

CEF Cameroon Strategy Programme of work

January 2005 to March 2007

Executive Summary

The CEF Cameroon strategy for the next two years will evolve around five main points

1. Support to coalition institution and programmes
2. capacity building for CSOs
3. funding of programmes/projects around the three core criteria
4. GAW and international lobbying
5. and follow up

Key priorities in the three criteria for 2005 to 2007 and Central activities planned to achieve these key activities are:

1. Strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks
 - a. Support to coalition institution and programmes
 - i. Help ensure Recruitment of policy and programme advisor in an open, transparent and participatory manner
 - ii. Support this officer to help plan and deliver coalition programmes
 - iii. Support general assembly and executive board meetings
 - b. Capacity building for CSOs
 - i. Project proposal writing and reporting seminar
 - ii. Project management seminar
 - iii. Mainstreaming gender seminar
 - c. Fund of projects
 - i. Call for projects
 - ii. study and fund projects
 - d. Support to GAW/international lobbying
 - i. Support to celebrations of GAW and subsequent follow up activities
 - ii. Support membership of coalition to regional and international lobby networks
 - e. Partnerships
 - i. Help in identification and networking of partners/partners meetings
 - ii. Help involve corporate sector
 - f. Management committee and CEF secretariat
 - i. Meetings
 - ii. Facilitation
 - iii. support to programmes
 - iv. AAIN staff retreat
2. Enabling local communities to monitor government spending in education on education both at national and local levels
 - a. Capacity building
 - i. Budget tracking seminar
 - b. Fund relevant projects
3. 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
 - a. Research
 - b. Fund relevant projects

0. Introduction

The CEF Cameroon process began in Cameroon in August 2002 at a smaller scale and in February 2003 it took a larger dimension with the implication of over 50 stakeholders including individual CSOs, government, national and international networks, and INGOs. The process has helped to put in place the Coalition of Education Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon (COSCEC); and has effectively supported this coalition financially, technically and logistically. The coalition formed in February 2003; recognised by the Ministry of Education as a partner and recognised by UNESCO as the framework in country for harmonising and coordinating the work of education CSOs since November 2003; it claims the membership of over 60 organisations. CEF Cameroon has so far engaged in dialogue to bring teachers Unions (FESER), women's Movements (FAWECAM) and human rights movements (global march against child labour) to support and strengthen the coalition voice. In this process, a good number of education CSOs and partners have been identified in Cameroon across the ten administrative provinces. Grassroots organisations have been involved in the process and they have demonstrated a high level of voluntary work. The EFA process has reached a larger public attention and understanding as a result of the introduction of the CEF Cameroon. Not only has the CEF Cameroon provided the opportunity for this plan to be explained to a cross section of education CSOs, it has also helped in the wider dissemination of the plan. Partnerships between the Government, INGOs and local NGOs have been intensified further by providing forums for exchanges and actively engaging partners in education. NGOs have developed a greater feeling to work together. There is an increase in the engagement with government of CSO representatives in education policy discussions. The CEF Cameroon has increased the intensity and extent of the celebration of the GAW (EFA week) in Cameroon by helping to take the celebration to local areas and to involve CSOs much more in this. The above is an indication that the CEF criteria one is being met in Cameroon, although the intensity and the extent of engagement of CSOs in policy influencing has not been commensurate with the favourable environment which has so far been created since the start of CEF Cameroon.

By the end of the year 2003, it was evident that Cameroon could not realistically embark on delivering the CEF around the three core criteria. Consequently, adjustments to the strategy programme of work refocused CEF Cameroon on delivering just criteria one. Almost all programme activities that have been planned in the strategy to take impetus from the coalition have not happened leading to a general delay in the programmes earmarked in the previous strategy.

The Management Committee had raised a number of questions in response to the Cameroon approved strategy for 2003 to 2005. These questions included:

1. How are the activities of the national coalition going to connect to the local level?
2. Are there going to be Regional/Provincial Strategies that the national strategy will be feeding from and if so how are they going to be developed
3. Details on activities that will be carried out to support the attainment of CEF aims and how they will lead to the actualisation of the goals.
4. How is the national coalition planning to engage with INGOs, UNICEF, UNESCO and faith-based groups, with a view to presenting a common advocacy voice, as well as ensuring that the national coalition is not undermined?
5. How is the national coalition ensuring that it is not dominated by one agency so that it is broad based and owned by the stakeholders?

The answers to these questions were very much theoretical as they rather specified plans or vision on the functioning of the coalition. It was hoped that an upward and downward flow of information was going to connect activities of the national coalition to the local level.

The provincial coalition representatives actually participated actively in the development of the national strategy, and submitted partial provincial strategies. But there wasn't any follow up at the central level and the process was consequently stalled.

There were enough details on activities to be carried out to support the attainment of CEF aims and how they would lead to the actualisation of goals. Unfortunately, the CEF was not a direct implementer of its programmes. And no matter the clarity of the activities, the CEF Cameroon could take a horse to the stream but couldn't force it to drink water.

It was hoped that the coalition would build on the conviviality and solidarity that was already existing between individual CSOs and INGOs, UNICEF, UNESCO, FBOs to formalise and consolidate working relations with the latter.

At the beginning, many proposals coming from provincial representatives of the coalition fed the decisions taken at the national level. Things seemed to be well especially as the previous strategy plan was developed in consultation with over 50 stake holders. This momentum did not continue for a long time as no appropriate measures were really taken to ensure that the coalition is not dominated by one agency. To make the coalition broad based, the CEF Cameroon engaged in dialogue with existing smaller networks like Global March against child labour, CONGEF(Network of Faith Based Associations) and the teachers unions. These efforts have not fully materialised as these do not see the feasibility of coalition activities on the field.

The CEF Cameroon process has raised to a high degree a sense of collective and national education conscience what remains is education on this. During the review, CSOs expressed greater enthusiasm to go ahead with the coalition and its programmes. Almost half of the fears were on the issue of decisions taken not implemented as has been the case for the last two years. With all support the CSOs haven't been able to advance, this means highly institutional inadequacies and weaknesses and the complete lack of a collective consciousness for national education. Looking at education at the macro level is still a big challenge.

CEF Cameroon implementing partners have faced problems hampering their smooth functioning and consequently that of the CEF. These problems as coming out of the review include:

- Absence of team work
- Documentation problems
- Lack of a clear strategy
- Problem of communication
- Structure of COSCEC
- Funding

2. Contextual analysis

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 morbidity 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 are underway since 1985 to harmonise these two systems. Formal education is under four ministries: the Ministry of Basic Education (from nursery to primary education); the Ministry of secondary education, the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training; and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Non formal education(adult literacy) is under four ministries: first the Ministry of Sports and physical education, the Ministry of youth and animation, then the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Women and children Affairs.

As concerns formal education, the gross enrolment rate 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 respectively, 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 a decay of falling standards. The teachers are still insufficient. Those recruited may complete their training and stay for a year or more without their subsistent salaries, rendering them inactive or ineffective within this period.

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.

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 elaboration 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.

More importantly, the Government of Cameroon is committed to involving an organised civil society in the implementation of the EFA Plan in Cameroon.

In a recent decree reorganising the government of Cameroon, a Ministry of Basic Education has been created and its sector strategy is being developed. This may be seen as a step to concentrating on and possibly achieving universal primary education.

One can comfortably say that the situation of the civil society today in Cameroon is better than what used to be before the 90s. There is a good measure of trust between Government institutions and NGOs, which was not the case at first. Both Government institutions and NGOs considered each other as rivals, and the degree of mistrust was very high. Today there is good collaboration and openness between the two, and they work in synergy now. As a veritable tool to efficient development, National NGOs and Associations still need serious support at the level of capacity building if there are to effect the highly needed change.

In the midst of these problems, the government came up in October 2000 with an education sectoral strategy which aims at broadening educational access while eliminating disparity between boys and girls. It is worthy of note that primary education in public schools in Cameroon is free, at least at the level of school fees. The government intends to provide 100% access to both boys and girls by 2008, and completion rate by 2015. The government also plans to improve the quality of basic education, develop vocational education and professional training, as well as improve management and governance through out the educational system. The government is also taking steps to reduce repetition especially in the primary schools system, as well as adopt a new teacher recruitment policy. Its intention to foster professional skills has been manifested by the creation of a Ministry of Technical Education. A sector strategy is being prepared to provide a framework for national vocational and professional training policies, though vocational education still remains at its infancy, and still unstructured.

However, the above plans are the government's ambitions and goal, but these will remain a dream if it does not receive support from national and international partners. So to overcome the multiplicity of problems plaguing education in Cameroon, total commitment from national and especially foreign partners is highly needed and desirable.

There is a high rate of poverty in Cameroon having its perverse effects on education. Cameroon is part of the HIPC initiative. Those with less education, small farmers, farm labourers and non management wage earners in the public sector are particularly affected by poverty especially when it is looked at in monetary terms. As a reflection of the importance of households in the household survey among poor households, 40% have not gone to school. Among the total unschooled population, one household on two is poor. This incidence declines as the household level of education rises. The degree of poverty in households where the head has a higher education is 4.1 %, as against 42.5% for those who have not gone to school. This shows that the higher the level of education, the greater the chance to

earn an income and to escape poverty. With the already dismal poverty situation, if nothing is done, then the possibility for such a situation to continue for a long time. This is so because of the crisis, the percentage of people who were going to school dropped, and the ability to continue to higher schools dropped. Studies have shown that the schooling conditions for the poor are even more alarming. This confirms the fact that there is a significant link between schooling and poverty in Cameroon. The net enrolment rate in Cameroon is 8.8% point lower for children 6 to 14 living in poor families, compared to those in non poor families (74.1% versus 82.9% in 2001) (ICAM 11) This discrepancy is obvious because poor people do not have sufficient income to cover school expenses, and/or that access is more difficult for poor children than for the non poor, or in "regions" that are poor in relation to others. Moreover, education spending is five times higher among non poor families than among poor families (68,001 CFA francs versus 15,973 CFA francs, on average, in 2001): it accounts for 4.2 percent of poor family budgets, and 5.6 percent for non poor families.

Education civil society organisations in Cameroon have identified the following critical EFA issues to address in the Country.

1. Access
2. Quality
3. Resources
4. Infrastructure
5. Language
6. Information
7. Culture/ religion
8. Curriculum
9. Accountability
10. Concept of citizenship
11. Centralisation
12. Curriculum
13. Community participation
14. Special education
15. Limited awareness of EFA Process
16. Investment in teachers
17. Limited capacity
18. Unclear nature of civil society role
19. After basic education what next?
20. Inadequate finance
21. HIV/AIDS
22. Free education for all children
23. Management issues
24. Training
25. Literacy issues
26. Gender balance

3. National level CEF process:

The CEF Cameroon has so far involved a wide range of stakeholders. These include the government through representation in the steering committee from two government ministries, the Ministries of Youth and Sports and that of Education through the EFA Unit. So far the INGOs involved include the managing agency ActionAid International Nigeria and the British council which currently chairs the steering committee. Apart from the larger coalition of

education NGOs existing, the CEF Cameroon has identified and involved other education networks in the process which are Global March Against Child Labour with a membership of over eight NGOs, CONGEF, a network of over 10 FBOs and FESER, the Federation of teachers Unions regrouping three Unions of primary school teachers; secondary and high school teachers and University and higher education teachers. Over 60 individual NGOs are involved in the process including specifically FAWECAM (Forum for African Women Educationalists Cameroon), and Working Group on Girls.

So far CEF Cameroon hasn't established any links with the private sector. Discussions have been however engaged with the management agency and steering committee members on the possibility of engaging with the private sector. One of the main hindrances that have held the CEF Cameroon down on this sector engagement has been the unsatisfactory delivery of coalition programmes which the CEF Cameroon had wanted to exploit for this engagement with the private sector. The next two years hopefully should involve some delivery which can be used as concrete examples to engage the private sector.

The CEF Cameroon is managed generally by the steering committee composed of ten members: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the British Council, FAWECAM and ActionAid International Nigeria. The day to day running of CEF Cameroon is directly managed by ActionAid International Nigeria, most of it done through the one man manned CEF Cameroon secretariat. Decisions are widely discussed among the steering committee members before final adoption. It is essential to remark that so far the steering committee has faced some difficulties in terms of implementing the decisions taken. This follows the institutional logistics on ground which has not favoured easy fund transfer between the managing agency and the steering committee. One problem that has plagued the steering committee of the CEF Cameroon has related to roles and added load. The conception of the steering committee had had some assumptions that the members were going to commit to it, as this involved something concerning them directly – education. But every member of the Steering Committee kept on for sometime wondering what exactly their different roles were in the CEF Cameroon. Those who asked what role they had to play didn't mean they hadn't read the roles prescribed for Steering Committee in the concept paper but meant exactly “what do we implement?” When answered you help to implement and you don't implement, they found their role therefore having no direct programme and financial implication. Therefore came the question of isn't this additional load, especially as we are even expected to sit on the Steering Committee on a voluntary basis?

4. CEF strategy nationally

The focal objective in Cameroon for the CEF is “to strengthen the capacity of civil society to help the Government ensure that the poorest and most marginalized children are able to enrol in and complete good quality primary education.”

The strategy of the CEF Cameroon will for the next two years evolve around five main points

6. Support to coalition institution and programmes
7. capacity building for CSOs
8. funding of programmes/projects around the three core criteria
9. GAW and international lobbying
10. and follow up

Each project submitted by the newly created Coalition of Education Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon or any of its members has to show clearly how it is related to the CEF core criteria. The major challenge is for the CSOs to ensure that Cameroon does really attend gender equity by 2005 and education for all by 2015 as Cameroon is considered a top risk country where EFA goals may not be attained within the time limits.

Core criteria of CEF	strategy	Activities
1. strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks	Support to coalition institution and programmes	Help ensure Recruitment of policy and programme advisor in an open, transparent and participatory manner
		Support this officer to help plan and deliver coalition programmes
		Support general assembly and executive board meetings
	Capacity building for CSOs	Project proposal writing and reporting seminar
		Project management seminar
		Mainstreaming gender seminar
	Fund of projects	Call for projects/study and fund projects
	Support to GAW/international lobbying	Support to celebrations of GAW and subsequent follow up activities
Support membership of coalition to regional and international lobby networks		
Partnerships	Help in identification and networking of partners/partners meetings	
	Help involve corporate sector	
Management committee and CEF secretariat	Meetings/facilitation/support to programmes/AAIN staff retreat	
Enabling local communities to monitor government spending in education on education both at national and local levels	Capacity building	Budget tracking seminar
	Fund relevant projects	Funding of projects
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	Research	Support to research work
	Fund relevant projects	Funding of projects

Work plan

Activities	2005												2006	Remarks	
	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
1. recruitment of policy and programmes person for coalition		x													The officer so recruited will engage the coalition executive bureau, CSOs and partners and plan for the AGA
2. support AGA for coalition		X													An AGA will give an understanding of the issues for proper planning and strategy development
3. proposal writing, reporting and gender mainstreaming seminar			x												Tools will be given to coalition and various CSOs to write fundable projects
4. CEF Coordinators meeting Ghana				X											
5. Management committee meetings		X			X			X				X			
6. call for projects/study and select for funding			x	x	x										
7 support GAW				X											
8. project management seminar						x									It is necessary that before the implementation of funded projects project management be tackled
9. AAIN staff retreat						X									
10. follow up of projects funded							X	x	x	x	x	x	x		
11. Engage the corporate sector							x	x							
12. Seminar on budget tracking													X		
13. Other seminars that may arise as a result of coalition and cso planning and activities												x	X		

Key issues expected to be addressed by the coalition

The issues identified above have been reduced to key issues with various strategies suggested to address these key issues. The key issues are numbered and the strategies lettered.

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 household 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
- 16. Language
 - a. Complementarity between local and international languages

5. Links between national, regional and international work

The Coalition of education CSOs will be supported to engage actively in national, regional and international work by seeking effective membership and participating actively in the activities of especially the GCE and ANCEFA.

6. Gender issues

In 2005, special consideration will be given to projects that have as focus the advancement of Cameroon towards gender parity; or those that will be designed to influence policy in relation to this.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Activities will be monitored and reported quarterly. The following Monitoring and evaluation plan will serve as the main guide for this.

Activities	Indicator	Means of evaluation
1. recruitment of policy and programmes person for coalition	Person recruited and located in a space	Person recruited Person located in an office Effective programme planning and implementation for the coalition
2. support AGA for coalition	AGA holds	Report Strategy paper for coalition established Calendar of events
3. proposal writing, reporting and gender mainstreaming seminar	Number of people and csos trained	Report Guideline for submission of projects made
4. call for projects/study and select for funding	Newspaper announcement Number of projects selected	Projects submitted Projects selected
5 support GAW	Activities during GAW	report
6. project management seminar	Number of participants trained	Report , Effective management of funded projects
7. follow up of projects funded	Field trips made	Reports of implementation progress, narrative and financial reports
8. Engage the corporate sector	Active lobby and marketing visits	Support from corporate sector
9. Seminar on budget tracking	Number of participants	Report Project proposals to that effect
10. Other seminars that may arise as a result of coalition and cso planning and activities	e.g. advocacy/lobbying	Reports

8. Risks and assumptions:

The greatest threat seems to be coming from NGOs themselves as they put personal interest to override the commonweal and consequently fall back to forestalling activities. It is equally hoped that the funding mechanism become effective, else activities will be planned and never realise as funds may not arrive or may lack a mechanism through which to be transmitted.

9. Budget

CEF Cameroon budget 2005 to 2007		2005	2006
A	Supplies and materials		
A1	Coalition secretariat (supplies, maintenance, communication, photocopy, rents)	1500	1500
A-all criteria	CEF Secretariat: logistics	1200	1200
Total		2700	2700

B	Non-personnel costs		
B1	coalition institution building meetings(executive bureau, AGA)	5000	5000
B-all			
criteria	Programmes/projects funding(coalition/individual CSOs)	10000	5000
B-all			
criteria	publications	2000	2000
B3	GAW	4000	4000
B3	Training workshops	15000	7500
B-all			
criteria	coordinators workshop	1000	0
B-all			
criteria	translation	2000	2000
B-all			
criteria	Management Committee meetings	1600	1600
B-all			
criteria	partners meetings	500	500
B-all			
criteria	Exposure visits	3000	3000
Total		44100	30600
C	Personnel remuneration		
C1	Policy and programmes advisor coalition	7200	7200
C-all			
criteria	CEF Contact/coordinator	3120	3120
Total		10320	10320
D	Personnel support cost		
D-all			
criteria	monitoring and evaluation of activities and programmes	2500	2500
Total		2500	2500
E	other costs		
E-all			
criteria	other costs	1000	1000
Total		1000	1000
totals		60620	47120
F	Lead agency administration costs		
Total		10%	6062
General			4712
total		66682	51832

Total for the next two years = GBP118514.00(one hundred and eighteen five fourteen pounds)