

## **STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND (CEF) IN CAMEROON**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In April 2000 at the World Education Forum, the Dakar Framework of Action was developed with six goals and twelve enabling strategies for achieving Education for All by 2015. One of the distinctive features was the recognition of the role of civil society in developing partnerships with governments and ensuring that they meet the commitments made at Dakar. The roles of civil society in helping to shape policy, planning and implementation, as well as in monitoring and evaluation were recognized as being critical in enabling the achievement of the EFA goals.

### **1.1 Background**

Cameroon is one of the countries benefiting from the Commonwealth Education Fund, a fund set up by the British Government and whose goal is to enable all children in poor commonwealth countries to have access to, and to complete, good quality primary education by 2015, and in reaching this goal, ensure gender equity in school completion is also achieved by 2005. This is in line with the goals set in the Dakar Framework of Action and also articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The fund aims to achieve this through strengthening the capacity of civil society in developing Commonwealth countries to help Governments ensure that the poorest and most marginalized children are able to enrol in and complete good quality primary education.

The CEF is to be jointly managed by Oxfam, Save the Children and ActionAid. In each country where they exist, they will jointly agree on the agency to take the lead in that country. In Cameroon however, none of the three agencies exist so ActionAid Nigeria has been requested to manage the process in Cameroon.

### **1.2 Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this Strategic Programme of Work (SPW) is three-fold. First, it briefly outlines the understanding of Cameroon context and status in working towards the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals and the approaches being taken to assist Government realize these goals. Secondly, it provides broad agreement and clear guidelines built in a participatory manner of the nature of the programme work over the next three years. Finally, it shares the thrust of our work and means by which performance can be evaluated.

### **1.3 Process of Developing the Strategic Programme (SPW) of Work**

This SPW is a result of extensive and participatory consultations carried out over the last seven months. These consultations started with a scoping visit to Cameroon, followed by a planning meeting in order to organize a coalition forming workshop. This education coalition building forum for Cameroonian civil society organisations was held in Yaounde Cameroon on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2003. 49 local NGOs took part in this forum. It was also attended by the Ministry of National Education (MINEDUC) through the Education for All Permanent Autonomous Technical Unit, the British Council, UNESCO, ActionAid Nigeria and Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA). The meeting deliberated, considered and provided the information that forms the body of this SPW. The workshop proceeding is attached as Appendix 1.

**The objectives of the forum were:**

- a) To build an understanding of the Education For All(EFA) process in terms of the common issues, the needs and the challenges of the civil society on EFA,
- b) Establish an appropriate coalition/networking mechanism to enable civil society participate fully in EFA in Cameroon.

The outcomes of this meeting were

- 1) Awareness and sensitization on EFA achieved
- 2) The creation of a Coalition and the establishment of a networking mechanism for civil society actors on EFA in Cameroon.

Immediately following the civil society forum was the Commonwealth Education Fund workshop of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

The objective of this workshop was to introduce the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) to civil society actors in Cameroon and develop a Strategic Programme of Work for the application of the fund in Cameroon.

The outcomes of the workshop were

- The achievement of an understanding of the Commonwealth Education Fund and the development of a Strategic Programme of Work.
- The establishment of the principles for engagement with the CEF.
- The completion of dialogue on next steps in the implementation of the CEF in Cameroon.

## **2.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Cameroon has a population of about 15 million inhabitants with an area of 475 445 square kilometres. This population comprises more than 200 ethnic groups. 45% of the total population are below the age of 15, with a population growth rate of about 2.83 % (1999). This kind of population means that urgent and sustained educational policy related measures need to be taken and implemented. The life expectancy rate is 54.5 years for men and 59 years for women.

Cameroon is richly endowed in natural resources. But since the 1980s it has been hit hard by the economic crisis – the situation being worsened by the World Bank imposed structural adjustment programmes and by the devaluation of the CFA franc. Per capita consumption dropped by 40% between 1985/86 and 1992/93. The outstanding foreign debt rose from 1/3 of GDP in 1984/85 to more than 3/4 of the GDP in 1992/93. The rate of investment dropped from 27% to 13% of GDP during the same period. Debt servicing absorbs close to 57% (1999) of the State budget. About 56.6 % (1996) of the population is living below poverty level. This ugly economic situation has depreciated public finances and led the government to effect (twice) drastic salary cuts in the public service (1993); restructure state and para-statal companies; liquidate some state companies; lay off state workers; suspend the construction and equipment of schools; close down teachers training colleges; and stop employing primary school teachers.

In fact, the state no longer provides education and health services in a sustainable manner. The mortality rate stands at 40.9% for children up to 5 years, 52% for adults over 55 years, 23.1% for people aged between 5 and 14, 23.2% for people aged between 15 and 19 and

31.7% for people aged between 20 and 54. The last two age brackets are the most exposed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Cameroon education system is composed of two sub-systems: the Anglophone and the Francophone sub-systems. This education system reflects colonial heritage from Britain and France. Efforts have been underway since 1985 to harmonise these two systems. Formal education is under three ministries: the Ministry of National Education (from nursery to secondary education); the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training; and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Non formal education (adult literacy) is under three ministries: first the Ministry of Youth and Sports and then the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Women Affairs. The gross enrolment rate for formal education dropped from close to 100% in the 80s to 71% in 1995/96 and rose slightly to 78% in 1997/98. The gross enrolment rate for pre-school children is low (about 10.6%) and lower in the provinces of Adamawa (5.3%), North (4.5%) and the Far North (0.7%). Between 1996 and 2000, enrolments in private schools doubled. School enrolment is not matched by teacher supply.

In 2000, the school age population at the primary level (6-12 years) was about 2.8 million. In 2000/2001, 2.69 million pupils enrolled, an enrolment comprising children aged less than six years, and especially those aged more than 12 years. A good number of school age children are therefore not attending school. This state of affairs is partly due to paucity of classrooms (20% of which are temporary and improvised structures) and partly to insufficient number of teachers, with a 1 to 63 teacher – pupil ratio, a ratio which the Ministry of Education plans to reduce to 1 to 47 by 2011.

From 1996 to 2001, the number of students in secondary schools rose from 443651(45% of which are girls) to 684583 (46% of which are girls). The number of teachers equally rose from 16973 to 30371. The number of schools rose from 894 to 1113. These increases are marred by unmatched infrastructure, and falling standards. The teachers are still insufficient. Those recruited may complete their training and stay for a year or more without their salaries being paid and this affects the level of teacher motivation.

The adult literacy rate rose from 47% in 1976, to 61% in 1996 and to 68% in 2001. But wide disparities in literacy rates exist with respect to sex and region of the country. The highest illiteracy rates are recorded in the Far North, North and Adamawa Provinces; respectively standing for the men at 36%, 32% and 29% as against 72%, 67% and 61% for the women. This high rate of illiteracy is accounted for by poverty, opportunity costs, negative perception of schooling for girls, early marriages and pregnancies for girls etc.

## **2.2 Actors in the educational sector in Cameroon**

The administrative structure in Cameroon is centralised requiring endorsement of the central government, represented by line ministries. There are two sub- systems existing in Cameroon, these are the English and the French and this has had implications for the education sector around quality, standardisation and certification.

Education policies are made by the Ministry of National Education at the national level and at the Provincial and Divisional levels there are the Delegations of Education with inspectorate support at the sub-Division or District levels. There is however no known education policy document, the process of putting one in place commenced in 1995 when the National Education Forum was held. There are four main actors involved in education in Cameroon. These include government at the National, Provincial, Divisional, Sub- Divisional, District and Village levels; civil society, international development agencies and the Private sector.

### **2.2.1 The Government**

The Cameroon government has demonstrated its will to promote Education for All goals. This is found in a series of laws, conferences and actions ranging from the endorsement of the principles enacted in the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, to the development of the National Action Plan of Education for ALL. The National EFA plan has however not entered the implementation stage despite the setting up within the Ministry of Education of an EFA Permanent Autonomous Technical Unit for the implementation of this plan. Cameroonians even at the Ministry of Education (especially at the external services) do not yet have access to this National EFA Plan of Action.

Cameroon has completed her National Plan of Action and this plan emanated from the six Dakar goals. Cameroon has taken into account moral challenges to add a seventh goal which is linked to citizenship education. The seventh goal is thus to develop an active and responsible culture of citizenship based on common values, in a bid to favour a predisposition of living together.

All seven goals have been sub-divided into 183 actions to be done in the short term (2003-2005), in the medium term (2006-2010) and in the long term (2011-2015). The plan is thus a strategic plan of work for overcoming obstacles and attaining the Dakar goals by 2015.

The National Plan of Action for Education for All brings out the general education policy as well as the measures to be taken to attain the Dakar goals. These include:

- ❖ Equity in education through the integration of excluded persons such as girls and women, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children with special needs in education and refugee children.
- ❖ Measures to reduce the effects of HIV/AIDS pandemic and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) on education.
- ❖ Quality education in terms of creation of school friendly environments, including life skills.
- ❖ Access and completion of basic primary education
- ❖ Literacy
- ❖ The promotion of new technologies of Information and Communication NTIC
- ❖ Citizenship education
- ❖ The management and governance of formal, non formal and informal education system founded on the participation of all the stakeholders, notably the civil society.

### **The Present State of Education in Cameroon**

Problems identified are:

- ❖ Access and completion of education in the school
- ❖ Equity in schooling and literacy
- ❖ Quality in terms of the supply of the qualitative and quantitative supply of education
- ❖ Teaching the young and adult reading and writing skills
- ❖ The HIV/AIDS pandemic in the learning milieu

Other problems include:

- ❖ Inadequate funding
- ❖ Inadequate infrastructure
- ❖ Bilingual nature of the system
- ❖ Management issues
- ❖ Cost of education
- ❖ Gender equity in enrolment and retention
- ❖ Inclusion of civil society in the process

## 2.2.2 Civil Society

There are many civil society actors involved in the education sector in Cameroon especially in the Provinces that are more educationally backwards like the Eastern, Adamaowa and the far North Province. These civil society organisations have only just been able to constitute themselves into a coalition. The Coalition of Education Civil Society Organisations in Cameroon (COSCEC) has been build following the administrative structure of Cameroon this is to allow for collaboration and partnering with the government at all levels. This structure is composed of;

- A National Co-ordination which has to be supported with a light secretariat.
- Provincial Co-ordinations
- Divisional Co-ordinations
- Sub-Divisional Co-ordinations
- District Co-ordinations
- Village Co-ordinations

These co-ordinations are composed of one or more CSOs and the criteria for these co-ordinations have been suggested as follows;

- CSO based at national capital to be in charge of the National Co-ordination depending on experience
- Provincial bureau to be formed considering their experience and expertise and bearing in mind their material and human resources
- National impact/already involved in EFA
- Human resources
- Take into account gender parity
- Logistics and material means
- Availability and competence
- Legalised organisation
- Operation in educational sector
- Track record (at least two years)
- Functional office
- Commitment to meet financial engagement
- Legal structure with recognised activities
- Scope of activities
- Identity (Organisation must have an address)
- Accessibility

Following a participatory process the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO) was nominated to be the lead agency for the coalition. NACALCO would therefore take the lead on the following issues:

- Articulate objectives based on the issues / strategies
- Develop an interim work plan and priorities
- Disseminate report and develop common mechanism
- Engage other stakeholders
- Contact government and seek space for submission to the CEF
- Begin the process of identifying lobby/advocacy/campaign issues
- Make recommendations to fine tune the process
- Draft criteria for membership

## **Private Sector**

The Private sector is a major provider of pre-primary, primary and secondary school education in Cameroon, with some private individuals/organizations venturing into the provision of tertiary education.

## **International Development Agencies**

Some of the international agencies working in Cameroon are UNESCO UNICEF, DFID, World Bank, USAID, GTZ, CIDA and the Netherlands Development Agency. UNESCO being the lead agency on the EFA process is working with a team of experts to develop the country's EFA plan. At Dakar one of the criteria set out for which any country's plan would be acceptable was that of civil society participation in the planning. In Cameroon NACALCO is the only civil society organization that was included on this team of experts. It is not clear whether their inclusion is enough representation from civil society. UNESCO has however been credited with having aided the establishments of its own CC NGOs one of which is the Network for Education for All (REPTAC).

UNICEF is working on pre- school and primary education, youth skills acquisition, sexuality education, teacher training and materials development, with emphasis on encouraging girl-child education. UNICEF works mainly through the government and supports the information management system. However, it has also supported some CSOs especially those involved in non-formal education.

## **3.0 TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OF WORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The contextual analysis reveals several gaps in the Education policy landscape. These include: inadequate funding, capacity, access, language, and culture, concept of citizenship, centralization, community participation, implementation, data, management, curriculum design and development, quality and gender equity.

### **3.2 Aims & Objectives**

The overall aim of this SPW is to strengthen the voices of civil society in EFA policy and other issues in Cameroon and internationally. The main objectives are:

- a) To strengthen the policy capacities of the civil society in Cameroon;
- b) To support civil society involvement in the governance of education; and
- c) To synergise and strengthen civil society, the private sector and Government partnerships at the various levels in the provision of EFA in Cameroon.

### **3.3 Thrusts of Work**

During this Strategy period, work will focus on four main strands, namely: Networking, Capacity Building, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization. Although we identify three levels for programme

work, namely: Divisional, Provincial and National levels – the level responsible for implementing basic education programmes, as well as in ensuring a strong civil society movement of EFA is built and strengthened at the National level.

### **3.4 Critical Linkages**

#### **3.4.1 Gender**

To achieve the overall aim of this SPW, the promotion of gender is considered critical in all our work. The empowerment of women and girls and promoting gender equity will be pivotal to achieving our goal and objectives. We will work with the poor, their organizations, government and civil society to promote and implement policies that support women's rights to education and ensure gender equity in education.

#### **3.4.2**

Linkages will be created between actions at the village, District, Provincial and National levels to ensure feeding into and out of each other, enabling lesson learning and sharing. We realize that actions at all levels must be deliberately linked and subsequently linked to work at the sub-regional and regional levels.

#### **3.4.3 Strategies for addressing key issues**

Indicative key activities at the various levels have been identified as follows: -

The issues earlier identified have been reduced to key issues with various strategies suggested to address these key issues.

1. Funding
  - a. Source of information
  - b. Information on budget formulation and tracking
  - c. Other sources- government, community and international partners
  - d. Link with parliament
  - e. Need to institute a lobbying group
  - f. Government to have clear information dissemination system
2. Accountability
  - a. Allocation
  - b. Empowering school management committees
  - c. Transparent quotation process for contracts
3. Decentralisation
  - a. Local community participation
  - b. Sensitisation
  - c. Management of budget from local levels
  - d. Decentralisation of resources
  - e. Introduction of local demand for national curriculum
4. Information/ materials
  - a. Availability
  - b. Maintenance
5. Gender
  - a. Sensitisation
  - b. More female teachers
  - c. Schools close to community
  - d. Gender sensitive facility
  - e. Reduction of house hold chores for girls
  - f. Discourage early marriages
  - g. Re-entry / Bridging programmes

- h. Curriculum
  - i. Gender Desks
  - j. Community participation
  - k. More financing
  - l. Incentive
6. HIV/AIDS
    - a. Education
    - b. Training of teachers
    - c. More funding
    - d. Scholarship
    - e. Counselling
  7. Disability
    - a. Special trained teachers
    - b. Integration of children into normal schools
    - c. Provision of special amenities
    - d. Complete scholarship
  8. Socio-cultural barriers
    - a. Flexible school time
    - b. Functional education
    - c. Community participation
    - d. Special training for special needs
  9. Information
    - a. Identify targets and disseminate information
  10. Community participation
    - a. Involve community
  11. Role of civil society
    - a. Identify the role of civil society
  12. Capacity Building
  13. Teacher issues
    - a. Access to training and retraining
  14. Curriculum
    - a. Socio- cultural values
  15. Literacy
    - a. Revive and make operational community centres
    - b. Language
    - c. Complementarily between local and international languages

Core criteria of CEF	objective	Sub-objectives	Activities
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1. strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks	capacity building	Institutional support to coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing juridical framework of coalition;</li> <li>- assistance to the functioning of the coalition secretariat(human and material resources);</li> <li>- identification of all education CSOs and other education partners plus their domain of activities(in relation to EFA) at the divisional, provincial and ultimately national levels,</li> <li>- establishing divisional representation for the coalition through participatory and democratic processes. (The coalition must come out with a programme of work accompanied by a logical frame showing activities in the long term, mid term and short term.</li> </ul>
		Information and best practice sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing internal and external information systems for the coalition(database of education CSOs, a mailing list);</li> <li>- sharing of activity reports or making others aware of activities on the field well before time and after time;</li> <li>- develop appropriate reporting and documentation systems;</li> <li>- working out a media policy</li> </ul>
		Baseline studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the exact situation in Cameroon in relation to the six EFA goals(Millennium Development goals), where statistics or indices are not available-make studies to establish them, work together especially with international NGOs and Government to establish the exact situation for assessment of progress to be easily done;</li> <li>- what exactly are CSOs doing in relation to EFA(and gender equity)</li> <li>- what is the coverage of the coalition of the country and of its individual member CSOs.</li> </ul>
		Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop practical partnerships with Government at all levels and INGOs</li> <li>- Establish linkages with regional and international networks</li> </ul>

		Policy and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish a lobbying group for the coalition on policy issues</li> <li>- organise sensitisation campaigns</li> </ul>
Enabling local communities to monitor government spending in education on education both at national and local levels	Capacity building	Basic accounting skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparing budgets,</li> <li>- elaborating them,</li> <li>- executing them,</li> <li>- reporting on the execution;</li> <li>- accountancy and accountability and transparency,</li> <li>- budget tracking</li> <li>- monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>
Supporting innovative ways for civil society to ensure that all children, especially girls and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged(including street children, former child soldiers and nomadic children) access primary education	Capacity building	Gender equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify attitudes and cultures that promote gender disparity and advocate that they be changed</li> <li>- How can schools be made girl friendly?</li> </ul>
		Cultural adaptation of education programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bring education programmes to adapt to local realities</li> <li>- ensure that the recent decentralisation policy of the Ministry of National Education is implemented appropriately</li> </ul>
		pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how can the messages be passed across to adults in an appropriate manner</li> </ul>

The execution of any of the activities in the above table is subject to a project whose broad guidelines will be established

### **3.5 Risk Analysis**

In preparing this SPW, three major assumptions have been made: -.

- That the policy environment will remain supportive and favourable during the Strategy period.
- That the Government and civil society commitment to the vision of EFA is strengthened.
- National Government and civil society continue the partnership in planning, resource mobilization and implementation of the EFA goals beyond the CEF initiative.
- That the different languages will work together.

## **4 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.3 Introduction**

In the Strategy Design Consultation Workshop there was consensus that the government, civil society (including ActionAid Nigeria) and representatives of the International development agencies jointly form the management committee of the CEF in Cameroon. Membership of the committee shall be voluntary and unpaid. The CEF will meet any expenses incurred by the members in attending meetings or carrying out duties other than routine quarterly sittings, as mandated by the CEF Management Committee.

### **4.4 The Governance Structure**

The members would jointly agree on the nomination of the Chair of this Committee. This committee would meet at least once every three months and will be obliged to conduct its business as transparently as possible.

### **4.5 Suggested Terms of Reference**

The following are envisaged as the key roles of the Management Committee.

1. To agree an overall SPW, with input and consultation from relevant stakeholders which is in line with the purpose, aims and objectives of the CEF;
2. To consider and approve actions and activities from a range of stakeholders which seek to contribute to the achievement of the SPW;
3. Provide oversight function and to monitor progress of activities;
4. To relate with and provide reports as required by the Fund;
5. To oversee the conduct of overall monitoring and evaluation of the CEF;
6. To bid for additional resources to meet the existing gap or expanded SPW in Cameroon; and
7. To publicly call for, receive, assess and approve proposals.
8. Be responsible to the key stakeholders that constituted them.
9. Formulate criteria for disbursement.
10. Produce blue print for accounting for funds.

### **4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation will be an integral part of the implementation of this SPW. Participatory monitoring and evaluation through annual reviews and reflection processes and impact assessments will be the main forms of monitoring and evaluation. Strategic planning and stakeholder review workshops will be held regularly to evaluate the progress and to consider revision of the plan to meet new and emerging demands. The primary purpose of monitoring and evaluation will be to enhance learning and sharing about our work together with our partners.

The indicators developed during these planning sessions and other critical success indicators will guide and influence organizational decision-making and implementation management. The Management Information System (MIS) will be important in monitoring performance and supporting decision-making.

The financial management system will also facilitate the monitoring of cost effectiveness of programmes and other activities. Regular management and programme reports providing summaries on status, baseline information and performance (i.e. quantity, quality and effectiveness of activities implemented) would also be another important process of monitoring and evaluation.

## **5 The Budget**

In establishing the priorities to be supported by the CEF, reference is made to the core criteria of CEF. In order of priority these are as follows: -

1. Strengthen civil society participation in design and implementation of national and local education plans especially through support for broad based national alliances and coalitions;
2. Enable local communities to monitor spending on education at levels; and
3. To support innovative ways for communities to ensure that all children are able to access quality education within a framework of national plans.

Budget priorities have been established based on the above priorities. It is envisaged that although the bulk of the funding will go towards supporting innovative activities at district level as well as supporting civil society in monitoring expenditures, strengthening policy and advocacy capacity at all levels is critical in enabling engagement by civil society at all levels.

## Appendix 1

### **REPORT OF THE COALITION BUILDING FORUM OF EDUCATION CIVIL SOCIETY**

#### **Opening ceremony**

A coalition forming workshop was held in Yaounde Cameroon from the 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> of February 2003. The meeting was officially opened at 10.30 am by Professor Maurice Tadadjeu after which Madame Sarah Kala Lobe delivered the welcome address.

**Welcome address:** While delivering her welcome address Madame Kala Lobe thanked the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) through ActionAid for facilitating the process of building a national coalition of civil society actors for Education for All (EFA). She said there is a network on education called REPTAC which has been in existence since 1997 however she noted the absence of a national coalition on EFA specifically and stated that the process of forming the coalition be well thought out and properly articulated in order that it may maximise the benefit of achieving EFA goals and address the following:

- Lack of viable policy on ECCD
- Girls and women's literacy
- Policy for the disabled and marginalized
- Monitoring resource allocation to education
- Information and communication issues

**Address:** Mr. Charles Abani the Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria made a brief presentation and said that ActionAid was established in 1972 and is the third largest development agency in the UK. He said that ActionAid works directly with over 5 million of the world's poorest people in more than 30 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. ActionAid vision is "a world without poverty and in which every person can exercise his or her right to life of dignity" and Mission is "to work with the poor and marginalized people to eradicate poverty by overcoming the injustices and inequities that cause it" and mentioned humility, honesty, accountability and participation as its values.

He further explained that there are links between poverty and education therefore the need to achieve the six EFA goals. At Dakar, the need for civil society participation in the education planning and implementation process was emphasised and the only substantial fund available to support civil society since Dakar is the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF). The CEF is to be managed by three agencies Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK and ActionAid and ActionAid is managing the process in Nigeria and oversees Cameroon because non of the three agencies exist in Cameroon.

ActionAid Nigeria has come to Cameroon to explore the possibility of facilitating the CEF process emphasising that the process is wholly Cameroonian and ActionAid Nigeria is happy to be guided by Cameroon.

Steps:

- Understanding who the players are in Cameroon
- To organise and agree a process
- Partnership with stakeholders ( CBO, NGO, faith based organisation, PTA, donors, INGO and the government)
- Transparent and accountable process linking grassroots level to the top
- Work plan

After Mr. Abani's remarks, Professor Tadadjeu who chaired the opening ceremony also explained the process of the day he started by introducing the officials for the workshop and that was followed by introduction of participants. There were 35 organisations representing the 10 Provinces (Centre 10, South 1, Adamawa 2, North 1, Far North 1, North West 5, South West 4, Littoral 7 West 2 and East 2) Participants were requested to submit their correct names, address, name of organisation and activities carried out by their organisation in writing to the organisers of the workshop.

The opening ceremony ended at 11am.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Presentation of the Cameroon Education for All Plan**

**Chair: Mr. Charles Abani**

A representative of the Cameroonian Government made a presentation on the national action plan for the EFA by first presenting the context, stating the six EFA goals of early child hood care, access to and free and compulsory primary education of good quality, equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme, achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 especially for women, eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary schools by 2005 and improving all aspects of quality education explaining that a seventh goal of developing an active and responsible culture of citizenship based on common values was added.

He also gave the situational analysis in Cameroon, listed five strategies for achieving the goals and also articulated the mechanisms for management. After the brief explanations a question and answer session followed:

Question 1: Why did you say the success of the implementation programme of the national EFA plan will depend on the political will of the Cameroonian government?

Answer: Government has a responsibility to provide education so support must come from the highest level of government to show commitment to education.

Question 2: What is the expected role of civil society?

Answer: Government alone can not deliver education therefore the civil society should fill in the gap and complement government efforts since it has structures from national to grassroots level.

Question 3: What is the responsibility of the steering committee, who will set it up and how "progressively" will it be set up?

Answer: National plans of action require money for execution therefore the government relies on the international community to sponsor programmes while the government will provide the balance of the funds. In other words the sponsors will choose what activities they intend to fund between 2003 and 2005.

Question 4: The national policy says that by 2015 primary education should be compulsory and free, what set is the government taking to ensure this giving that nursery and primary education is mostly in private hands today?

Answer: We admit that there are some problems but since government alone can not provide education, it continues to encourage the private sector to participate. However government will continue to work towards attaining education for all.

Question 5: What is autonomous technical committee?

What is the new structure?

Are you looking at training local language teachers?

Answer: We regret that the validated action plan has not been circulated other wise your questions have been answered.

Question 6: What is the expectation for civil society?

Answer: To build capacity for consistency and our expectation is that you will help government deliver EFA goals.

Question 7: How will the EFA goals be achieved without compromising early childhood care?

Answer: You referred me to goal one I will also refer you to the subsequent goals.

Question 8: HIV/AIDS pandemic is a big problem so is corruption and other ills how does the government intend to deal with these issues of HIV/AIDS, corruption and others?

Answer: That is why we added citizenship education due to our peculiar circumstances our donors have welcomed our stand on the matter.

Question 9: Civil society did not participate in the planning process so how can it now buy into the process?

Answer: NACALCO and UNESCO were represented on the committee it is unfortunate that due to several constraints including finance not all NGOs could be represented stating that even at the coalition forming meeting not all actors are present. He however went on to say that whatever recommendations emanate at the end of the work shop will be incorporated in the document.

## **2. The Role of civil society in EFA-ANCEFA**

### **Chair: Madame Sarah Kala Lobe**

The paper on civil society participation was presented by Monsieur Gorgui Sow the Coordinator of African Network Coalition on Education for All (ANCEFA). He started by explaining that civil society presentation gained prominence after the Dakar meeting and that civil society participation is one of the criteria for endorsing any action plan. Civil society has also moved from just service delivery to creating demand for education this change in perspective has raised new challenges such as understanding the role of civil society and indeed seeing it as subversive.

He went on to say that in other to look at civil society participation a research of 25 countries was carried out and it was found that participation is not mere consultation but active involvement in the planning and implementation of programmes. ANCEFA therefore sets the following criteria for participation:

- The recognition of civil society as partners
- Roles must be clearly spelt out
- There must be dialogue at the national, sub regional and regional levels
- Information sharing and best practice
- Follow up on EFA initiatives

Each of the listed criteria has further conditions for example in the first criteria civil society must ensure that it is legitimate, content in message and that there is common vision within the EFA goals.

#### ANCEFA perspective

- National coalition must meet the above mentioned criteria
- Coalitions must bring in NGOs and CSOs working in related areas
- Information communication to act as a consultative mechanism and sharing of experiences
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Coalition will take part in political dialogue
- Put in place thematic goals of the EFA

ANCEFA coordinator mentioned countries like Ghana, Burkina Faso and Nigeria where coalitions have been formed and have set consultative roles therefore making the civil society in these countries to be respected indeed that in Nigeria the EFA Coordinator today was the coordinator of the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) about a year ago. He then said that Cameroon is referred to as a high risk area because of fear that it may not achieve the EFA goals of 2005 and 2015. He therefore called upon civil society to sound the alarm for government and all actors in the EFA to move the process forward.

In concluding his presentation ANCEFA coordinator wanted to know from the government representative what the EFA process in Cameroon will cost and also what government involvement will be. The representative of government apologise for his inability to have presented the budget while making his presentation and stating time as the main constraint. He went further to give the break down as seen in the table below

EDUCATION FOR ALL PLAN: Financial structure
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Kind of cost	Cost (Million FCFA)				MINED UC	Other Ministries	Donors	Total
	MIN EDU C	Others Ministries	DONORS	Total				
<b>Objectives</b>	103	8	284	395	26	2	72	100
<b>Investment</b>	137	8	750	895	15	1	84	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	240	16	1034	1291	19	1	80	100

Case study: The ANCEFA coordinator made mention of the Gambian experience where government in partnership with ActionAid translated the EFA recommendations to local languages which was in turn sent to schools for dissemination this action he said should be considered as best practice and should be replicated in other countries.

### **3. Common issues for Cameroon Civil Society on EFA**

Professor Tadadjeu started his paper by noting that the meeting being held was a privilege for Cameroonian civil society and said the meeting was coming at a time when the Cameroonian civil society through the Federation of Cameroonian Civil Society Organisation (FOSCAM) has developed a common vision for action marked by the concept of common programmes and decentralisation. He identified the problems affecting basic education as quality, access and said the civil society is handicapped in carrying out any intervention as it is saddled with the problem of poor communication. He explained that internal and external communication must be handled well for meaningful progress to be made.

Mr Abani contributed to the paper on common issues by saying that communication can not be for the sake of communication but that communication must create voice, open up space and create demand. Communication therefore must be a process that enables civil society to contribute to the EFA goals.

Announcement on financial matters

#### **Home work**

- What are the key issues in the education sector in Cameroon and how should civil society be involved in addressing them?
- Have been presented the outline EFA plan, what is this forum's feeling about it and what strategies should be employed to engage constructively with government?
- How must we organise ourselves (coalition or other wise) to maximise our voice in positive input into the EFA process in Cameroon?
- What strategies will the forum evolve to ensure that national initiatives are in line with regional and international levels?

The first day ended at 5.30pm

## **DAY TWO**

Day two commenced with Mr. Abani apologising for the late start and informed the house of a draft agenda for the day.

### **Recap**

Recap of the previous day's work was done by Francis. He said that there were four main issues:

- Introductions
- Presentation of EFA plan
- Civil society participation in the EFA process
- Communication

After the recap Mr Abani presented the draft agenda for the day after discussions it was adopted. He also said that there will be four working groups two English and two French after discussions it was agreed that language was not necessarily a problem therefore groups were randomly selected and interpreters were requested to join the groups to assist with interpretation. On the issue of forming groups based on thematic areas it was noted that the issues was one of engagement and not thematic.

### **Group Work**

**What are the critical EFA issues emerging from the process so far?**

#### **Group 1: Issues**

- Access
- Quality
- Recourses
- Infrastructure
- Language
- Information
- Culture/ religion
- Curriculum
- Accountability

#### **Group 2: Issues**

- Concept of citizenship
- Centralisation
- Curriculum
- Community participation
- Special education

### **Group 3: Issues**

- Limited awareness of EFA Process
- Investment in teachers
- Limited capacity
- Unclear of civil society role
- After basic education what next?
- Inadequate finance
- HIV/AIDS

### **Group 4: Issues**

- Free education for all children
- Quality of education
- Management issues
- Training
- Literacy issues
- Gender balance

### **Plenary**

#### **Common issues:**

- Information
- Funding
- School curriculum
- Quality of education
- Teachers issues
- Community participation

Mr. Abani reminded the house of the prominent issues at Dakar which include gender and civil society participation and that if civil society does not have the capacity how can it engage with government on education issues. He requested Madame Sarah Kala Lobe to moderate the plenary session and look at other pressing issues that may have been omitted or only mentioned once during the group work.

### **Strategies for addressing key issues identified**

#### **Group 1**

- Funding
  - Source of information
  - Information on budget formulation and tracking
  - Other sources- government, community and international partners

- Link with parliament
- Need to institute a lobbying group
- Government to have clear information dissemination system
- Accountability
  - Allocation
  - Empowering school management committee
  - Transparent quotation process for contracts
- Decentralisation
  - Local community participation
  - Sensitisation
  - Management of budget from local levels
  - Decentralisation of resources
  - Introduction of local demand for national curriculum
- Information/ materials
  - Availability
  - Maintenance

## **Group 2**

- Gender
  - Sensitisation
  - More female teacher
  - Schools close to community
  - Gender sensitive facility
  - Reduction of house hold chores for girls
  - Discourage early marriages
  - Re-entry / Bridging programmes
  - Curriculum
  - Gender Desks
  - Community participation
  - More financing
  - Incentive
- HIV/AIDS
  - Education
  - Training of teachers
  - More funding
  - Scholarship
  - Counselling
- Disability
  - Special trained teachers
  - Integrations of children into normal schools
  - Provision of special amenities
  - Complete scholarship
- Socio-cultural barriers
  - Flexible school time
  - Functional education

- Community participation
- Special training for special needs

### **Group 3**

- Information
  - Identify targets and disseminate information
- Community participation
  - Involve community
- Role of civil society
  - Identify the role of civil society
- Capacity Building

### **Group 4**

- Teacher issues
  - Access to training and retraining
- Curriculum
  - Socio- cultural values
- Literacy
  - Revive and operational community centres
- Language
  - Cameroonian languages should compliment between local and international language

### **Plenary**

This session was anchored by Monsieur Gorgui Sow who gave an over view of what the expectation for the session was and advised that individual and collective experiences within Cameroon be used. But first he emphasised the need to agree to form a coalition saying that without an operational structure the strategies agreed on can not be implemented. He noted that the process must be well thought out, articulate and agreed on at the National, Provincial, Divisional Sub-Divisional, District and village levels the process can not therefore be hap hazard.

He advised Cameroon to put in place coalition that will be a force to recon with and which structure can address the EFA goals. He also suggested that the process be guided by two principles:

- Process must be simple
- Process must comply with and respect the administrative structure of Cameroon

These two principles are useful in demand and suggested the following criteria:

- Experience within the EFA framework

- Organisation with activities on the field
- Logistic

## **Mechanisms for addressing issues/ strategies**

### **Group 1**

#### **Structure:**

- National
- Provincial
- Divisional
- Sub-Divisional
- District
- Village

#### **Criteria:**

- CSO based at national capital should be in charge depending on experience
- Provincial bureau will be formed considering their experience and expertise not forgetting their material and human resource

### **Group 2**

#### **Structure:**

Name: Coalition of civil society organisation in Cameroon

- National
- Provincial
- Divisional
- District
- Villages

#### **Criteria:**

### **Group 3**

#### **Structure:**

Name: Task force

- National
- Provincial
- Divisional
- Sub-Divisional

#### **Criteria:**

- Legalised organisation
- Operation in educational sector
- Track record (at least two years)
- Functional office
- Commitment to meet financial engagement

### **Group 4**

#### **Structure:**

- National
- Provincial
- Division

**Criteria:**

- Legal structure with recognised activities
- Scope of activities
- Competences and experiences and track record
- Organisation must have an address
- Accessibility

**NOMINATIONS**

It was suggested that participants meet according to Provinces and nominate representatives who will then be presented to the house. After extensive deliberations the following were nominated:

- ANACALCO: 8
- ACCD: 7
- REPTAC: 5
- EEF: 2
- CAMAUW: 1
- ACAPPEN: 1
- BASED: 1

As a result, ANACALCO was nominated as the lead agency for the National level. While making an acceptance speech Professor Tadadjeu, the leader of NACALCO thanked all for the confidence reposed in his organisation and requested that both ACCD and REPTAC join NACALCO in managing the process.

**Next step**

NACALCO would therefore take the lead on these following issues:

- Articulate objectives based on the issues / strategies
- Develop an interim work plan and priorities
- Disseminate report and develop common mechanism
- Engage other stakeholders
- Contact government and seek space for submission to the CEF
- Begin the process of identifying lobby/advocacy/campaign issues
- Make recommendation to fine tune the process
- Draft criteria for membership

Mr. Abani summed up the activities of the day as follows:

- We know broadly what Cameroon EFA plan says
- We have the commitment of government to involve organised civil society in the process
- We have discussed the main issues that civil society feel are important
- We have identified some of the strategies for addressing these
- We have agreed an interim structure and process for moving forward

- We have mandated NACALCO to lead this process

The day ended at 5.30pm

### **Day Three**

The day commenced at 9.30am with Mr. Abani apologising for the late start of activities stating that we were waiting for power point machine and the agenda. After which he called on Monsieur Gorgui Sow to deliver a paper on the history of civil society involvement in EFA.

### **History of Civil Society Involvement in EFA**

#### **Pre-Dakar**

- No African driven campaign only Northern campaign (ELINU, EDUCATION NOW, Oxfam and ActionAid...)
  - ELINU's objective was to mobilise civil society to redress the failures of Jomtien
  - Oxfam sort to achieve the same objective
- No space for Africa in the area of policy dialogue on EFA
- Disorganised civil society in most African countries
- No idea on the contribution of the civil society in achieving Jomtien
- Pre NGO forum had 350 civil society world wide only 8 were Africans
- Africa did not have her own voice

#### **Dakar**

- Conflict in the global campaign members on priorities in Africa
- Africa region did not have space for concentration on EFA before
- Civil society participation is one criteria for financing EFA plan
- A global initiative for financing education has been launched
- UNESCO has been identified as the lead organisation to facilitate policy dialogue between the actors
  - UNESCO facilitated the emergence of REPTAC

#### **Post Dakar**

- Emergence of ANCEFA (25 coalitions)
- Global Campaign for Education (GCE) position on financing have become more visible
- More pressure on donors
- Launch of the Fast Track
- GCE and ANCEFA position paper is yet to Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and conditionality
- Monitoring EFA becomes more of a priority (Report 1 and 2)
- Two High Level group

- ANCEFA is a member of the GCE board and regional focal point of CCNGO
- Huge consultation of CSO in Malawi on EFA

## **ANCEFA**

At Dakar it was clear that African civil society was disorganised therefore there was the need to do something this led to the emergence of the African Independent Network which led to the creation of the African Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA) in May 2001 in Abuja. ANACEFA is a regional network with representing 25 African coalitions. There a sub-regional offices in Ghana for West Africa, Tanzania for East Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa none yet in North Africa.

### **Challenges**

- Not enough finances to be able to achieve the six EFA goals
- Even where there is funding the conditionality attached are almost unattainable

### **Achievement**

- National coalitions
- Some level of capacity being built
  - Advocacy skills
  - Budget tracking
  - Quality of education and literacy
- Emergence of "voice"
- National funding

Participants sort clarification on the type of conditionality and after discussions Mr. Abani was called upon to make a presentation on the Commonwealth Education Fund

## **Commonwealth Education Fund**

### **Goal of the fund**

The goal of CEF is to ensure that all Commonwealth children have access to, and complete, good quality primary education by 2015. In reaching this goal, gender equity in school completion will be achieved in all Commonwealth countries by 2005.

## **Aim of the fund**

The aim of the fund is to help strengthen the capacity of civil society in developing Commonwealth countries to help governments ensure that the poorest and most marginalized children are able to enrol in and complete good quality primary education.

## **Activities to be supported by the funds**

1. Institutional support to coalitions and networks
2. Capacity building for advocacy, lobby and policy work
3. Budget tracking
4. Policy research and advocacy
5. Supporting hard to reach groups to gain policy access
6. Networking, information sharing and best practice
7. Exposure visits
8. Institutional support to coalitions and networks
9. Capacity building for advocacy, lobby and policy work
10. Budget tracking
11. Policy research and advocacy
12. Supporting hard to reach groups to gain policy access
13. Networking, information sharing and best practice
14. Exposure visits

## **Who can benefit**

1. Civil society in partnership with government
2. Low income commonwealth countries
3. Regional networks and coalitions
4. Other commonwealth organisations outside the commonwealth countries through the Comic Relief

## **How much is available**

The CEF has a take off grant of £10 million and this is allocated based on population and size. The CEF is growing through fund raising activities and the additional funds will be reallocated by a formula to be agreed. Cameroon will get an initial allocation off £150,000.00 (out of which the start –up would be charged).

## **Duration**

The fund is for a period of three and a half years commencing April 2002 and terminating December 2005 this is intended to coincide with, and draw attention to the first international development goal of gender equity.

## **Management of funds**

The fund is to be managed jointly by ActionAid UK, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK. In each country where these three agencies exist they will agree on which of the agency will take a lead in that country with the support of the other two agencies. ActionAid is the international lead agency for the CEF.

## **Process so far**

1. MOU has been signed with DFID
2. Finance procedures have been agreed upon
3. Modality workshop held in Nairobi 2002
4. Countries and ANCEFA have submitted their strategic programme of work to CEF by September 2002

## **Cameroon**

None of the three agencies has presence in Cameroon therefore ActionAid Nigeria has been requested to oversee the process of managing the CEF process of accessing the funds in Cameroon.

## **Tasks before Cameroon**

1. Develop a clear understanding of CEF focus
2. Agree an inclusive and participatory process for defining the Strategic Programme of work
3. Set up an appropriate management process
4. Agree on mechanisms for disbursement of funds
5. Monitoring and evaluation process

## **Group work**

- Agree on priority areas that the CEF will address in Cameroon and levels of intervention
- Input to oversight mechanism
- Develop some basic monitoring indicators

## **Group 1**

### **Priority areas**

- Capacity building
- Institutional support
- Information and best practice sharing
- Feasibility studies
- Community participation

### **Oversight mechanism**

Have a management committee with representatives from:

- PTA
- Ministry of External Relations
- Ministry of Education
- Teachers union
- Religious organisations

### **Indicators**

- High enrolment rate
- Success rate
- Pupil- teacher ratio
- Drop out rate
- Balanced representation
- Increase in the capacity of civil society

### **Group 2**

#### **Priority areas**

- Institutional building of coalition
- Capacity building
- Communication/ information
- Inventory of education NGOs
- Exchange

### **Oversight mechanism**

Create ActionAid in Cameroon to be supported by:

- Association representatives
- Ministry of Education
- Associate NGO with specialisation in financial management

### **Indicators**

- Increased rate of gender parity
- Reduction in failure and drop out rates
- Increased access to education for the under privileged
- Improvement in teacher quality and ratio

### **Group 3**

#### **Priority areas**

- Strengthen capacity
  - Production of basic document
  - Draw up plan of action

- Hold seminar to validate constitution and work plan
- Audit of all education CSOs
- Training on project elaboration monitoring and evaluation
- Budget tracking
- Information gathering
- Elaboration of a strategic document for the coalition

### **Oversight mechanism**

Management committee with representatives from:

- Presidency
- Financial sector
- Treasury
- Representative of ActionAid Nigeria
- Representative of government
- Plan International
- FOSCAM

### **Indicators**

- Effective functioning of coalition
- Effective communication within members and with the public
- Members of coalition are members of the steering of EFA process at various levels
- Lobby initiatives are actually integrated in policies

### **Group 4**

#### **Priority areas**

- Institutional support
- Legal framework

#### **Oversight mechanism**

Management committee of three people (one from government)

#### **Indicators**

Baseline studies to be carried out at the field using activity report

#### **Plenary**

#### **Key trends**

#### **Priority areas**

- Institutional support
- Networking process sharing information and best practice

- Capacity building
- Mapping
- Feasibility studies

### **Oversight mechanism**

Management committee

- government representation
- ActionAid Nigeria
- Two others

### **Indicators**

Baseline studies on current involvement of civil society in the EFA process

### **Activities that can be carried out by the new coalition**

The coalition was informed about the activities to be carried out during the Global Week of Action and was requested to participate.

The forum closed at 4.15pm with a vote of thanks by Professor Tadadjeu.