

PD-ABC-047
ISA 68900

Evaluation Report and Recommendations

Cameroon: Support to Primary Education

(631-0033)

March 1987

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LOP Funding: \$27.6 Million
(\$11.36 M Grant (\$16.26 M Loan)

PACD 6/30/90

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Support to Primary Education (SPE) Project is off to a good start. It has developed and tested a series of innovations (for Cameroon) which have been extremely well received by the direct beneficiaries. The project has conducted a large number of well planned and highly organized seminars addressing many of the perceived problems in primary education. The seminars involve speakers from the Central Ministry and related agencies such as the Ecole Normale Superieure and IPAR (curriculum). The Seminars are improving as the staff gains experience. The Morale of the Inspectorate is much improved as a result of the project. Study tours, exposing Cameroonian school officials to U.S. Education have been successfully mounted. The core staff is in place and is of high quality. The project has trained, and will continue to train participants in the U.S. to assume leadership positions in provincial education positions. We already have indications that children are learning more and faster as a result of better teaching methodologies.

- The project is not without problems which relate to focus, replicability, sustainability, construction and management. These problems are highlighted in the body of the report which contains twenty-one specific recommendations. This report did not dwell upon the project's progress toward interim objectives, since this was specifically addressed in the internal avaluation which should accompany this report.

Introduction:

This report is an adjunct to the year II Internal Evaluation which was conducted March 12-13, 1987 by a joint USAID/USC/MINEDUC team. The Joint Internal Evaluation addressed progress and constraints in attaining the project's objectives, and when finalized, should be attached to this report. It is too lengthy and detailed to be effectively summarized.

The report will directly address paragraph II (2-6) of Yaounde 02057 which asks the evaluator to examine the project's rationale and issues of particular interest to USAID. It will also go beyond this framework, by providing USAID/Cameroon with alternatives for mid-course project corrections. Some of these alternatives may imply a need for project amendment.

Despite delays in construction; in the provision of certain T.A. for evaluation, data collection and analysis, library development; and in recruitment of participants for long term training, this project is perceived by the Cameroonian government and the Cameroonian people as being useful and successful. By and large, it is off to a good start and it is meeting its quantitative and qualitative objectives. It is to

be expected that certain areas of the country will provide more of a challenge than others, and that results will not be uniform.

I. Project Scope:

One of the indicators of the perceived usefulness of the project is increasing pressure to expand its impact geographically, first, within the provinces where it is already targeted, and second, to provinces that are not included in the project. In the Northwest, A.I.D. is being urged to support the new TTC in Nkambe, a reasonable request, since its graduates teach in rural schools, whereas many of the graduates of the Bamenda TTC teach in Urban or semi-Urban schools. We are also asked to extend some project support to the three church mission sponsored TTCs in the Northwest. None of these requests have come in official form from the Government.

In the three Northern provinces, two new TTCs have been built since the project's inception. Here too, a strong case can be made to expand the project to include them.

A.I.D. is also being pressed to extend benefits to the provinces, that are not targeted within the project. The rationale for this request is that teacher trainers who are not trained in TTCs supported by the project are less qualified and cannot function effectively when rotated to schools in the project area.

The larger question is whether the project needs to be T.A. intensive in each TTC in order to achieve impact? I think not. The intensive and highly qualified TA assigned to the current numbers of TTCs included in the project should be perceived as a research and development team that is building, testing and proving the effectiveness of a methodology and a series of products that are capable of being replicated throughout the country. Replication, however, as we have too often learned, is not automatic; it needs to be planned and promoted.

Recommendations:

1. The project should recruit and train about five inexpensive ABDs former PCVs, or highly qualified PCVs to serve in the TTCs in Northwest, Adamaoua, North and Far North provinces which are not already staffed by the project. They should be supervised by existing personnel whose roles will slightly change from advisory to supervisory. Each should

be furnished a project vehicle with no other support for construction, materials supplies or large multi-passenger vehicles. (1)

2. The project should recruit and place an experienced bilingual Professor of Education Methodology in the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Yaounde to provide pre-service training to Primary School Teacher Trainers. Part of the task of this TA should be to reconcile the pedagogical curriculum being taught at ENS with that of the TTCs.
3. The technical advisor position in Maroua should be retained. This is the largest of the five Northern TTCs. In fact, larger than the others combined in terms of enrollment.
4. Optimally, and if resources permit, the project should expand its long term participant training program to include the training of about 25 participants to the M.S. Education degree in a special abbreviated program to conduct all of the seminars and training offered by the project. They would do part of their training in the U.S. (about 18 mo.), and part practice teaching under the supervision of project staff, who would also supervise thesis preparation. This training should be conditioned upon the GRC's agreement to place each of them in one of the TTCs at a minimum level of Director of Studies.

This training will facilitate replicability nationwide of the methodology and products being developed in the project area.

II. Products:

I have previously referred to this project as a research and development effort to build, test and prove a methodology and a series of "products." The project has been conducting a series of apparently well received seminars addressed to teachers, inspectors, teachers trainers and administrators. A lot of paper has been produced which will presumably be tested and

(1) Here, and in other parts of this report, I specifically recommend prudence in providing equipment, materials, supplies, etc., which imply recurring costs for maintenance and replacement. The GRC must demonstrate its commitment to support these institutions over time. To date, it has not demonstrated its willingness to provide operating costs other than salary and scholarships, with the operating budget of the average TTC at about \$1,000 per quarter.

improved as time goes by. To date, the MinEd in Yaounde has not developed a curriculum for Primary Teacher Training, and if they do, without involving project personnel, the product which would be imposed on the TTCs might be less than desired, or contrary to the project's philosophy. It is important that a series of documents be produced and collaboratively edited with MinEd personnel that can serve as a guide and model for primary school teacher training.

Recommendation:

5. That the project establish a target date (I'd recommend June 1988) to write and publish a draft model curriculum with three major components:

- (a) Methodology of teaching
- (b) Content: Math, Science, etc.
- (c) Administrative skills
 - personnel management
 - record keeping
 - financial management, purchasing, etc.
 - physical plant maintenance
 - supervision
 - etc.

These publications could be the most important outcome of the project in terms of influencing the course of National Education, and would be useful bilingual documents for all of Africa to share.

The creation and editing of these documents could be a potential Doctoral Dissertation for an enterprising and highly skilled ABD.

III. Other Donors:

The World Bank staff appraisal report of the Cameroon Educational and vocational Training project (April 10, 1987) (\$30.1 million) contains two elements that relate to A.I.D.'s S.P.E. Project. The first, which has been often discussed is the construction and equipping of three ENIAs in Bafia, Ebolowa and Edea. The second, which is of far more importance to the success of the USAID project, is to strengthen and develop MinEd capacity with respect to:

- a. data collection and analysis, policy formulation, educational planning
- b. budgeting, planning and management of the technical education subsector
- c. project preparation, implementation and evaluation

The World Bank Policy paper on basic education in Africa coincides with the views of the Africa Bureau in a number of respects. One, which is of critical importance to Cameroon, will undoubtedly meet with resistance in certain quarters. The World Bank and Africa Bureau will focus upon the need for much more community involvement in the management and financing of basic education. Much of this is already going on in the Anglo provinces and the Northern provinces but without formal sanction. Three concepts are involved: autonomy, responsibility and accountability. In his book on La Liberalisation Communautaire, President BIYA espoused many of the concepts that would eventually hold school officials accountable to representatives of local communities for the quality of education being offered. Yet there is resistance from the body politic. The A.I.D. Administrator has made this concept the foundation of the Agency's education policy. I have learned that a series of meetings on Education Policy "Les Etats Generaux de l'Education" will take place in June - July of this year, and that "Responsabilization" of Provincial Delegates is an issue to be discussed. In the TTCs, ENIs and ENIAs school Directors have virtually no authority to discipline either staff or students. They have no voice in staff recruitment or selection. TTCs have no relationship to Provincial Education Delegates. All decision making is taken in Yaounde. Parents, except those with children in private schools, have no control over that is being taught, how well, or by whom.

Recommendation:

6. USAID should maintain close contact with World Bank Education staff with regard to their input into policy formulation within MinEd. If possible, I strongly recommend, phased conditionality to any additional funding under this project (above current commitments). The conditionality should initially require the GRC to develop policy that will give Provincial Delegates autonomy with regard to decision making on personnel and budget allocation with authority to delegate authority to School Directors. As a second stage, the GRC should move toward increasingly involving community representatives in overseeing and financing education. Since the World Bank holds the same general view, they may be willing to join us in pressing this issue. An alternative to conditionality would be to join the IBRD in a structural adjustment program targeted toward the education sector.

IV. Recurrent Cost of Education:

USAID has a responsibility to inform the GRC of the financial implications of school expansion. Classes of upwards of 150 students are not uncommon. As efficiency rates improve due to better quality instruction, and as new teachers are added to payrolls, costs will skyrocket. Also, as quality improves, articulation from primary to secondary to higher will increase, if not as percentages, in terms of net enrollment. Will the

Government of Cameroon be able to afford this? If not, can we strengthen the case for local financing of basic and secondary by showing them the figures?

Recommendation:

7. The project should engage a highly skilled Educational Economist with experience in modeling and calculating private and social rates of return, to prepare alternate forecasts of the cost and social rate of return of basic education based upon state financing compared with partial private financing.

Caveat:

The data base is weak, particularly on the cost side. Our knowledge of enrollment, pass rates and completion rates is based upon questionable UNESCO Data. We might be better off using a sampling approach in those areas where we have better data, though regional disparities might jeopardise the validity of the findings.

V. Institutional Arrangements:

The PROAG is clear in that all communications relative to payments and debt service should flow from A.I.D. to the Minister of Finance, and that communications concerning all other matters be addressed to the Minister of Plan and Territorial Development. The Project Paper (Annex 1, V, p. 12) designates the Ministry of National Education as being responsible for the execution of all project components. The Minister, in the PP designates the Department of Primary and Nursery Education (DPNE) and more specifically its Director, as the Project Director to coordinate project implementation. By and large the Mission has chosen to communicate directly with the MinEd and with the MinPlan only where an impasse is reached or where substantial modification via PIL is required. This seems to be a workable arrangement, but, in the case of construction, communications with MinEd were not able to unblock the quarrel with Min. Equipment over which agency is responsible for overseeing A&E services. The Mission should probably have, much earlier on, asked the MinPlan to resolve the dispute. Further complicating the institutional arrangements, and affecting the management of the project, is confusion with respect to USAID, U.S.C., and the MinEd as to which entity is responsible for project execution. The contract Chief of Party, Dr. McKenna is highly achievement oriented and therefore tends to assume a strong and visible role in Project Direction. The USAID project officer, Mary Ann Cusack, is also concerned and interested in project management and occasionally gets out in front of the contract team with regard to communications with U.S.C. and with the MinEd. This has led to friction which jeopardizes achievement of project purpose. Both parties feel that the other has not consulted adequately (both are justified) and the Cameroonians are a bit

confused as to whether they, A.I.D. or the Contract Team is implementing the project. The root problem is that Division of responsibility among the three entities is unclear.

Recommendations:

8. In view of the fact that the MinPlan has a more progressive attitude toward reform of the Educational System than does MinEd, and that MinPlan coordinates donor support to Education, the Mission should conform with the terms of the PROAG by directing its communications to the MinPlan on all but financial matters. The Contract Team, on the other hand, should communicate with the MinEd which is responsible for project execution.

9. The Contract Team should be courteously appraised of the fact that this is a Cameroonian project wherein the GRC is committing the lion's share of resources and wherein the MinEd has titular responsibility for project direction and execution. The GRC's recalcitrant commitment of agreed upon resources to the project, may be partly due to their feeling of being left out. This is largely a matter of style and communication since the MinEd is probably not prepared to put a lot of staff time into project management. It is very important that the MinEd. play a stronger management role if the project is to be sustainable.

10. USAID Mission management, especially the Chief of the Health and Human Resources section need to clarify the following terms:

- Project Officer - M. A. Cusack
- Project Manager - B. McKenna
- Project Director - GRC/MinEd/DPNE

and to carefully define, preferably in a collaborative working session, the roles and responsibilities of each party. The HHR Chief, by virtue of his long and comprehensive experience should more closely support and supervise the project officer and resolve disputes between the Project Officer and the Project Manager.

There is evidence that at least two members of the Contract Team exercise a directive/assertive and perhaps authoritarian management style. Since it would not be constructive to be more specific in this regard, suffice it to say that we are guests of the GRC and that we would all profit from working in an environment of mutual respect. The U.S.C. Project coordinator should use his office to promote such an environment. If roles are clearly defined, 90 percent of the problems will disappear.

VI. Project Planning and Management:

Annex I, Para IV, 1 (1) p. 7 of the project paper defines the role of the team leader. He is required, inter alia, to work with the joint Project Implementation Committee (PIC) to develop a detailed work plan and policy guidelines with respect to:

- Management and Admin Support for the TTCs.
- Primary Education reform planning and implementation related to curriculum development, personnel policies and school construction.
- TTC operations.
- In-service training programs.

Irrespective of what has been actually carried out in each of the four provinces, I am unaware of the existence of a detailed Five Year Work Plan, or even a one year plan that has clearly identified education reform requirements and policy guidelines to achieve reform.

There is certainly a need for education policy reform, but, in the opinion of the evaluator, the project has overly concentrated upon the organization and conduct of in-service training programs that are conceived on a relatively ad hoc basis to meet perceived needs for training. There is no overall plan that lends focus or rationale to the totality of the parts.

Recommendation:

11. The team leader and his staff should collaberatively develop, with appropriate elements of the MinEd, a series of real objectives toward which the project is aimed. The first five of the seven objectives cited on PP 2-6 of annex 1 of the PP are really inputs, indicating that a series of in-service training programs will be developed for four different levels of beneficiaries (teacher trainers, inspectors, primary school directors and teachers). These are a means to end --- but to what end?

The Cameroonian Government will soon be faced with a budgetary crisis in education. The lack of operational funding is already apparent. The GRC will be faced with several clear cut options, and some which are not so clear. It is our responsibility to use our expertise to appraise the MinEd of the probable financial implications of continued rapid growth and to assist them to develop policies and reforms that will enable them to make better use of available resources.

Reform is also needed in the curriculum and in the pre-service training of primary school teachers and teacher trainers.

There does not appear to exist an overall plan with interim objectives for project implementation. This a difficult task, but it needs to be done. The project is complex, with several "streams" of activity:

- Construction
- Procurement of equipment, books, etc.,.
- In-Service training in several sector to several levels of beneficiaries.
- Participant training and study tours.

Delays in one, affect outcomes in the other.

Recommendation:

12. Ideally, this project should be framed within a computerized PERT chart with critical path indicators. Seminars, which seem to be the pre-eminent occupation of the project should be organized in such a way that they flow from one stage to the next in a sequential pattern that leads to a series of defined objectives.

The PERT chart should clearly demonstrate the potential consequences, in terms of time, budget and impact, of delays. This would vastly improve A.I.D.'s ability to deal effectively with the GRC on timely disbursement of their share of budget resources, and will enable the project manager to plan his annual budget requirements more effectively. Should the Mission choose to use computerized management, I'd suggest either "Timeline" or "Harvard Project Manager" and about six weeks of T.A. to set the program up and train Mission and Contract Staff.

VII. Sustainability/Replicability:

As currently constituted, the project is neither sustainable nor replicable in that a) there is no evidence that the GRC will continue to provide funding for seminars, vehicles, equipment or training after PACD; b) since there is a propensity toward outward mobility, particularly in the three Northern provinces. It is unlikely that the project will leave behind a critical nucleus of trained personnel; c) there is no plan to extend the project in any form, to any of the provinces not included in the project, nor even to some of the newer TTCs in the project zone.

Recommendations:

13. In addition to Recommendation number 4, which calls for additional participants to serve as teacher trainers in each of the TTCs, it is essential that the MinEd be sensitized to the need for additional budgetary support for teacher training. The project leadership needs to focus much more sharply on relationships with GRC Ministry officials, leaving more of the provincial activities to the assigned T.A.

14. As mentioned in Recommendation number 5, sustainability and replicability will be greatly enhanced by creating, written guidelines for teacher training, administration and course content. All and sundry topics will be or have been discussed in one seminar or another, in one province or another. This is not enough. The project has a responsibility to tie many of these experiences into a single package that can serve as a guide and model for replication elsewhere in Cameroon, and even beyond. This is not to criticize what has been done. As stated, the project has engaged in applied research and testing. It will soon be time to assess results and extend certain methodologies in a more organized format.

VIII. Agricultural Education:

Although the Contract Team agrees with the need to incorporate agricultural education into the science curriculum, and to provide practical experience in agriculture, it feels that no mandate for this activity was given in the project paper. This is true. However, the rationale for the project, which is described in Part II, A, b (p. 7) of the PP is almost entirely based upon increased agricultural productivity which derives from basic education in a modernizing environment.

Recommendation:

15. The Contract Team should: a) establish linkages with the Mission's agricultural portfolio to gain expertise in the development of applied agricultural activities; b) provide short-term expertise in integrating basic agricultural principles and concepts within the curriculum linked to practical application; c) to the extent possible, make an equivalent effort in Health Education.

IX. Education Sector Assessment:

Several of the key assumptions contained in the project paper have, in fact, not taken place. To name but a few, the Primary Education Reform, which was anticipated has still not occurred, resulting in a high degree of centralization and continuing disputes over teacher qualification. A rapidly expanded enrollment of students in TTCs was anticipated. This has, in fact, gone in the opposite direction in the project zones. The

Pitoua ENIA, for example, which can accommodate 150 students, has 15 enrolled. Enrollment in the Garoua ENI/ENIA has diminished by 50 percent.

Although the Mined recognizes a need and demand for more classroom teachers, the Public Service Ministry has been unable to allocate the resources necessary to hire them.

The Economy of Cameroon has taken a jolt due the oil crisis. Is it still prepared to finance a rapidly expanding school population? Is the GRC ready to entertain proposals relative to decentralized revenue generation and greater popular involvement in education?

The GRC continues to treat all teachers, and even students as civil servants with guaranteed employment. Entry to TTCs is, in fact, a function of the level at which the GRC can provide scholarships and budget for teacher slots. There is no latitude, under this system, for the training of teachers for private employment, nor is there any incentive for competition or academic excellence. Some rather simple policy decisions might radically improve this situation, and enable the TTCs to operate at full capacity.

Recommendation:

16. In view of the rapidly changing socio-economic context, the Mission should contract for a comprehensive assessment of the Education Sector.

If this is done, Recommendation number 7 could be incorporated into the assessment.

X. Financial Management:

Although the Evaluator lacked time to carefully examine financial management, it is clear that the sub-contractor was lax in the timely presentation of the 1986 budget which contained serious overruns. U.S.C. has now assumed direct responsibility for this function. Negotiation of the CY 1987 budget has been delayed subject to resolution of CY 1986 problems.

Recommendation:

17. The Contractor should submit the detailed 1988 budget not later than November 15, 1987. The Mission Controller and/or Contracts officer should advise the Contractor as to exactly how much detail and precision is required.

XI. Sub-Contracting:

The prime contractor, U.S.C., has divested itself of a sub-contractor, Creative Associates, which was responsible for

project management and evaluation. Another, sub-contract relationship exists with the University of Southern Illinois (Carbondale) to provide for Library Services and one T.A. (Garoua). The rationale for the relationship with Southern Illinois was to bring agricultural expertise to the project. In fact, all of the T.A. provided under this sub-contract was imported and initiated by the prime contractor. The reviewer perceives no institutional relationship between Southern Illinois and the project.

Recommendation:

18. The sub-contract with University of Southern Illinois should be terminated, with the prime contractor absorbing the function of Library Services and the Garoua T.A.

XII. University of Southern California:

The University of Southern California is the prime contractor. The basis for an educational selection mode of contracting is to draw upon the full resources of the U.S. University in support of GRC institution strengthening and achievement of project objectives. U.S.C.'s involvement in this project has been arm's length, consisting, basically, of the part time participation of the project coordinator.

Recommendation:

19. Recommendation No. 4, if properly implemented, should bring the full resources of U.S.C. to bear upon the U.S. and in-country training of a significant number of participants. This will only happen if the University is willing and able to develop specialized programs based upon Cameroon's specific needs.

20. There should be more interaction between U.S.C. and the Ecole Normale Superieure with regard to pre-Service Training of Teacher Trainers. U.S.C. should tap its resources for short term technical assistance in financial planning, school administration, personnel management and plant management. The full time in-country technical assistance should not be considered as polyvalent. Their work needs to be complemented by short-term T.A. as appropriate.

XIII. Gray Amendment Targets:

The Cameroon Mission has performed reasonably well with respect to Gray Amendment targets and HBCU involvement. However, now that the sub-contract with Creative Associates has been dissolved. The support to Primary Education Project is left with only one minority contract employee whose tenure in that position is in question.

Recommendation:

21. There are several HBCUs with strong capability in both Education and Agricultural Education. To the extent that additional expertise is required, above and beyond the in-house capability of U.S.C., the project coordinator should attempt to establish a working relationship in a sub-contractual arrangement with a Historically Black College or University. Several alternatives were discussed with the U.S.C. coordinator ranging from participant training to technical assistance in Agriculture and Health. The USAID management should monitor this process to assure compliance with Bureau targets. The Cameroon Public Health model would seem to be an appropriate one.

22. The GRC may find it politically awkward to agree to the use of project funds to support the three Church Mission sponsored TTCs in Northwest province. USAID may wish to consider a cooperative agreement with a Private Voluntary Organization such as Africare to provide coverage to these schools while maintaining a close working relationship to U.S.C. staff, particularly in Bamenda. Should the Mission choose to do this, the PVO should recruit three former PCVs with subsequent experience as teachers and elementary school principals.