STUDY TOURS ON EDUCATION POLICIES IN ASIA
June 2006

“The Country Issues Note” for Cameroon

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

STUDY TOURS ON EDUCATION POLICIES IN ASIA
June 2006

“The Country Issues Note” for Cameroon
Cameroon’s educational system: Challenges and stakes

I General Introduction

Cameroon is a central African country located at the far end of the Gulf of Guinea. Highly diversified from the physical, human and economic standpoints, this country has over 200 ethnic groups using many maternal languages, besides English and French.

As regards its economy, a decade of severe economic crisis and widespread poverty led to serious consequences on all segments of its society; education is one of the sectors having suffered from the pangs of the economic recession.

The education policy in Cameroon is implemented by four ministries: namely the ministry of Basic education, the ministry of secondary education, the ministry of higher education and the ministry of employment and vocational education.

The education sectors faces many challenges among which the following:

1. The problem of educational resource management, notably teaching personnel

The educational system witnesses serious managerial and control malfunctionings.

The solution adopted by the sector strategy consists in decentralizing management in order to reduce the uncertainty noted in the deployment of teachers. Accordingly, the Ministry of Basic Education will allocate a stock of teachers to the different provinces/regions and at this level, the teachers will be posted according to the needs notified in the field. This is just a temporary measure as we await the translation into reality of political decentralization which will make regions/provinces responsible entities in matters of education.

Supposedly, implementation of these measures will greatly depend on the good will of officials in the field and most especially on their proper understanding of the stakes involved. This seems a real source of worry when we know that there is no efficient information system in existence. How then are we going to do it? That is the question we would like to ask you.
2. Information system

There is no efficient and sustainable information system. In fact, without information on school statistics, it becomes difficult to evaluate concrete implementation of decisions, nor give information on the realities in the field (budget execution, information on the construction of school buildings, on school enrolment and drop-out, etc).

We want to share other countries experience with regards to setting up an efficient information system.

3. Curricula and system of assessment.

Cameroon has launched a reform of secondary education that will include a reform on the curricula. The current programs (syllabuses) are national and are in force in all the schools. They involve the following domains:
- Arts and literature
- Sciences and the technology
- Social studies
- Technical education for technical schools.
- Physical education and sports.

The system of assessment is made up of promotion examinations that take students to the next class and official examinations for which successful students are issued certificates. We are interested in the secondary education approach in Asian countries, notably:
1. What is the scope of the secondary education curriculum?
2. Who participates in the development of the curriculum?
3. Who controls the process of curriculum development?
4. What is the relation between the secondary and the higher education curriculum?
5. Are there national examinations? If so how are they organized?
6. How are didactic or learning material made available?

4. Regulation of flows

We are here referring to the principle of regulating flows according to which those who do not proceed to secondary school will benefit from a minimum short-term vocational training to enable them to efficiently join the job market.

This vitally important change begs a number of questions:
- What is the ideal age for entering vocational training (immediate employment).
- What will be the types and trades of training available?
- What will be the terms and conditions governing such training?
- How will the interest of society be aroused and people mobilised for such training?
- How will the vocational training for immediate employment be organised in a way as to, on parallel basis, ensure regulation of flows and improve the output of actors in the informal sector?

5. School constructions

The cost of a classroom remains very high and stands at about 15,000 US dollars. We also want to share the Asian approach in this domain, which is a very important issue.

These are some of the major challenges that our country has to face in its attempt to develop an efficient system of education. We hope to share your experience during this study tour.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION