



EDUCATION FACT SHEET - CAMEROON

In Brief	<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>Population: 23.44 million (Word Bank, 2016) Country Size: 475,442 sq km/183,442 sq mi</p> <p>National Curricula: Yes, with the French and English Sub-systems of Education</p> <p>Literacy: 75.0% (Knoema, 2015) Youth Literacy: 83.8% (Knoema, 2015) Female Youth Literacy: 60.1% (Knoema, 2015)</p> <p>Years of Public School: 13 Primary: 6 years, starting age 5 Secondary School (Ordinary Level): 5 years [4 years in the Technical and French Sub-System] High School (Advanced Level): 2 [3 years in the Technical and French Sub-System]</p> <p>Language of Instruction: English, French</p> <p>High School Leaving Exams: The GCE Advanced Level, the Baccalaureat Date of Exams: May-June</p>
Education Overview	<p>Trending toward English Cameroon has two educational sub-systems operating simultaneously: one based on its British colonial past and the other on its French colonial past. More Cameroonians are embracing studies in English, following the globalization trend.</p> <p>Free Primary, Subsidized Secondary Education In government schools, primary education became free for all children in Cameroon in the year 2000 but parents pay minimal Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) levies. The government is the largest provider of primary education. In the cities, the number of privately-owned primary schools is rising —they charge very high fees for higher quality education, involving ICT.</p> <p>Secondary/high school education is equally highly subsidized by the government of Cameroon and many households are able to afford it. There are many private and prestigious mission secondary/high schools which charge more. Students who can afford them or those who do not gain admission into government secondary/high schools resort to the mission/private institutions.</p>

	<p>The percentage of students advancing to the Ordinary Level and the number of students attending universities has increased significantly as a result of the government’s policy of creating schools in every neighborhood and at least a university in each region of the country. Within the last ten years, more public institutions of higher learning have been created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameroon’s Education Expenditure 3.0 % of GDP (World Bank, 2013) • Pupil/Teacher Ratio: 46:1 (Open Data for Africa, 2012) • % Entering primary school having attended preschool – 28.71% (UNESCO, 2016) • % Completing primary school – 75.42 % (UNESCO, 2016) • % Transition to secondary school – 66.49% (UNESCO, 2015) • % Completion of secondary school – 45.6 % (World Bank, 2015) • Number of candidates who took the GCE Advanced Level Exams in 2016: 46,714 • Number of candidates who took the Baccalaureat (Francophones) in 2016: 103,097 • Total number of candidates who took the high school exams in 2016: 149, 811 <i>[This number excludes those who took the GCE Technical Exams - statistics still being sought.]</i> • % Completion of Advanced Level studies – 40% Boys, 32 % Girls (EPDC, 2014) • % Achieving pass grades at the A’ Level exams – 60.41 % (Cameroon GCE Board A’ L 2016) • State-owned Universities: 8 [two Anglo-Saxon] • Other Higher Institutions of Learning: 201 • University enrollment rates in Cameroon have increased by 22% over the past 20 years (World Bank 2018)
<p>School System</p>	<p>Progression not Automatic Cameroonian education can be described as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years optional pre-school from age 3 or 5 • 6 years in basic primary education (for children aged 5-11) • 5 years of secondary education (ages 11-16) • 2 years of high school education (ages 16-20) <p><i>NB: The elementary level classes are known as primary, while the secondary ones are known as forms and the high school ones are known as lower and upper sixth forms.</i></p> <p>Progression from one educational level to another is not automatic as it depends on national examination results, overseen by the government at the end of Class 6 in the primary, Form 5 in the secondary and Upper Sixth Form in the high school, overseen by the Cameroon GCE Board and the Cameroon BACC Board (for secondary and high school). The Government Common Entrance exam for pupils in class 6 allows for the rationing of the limited space available in government schools by pushing out children who do not achieve a pass in list A to seek admission in non-government secondary schools. With so many newly created government secondary schools, these standards however are being compromised.</p>

Grading Systems

The grading system in Cameroon for the GCE Ordinary and Advanced Level results is based on exam letter grades.

a. Letter Grades/points awarded

(i) GCE Advanced Level

Grade	Marks	Points	Remark
A	80-100	5	Excellent
B	70-74.9	4	Very Good
C	60-69.9	3	Good
D	50-59.9	2	Average
E	40-49.9	1	Satisfactory
Ø	35-39.9	0	Compensatory
F	0-34.9	0	Fail

The mark boundaries are not standardized and often depend on the general performance. A student must have at least two subjects to be declared successful at the GCE Advanced Level.

(ii) GCE Ordinary Level

Grade	Marks	Points	Remark
A	75-100	3	Excellent
B	65-74.9	2	Very Good
C	45-64.9	1	Good
D	30-44.9	0	Failed
E	15-29.9	0	Failed
U	0-15	0	Useless

The mark boundaries are not standardized and often depend on the general performance. A student must have at least four subjects to be declared successful at the GCE Ordinary Level.

b. Cumulative Grade Scale

Students are allowed to sit a maximum of 5 subjects at the GCE Advanced Level and 11 at the Ordinary Level. Hence a student can have 15 points and 33 points maximum at the Advanced and Ordinary Level GCE respectively. In the 2016 GCE, the distribution was as follows

Number of Points	No. of Students GCE Ordinary Level	Number of Students GCE Advanced Level
25	-	27 out of 48,058
33	21 out of -	-

Secondary Schools

The **Government Common Entrance Exam** and the **First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) exam** mark the end of the primary education cycle and are used as the basis upon which pupils can join the secondary education cycle. At the secondary level, there are basically four kinds of schools available:

Government schools: General and Technical Education represent the largest group of government schools. Most are day schools, where students have to commute to school and

	<p>back home, although a few other schools offer hostels for boarding. There are minimal tuition per annum fees of about \$60.00 for day students and about \$600.00 for boarding students. Technical education is more expensive and is only now becoming popular but still far below general education. Due to low tuition fees, government-owned schools are the major providers of secondary education in Cameroon and the government has some of the best trained teachers in the country.</p> <p>Mission schools: The Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists etc run some of the best educational institutions in the country which are predominantly boarding schools. Tuition is about \$1000 which only the rich can afford. The performances of students in certificate exams from these schools are usually outstanding.</p> <p>Lay-private schools: These are owned by individuals or private organizations. Some provide both boarding and day options. These tend to be lower in quality compared to public schools and have mid-fee ranges, mostly \$100 to \$700 per annum depending on whether it is boarding or not. They tend to attract average students who cannot gain admission into government schools or (afford) mission schools as well as those dismissed from these institutions. Over the past years, some lay-private schools have been improving tremendously on discipline and the quality of their results. Very few of such schools are technical.</p> <p>International private schools: These are the boarding and day schools which offer high quality education in Cameroon. They offer international curricula such as International Baccalaureate and Cambridge International. There are very few such schools and are located only in about four cities of Cameroon. They tend to attract wealthy Cameroonians. as well as ex-pats.</p>
<p>Higher Education</p>	<p>Higher Education and Training System Higher education and training encompass post-high school education in Cameroon, leading to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees. Cameroon adopted the LMD or BMD (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate) system for its universities from the 2007-2008 academic year. It is quite difficult in Cameroon for students who do not achieve a pass at the GCE Advanced Level to pursue higher education in Cameroon.</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education monitors the provision of education in universities and higher institutions of learning in the country. The vision of the ministry is to maintain a system that provides higher education capable of supporting national social, economic and cultural development in a global context. University education in Cameroon takes three years for the liberal arts, science and business courses, four-five years for engineering courses, and six-seven years for medicine.</p> <p>The Cameroonian higher education system is made up of public and private universities, and vocational/technical training institutes. All public higher education institutions in the country are tightly under the control of the government, which dictates the pace of all of its activities. The country has a total of eight public universities and more than 200 mission/private higher institutions of learning. The proliferation of private institutions is because admission into most programs in public institution is through a competitive entrance exam and spaces are limited. Even for some with no competitive entrance exam, candidates are expected to have passed in English or French as well as Mathematics at the GCE Ordinary Level. Private higher institutions of learning waive these requirements and equally pay attention to candidates who are qualified and capable of paying the tuition.</p>

	<p>More high school graduates are enrolling into higher education after meeting all academic requirements, thanks to the creation of more higher institutions of learning. Literacy among people aged 15-24 is 85 % [EPDC 2014].</p> <p>GPA's of 3 or above are very rare in Cameroonian universities (especially the French universities) due to the assessment system or culture, which has a higher tendency to underrate the effort of a student, as a way to show academic superiority by most of the faculty, who find much pleasure in that.</p>
<p>Issues with the Education System</p>	<p>Under-Resourced Schools Most government schools in Cameroon, especially in the villages, are under-resourced, with government subsidies to both government and private schools dropping significantly over the last 10 years. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a very strong organization in each institution which contributes money to provide more resources to the school to improve on the quality of education, recruit more teachers in understaffed institutions, erect more classrooms and acquire benches, laboratory material, books for the library etc.</p> <p>Many teachers are getting trained on gender-balanced teaching to improve on the number of girls staying in school and excelling. But the pace is rather too slow and most of the organizations pioneering are non-governmental.</p> <p>There are a few model government schools (from primary to university) now which accommodate all abilities (inclusion) and the examination boards accommodate them as well. But logistics and qualified personnel continue to be major challenges.</p> <p>The competency-based method of teaching, meant to develop critical thinking skills, was adopted in 2010 but many teachers in the field are still learning it. Seminars to train teachers to embrace the new paradigm shift were mostly limited to urban areas. Therefore the traditional methods of teaching are still very present.</p> <p>Corporal punishment is banned in schools, though there are still low levels of corporal punishment, mostly in non-government schools, where the level of indiscipline is higher.</p> <p>Rapid expansion in enrollment has meant that the number of students in each classroom has increased – with an average of 50 students in each government secondary school classroom in the cities. Government policy states that the number of students in each class should not exceed 40 but in the high schools in the major towns, the numbers can exceed 100.</p> <p>Most schools face extreme shortages in textbooks, desks, chairs, toilets, water supply, and hand-washing facilities. Students are expected to buy textbooks. Despite the proliferation of</p>

textbooks and workbooks, students in government schools have challenges acquiring them. The mission schools supply textbooks directly to all students and bill them on that. On average there is one latrine of between 2-6 rooms for the entire school of about 3000. This is far below the normal student/latrine ratio of 25:1 for boys and 20:1 for girls, and impacts especially on girls' attendance and performance.

The national adolescent pregnancy prevalence in Cameroon is 14.2%. Hence, each year, a number of girls become pregnant and leave school. The exact statistics on the number dropping out each year is not immediately available. Some teenage mothers continue with studies in government schools, private or evening schools after giving birth, and move on to take the national certificate exams.

The Cameroon government funds teacher training programmes, but despite this, many government schools do not have enough teachers. The government also encourages in-service training and a good number of teachers move on to obtain higher qualifications. Teacher unions are always in a struggle with the government for better working and living conditions, and for the implementation of educational reforms.

The Political Crises and Insurgency in Cameroon

Access to education in the North West and South West (English-speaking) Regions of Cameroon has deteriorated since November 2016 due to deepening political crises, as well as in the Far North region due to repeated sporadic attacks by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

As a consequence of the ongoing civil unrest, there are many internally displaced persons from the affected regions who have sought academic refuge in the parts of the country that are stable. Most of them are exposed to new challenges in their new environments; those who choose to stay behind are equally exposed to daily security challenges while their morale runs down. All in all, this plays negatively on their academic performance in final year certificate examinations.

In the North and South West Regions, schools were interrupted from November 2016 leading to dismal GCE Results in 2017. While this report focuses on the normal years, here is a brief presentation of 2017 which was an extraordinary year for schools in the English-speaking parts of Cameroon:

The statistics for the 2017 GCE indicate a 35.32% pass for Advanced Level down from 66.52% in 2016. The Advanced Level Technical scored 22.37% against 54.33% in 2016.

For the General Education, 38,628 candidates registered for the examination, 33,037 students effectively wrote; 3,591 absences were recorded while 11,670 candidates were successful.

For the Advanced Level Technical, 3,472 students registered. Of the number, 2,567 wrote while 905 students were absent and 574 candidates passed.

Meanwhile the GCE Ordinary level General Education results show a 25.29 percentage pass this year drastically dropping from 62.17 in 2016. Only 11,770 candidates passed out of the 46,532 who wrote the exam. The GCE Technical O/L registered a 28.49 percentage pass as against 40.12 for previous year.

Academic Calendar

The academic year for public and private primary, secondary and high schools runs from September to June, with three terms. The academic year for universities and most higher

	institutions of learning runs from October to July and resit exams take place in August. A few university programs, especially newly introduced ones, run from January to December.
SAT Test Centers	Three centers: The American Language Centers in Yaounde and Douala and Rain Forest International School in Yaounde
ACT Test Centers	Two centers: Institut Superieur Dale Kietzman in Douala and Rain Forest International School in Yaounde
IELTS/TOEFL	IELTS/TOEFL tests are not required for admission to Cameroonian universities. Only two out of eight public universities use English as the medium of instruction while French is the language of instruction in the other six state-owned universities. However, the University of Buea requires a pass in English at the GCE ordinary level as a strict condition for admission, while the University of Bamenda has a pre-enrollment English language foundational course for those who previously studied in the French language.
Best Time for Admissions Officers to Visit	<p>Cameroonian students complete their Advanced Level (Upper 6th) final exams in June and then attend optional/elective preparatory classes for national competitive entrance exams (most of the exams into the public service) for two-three months until September. The GCE exam results are released in late July or early August.</p> <p>The best time for admissions officers from abroad to visit secondary schools in Cameroon is in April prior to the commencement of the GCE practicals.</p>
HALI Contacts	<p>Open Dreams Cameroon: Mile 2 Nkwen, PO Box 448 Bamenda Email: info@open-dreams.org Phone: +237 676411987 (Whatsapp enabled)</p> <p>USA: 1416 E Street NE, Washington, DC</p>

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