business persons to save by urging people and encouraging people to open savings account where money cannot easily be withdrawn.

Next issue: Key Success Factors for Small Business Start-Ups.

By Augustine KONDJE-TANIKVU

Fresh Impetus at the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation

Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation is pleased to welcome two additional staff into her regional office in Yaounde, Cameroon. The Foundation recently recruited its pioneer Communication Manager, Ms Laure NGANLAY. The graphic design department also receives a boost thanks to its new intern, Mr Vincent Aimé NANG.
They are three, all men. Since 2013, they have been toiling daily for the education of young ones. Their services are rendered free of charge, often at their own expense, but for sporadic community support. With its three makeshift classrooms, hosting two classes each, the Parent Teacher Association’s contribution barely meets the needs of the over 300 pupils. Thus, three God-sent teachers (one trained and two untrained) resolved to bridge the education gap in their community, by volunteering for the last four years.

Created in 2013 by the local community, the Gabaraye-Tchong Parent Primary school depends solely on PTA contributions. Of its 26 pupils enrolled in Class Six, only two will seat in for the school’s first badge during the 2016/2017 Common Entrance and First School Leaving Certificate in the French Language. The others cannot register, because they lack birth certificates, as do virtually all the lower class pupils. After several years of community struggle, it was indeed with great joy that the staff and pupils received an august visitor last month.

March 22, 2017 will forever remain a red-lettered day in the annals of the Vele Subdivision. Situated in the Mayo Danay Division of the Far North Region, Cameroon; they turned out to witness the launch of the Far North Pilot Basic Education Project organized by the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation. Pursuant to the goals and objectives of its Sustainable Development program, the Gabaraye-Tchong Parent Primary school was earmarked as a beneficiary for the Foundation’s actions for improving the quality of basic education in rural communities.

Quality education project
The project’s overall objective is to grant financial aid to the school’s three voluntary teachers for one year. Through this, spillovers such as increased enrolment, especially for girls; awareness raising and educational campaigns to counter illiteracy are expected to follow. The Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation’s interventions and activities aim at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. These fall in line with the Sustainable Development Goals as defined in transforming our world – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The field trip was carried out by the Project Management Officer at the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation, Hilaire Kamga. This first-hand experience unveiled several factors plaguing the education community in this part of Cameroon. Language constitutes a barrier to school enrolment, since parents and pupils hardly express themselves in either English or French; most pupils of school going age do not have a birth certificate, a prerequisite for registration in official exams, thus having a toll on primary school completion; inconsistent PTA contributions to meet the school’s ever increasing needs. During the rainy season, teaching/learning is hampered by wind, rain drops and runoffs that invade the raffia shelter, serving as classroom; just like the lack of benches forces the pupils to seat either on mud bricks or on the floor. The absence of toilets and running taps create breeding grounds for health hazards. Information from the Vele Inspectorate of Basic Education holds that all requests have met with unresponsiveness at the central level in Yaounde.

By Laure NGANLAY

Far North:
Gabaraye-Tchong Parent Primary voluntary teaching staff receives financial boost

Prospects:
The Gabaraye-Tchong Parent Primary school project aims at increasing school enrolment from 315 to 500 pupils, stepping up primary education completion from 50% to 70%. As such, factors such as improving working conditions for the teaching staff; creating an environment conducive to teaching/learning; and, establishing birth certificates for children of school going age, especially girls, become a prerequisite to quality education.

Name: Gabaraye-Tchong Parent Primary school
Creation date: 2013; 2016/2017 year: First official exams batch
Location: Vele Sub Division, Mayo Danay Division, Far North Region, Cameroon
Enrolment: 315 students (177 boys / 138 girls)
Infrastructure: 03 makeshift classrooms (hosting two classes each)
Teaching Staff: one trained and two untrained voluntary teachers (teaching two classes each)
School functioning: Parent-Teachers’ Association, community support
Nkafu Policy Institute, the Think Tank of the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation is organizing an in-house Policy Analysis Capacity Building Seminar. The seminar would briefly address the huge gap between policy and practice in Cameroon. Emphasis would be laid on the need for feasible and strong policy recommendations - by analysts - that take into account immediate economic, political and cultural conditions on the ground. The seminar will be conducted and moderated by external professionals and experts in policy analysis.

ONLINE REGISTRATION
Apart from Nkafu Policy Institute’s analysts, the training is opened to 20 candidates. The aim is to equip participants with the understanding, skills and methods of information gathering, knowledge and training that enables them to effectively, accurately and objectively perform Policy Analysis. Shortlisted participants are expected to write a paper of not more than 2000 words, analyzing any policy of their choice. REGISTRATION is STRICTLY ONLINE via:

English: http://www.foretiainstitute.org/attend-an-event/registration-policy-analysis-workshop-seminar/
French: http://www.foretiainstitute.org/attend-an-event/inscription-Policy-Analysis-Capacity-Building-Seminar

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Intelligence économique: un outil pratique au développement de l'économie camerounaise

Dans l'environnement des affaires d'aujourd'hui, il est extrêmement important d'avoir une analyse approfondie et des données solides pour s'assurer que les chefs d'entreprise peuvent prendre des décisions informées et dynamiques qui positionnent leurs entreprises comme des leaders dans leurs secteurs d'activité. En Afrique, et en particulier au Cameroun, l'obtention d'une telle Intelligence Economique est extrêmement difficile. L'Intelligence Economique (IE) est perçue comme un ensemble de disciplines visant la collecte, l'analyse, le traitement et la diffusion sécurisée...

Read the full article: http://www.foretiaphoundation.org/intelligence-economique-un-outil-pratique-au-developpement-de-leconomie-camerounaise/

Par GaelleDejo
Assistante de Recherche en Politique Economique
Nkafu Policy Institute, Cameroonian Think Tank at the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation

The Anglophone problem:
A historical approach

In his opening statement, Augustine Kondje gave an elaborate presentation on Cameroon’s history, its evolution and present state of affairs... “During the First World War 1914 to 1918 Germany, Cameroon’s colonial master, was defeated in1915 by a combined force of British, French and Belgian troops. The British and French thereafter established a joint administration of the territory (condominium) for a few months, and then partitioned it. The British took a smaller Western band with the Mountain range forming a natural frontier between her sector and the larger eastern French sector.”

Both territories had to be prepared for self-governance: “At the UN supervised Plebiscites of 11th February 1961, British Southern Cameroons voted to reunify with the newly independent Republic of Cameroun (January 1, 1960). While the British Northern Cameroons voted to unite with Nigeria. After series of meetings between Prime Minister Foncha of British Southern Cameroon and President Ahidjo of the Republic of Cameroun on the form unification should take, an enlarged constitutional conference was held in Foumban in July 1961. During that conference, a framework of a constitution was mutually worked out by government and opposition leaders of Southern Cameroons, on the one hand; and leaders of the Republic of Cameroun, on the other hand.”

He added: “After agreement in August 1961 on the constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, reunification was formally consummated at Buea on 1st October 1961 (British Southern Cameroon allegedly gained independence with the lowering of the union Jack and the withdrawal of the British Commissioner and the proclamation of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. British troops were replaced in Southern British Cameroon (renamed West Cameroon) by troops of the Republic of Cameroon (which became East Cameroon). President Ahmadou Ahidjo eager and determined to merge the two Federated states and so proposed a unitary state on May 4, 1972. Just 14 days afterwards, a national referendum was conducted on May 20, 1972. Because of the overwhelming majority of the population of the East Cameroon, the verdict was the abolition of the federal state. Later in 1984, President Paul Biya signed a presidential decree changing the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon, the name adopted after 1972; to the Republic of Cameroon, the name East Cameroon had before reuniting with the West Cameroon.”

However, the nature and management of this union, has been a subject of criticism, especially from former West Cameroon. Events took greater proportions lately, when protests and street unrest erupted in the North West and South West Regions, as a means of voicing what many describe as the “disenchantment” of the Anglophone population.

By Mirabel TUME, Laure NGANLAY

Team member of the month

Le meilleur employé du mois de Mars 2017 est Kamga Fotue Hilaire, occupant le poste de Project Management Officer au sein de la Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation. Il est pleinement investi dans les différentes missions qui lui ont été confiées, ne manquant pas par ailleurs de faire preuve d’initiatives, de détermination et d’un professionnalisme sans faille pour atteindre ses objectifs.
Below are excerpts of March 21, “Briefing Cameroon’s Internet Refugees,” discussion organized by the the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington DC.

“... Cameroon is misunderstood from the outside, because everybody thinks it is a federated state. It is not...The British ambassador to newly independent Cameroon virtually handed the sovereignty of Southern Cameroons to President Ahmadou Ahidjo, the President of the Republic of Cameroon; in the presence of John Ngu Foncha, the then Prime Minister and Head of government of Southern Cameroon. At the day break of October 1, we were not independent and therefore not clothed to carry out any negotiation to establish a federation. The drama in Foumban ended up with us not having a conclusive disposition to establish an act of union, by way of federation. Ahidjo apologetically told the National Assembly of his country that they were not going in for any serious federal arrangement, but were simply recovering part of their territory, per the German protectorate. And this unwritten policy has determined the disenchantment of Southern Cameroonians that has finally blown up in recent manners... people have gone back to history and seen that we have been agitating for the union to be legalized... So all the things that had to be done were not done, especially establishing the act of union... It has been a lie throughout which has led to a lot of neglect, marginalization, further constitutional blunders and exploitation...” Dr Ikome Sako, Community Humanitarian Emergency Board

“...We can look at the current situation in Cameroon, including the internet blackouts, the recent strikes by teachers and lawyers association; as speaking to the broader issues of addressing it...We cannot also look at this crisis outside the context of colonial heritage... But at the bottom line, all Cameroonians, both English and French speaking, want to have the opportunity to elect their own government, Mayors and Governors...” Dr Denis Foretia, MD, Senior Fellow at the Nkafu Policy Institute, Cameroon

Watch full video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RGmw-Dc7tk

Transcribed by Laure NGANLAY