

*Inclusion in Teacher
Policies and Practices:*

Gender Equality in
Teaching and
Teacher Management
in Cameroon

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Study context: policy framework

- MDG 3, EFA Goal 5, Dakar Framework for Action, CEDAW Article 10, Second Decade of Education for Africa: gender equality in primary and secondary education
- impact on education quality: gendered roles and opportunities impact teacher motivation and performance and student experiences and learning outcomes
- Cameroon's education policies aligned with MDG/EFA goals
- focus on gender equality at the student level (access, retention), few references to gender equality in teaching and education management



The research

Research partnership

- VSO's 'Valuing Teachers' research and advocacy programme: research on gender equality in education in Cameroon and Rwanda
- partners: UK National Union of Teachers, VSO & CUSO International, International Task Force on Teachers for EFA (UNESCO)
- collaboration with the Forum for African Women Educationalists Cameroon (FAWECAM)



The purpose of the research was to...

- examine gender equality in teaching and education management in Cameroon
- document policy initiatives linked with gender equality in teaching and in education management

Qualitative research involving...

- 54 focus groups with students, teachers, and parents
- interviews with 25 regional education managers and 16 national stakeholders
- findings validated by regional and national stakeholders



Findings: primary themes

- gender parity in teaching and education management
- gendered impacts of family responsibilities on teacher experiences
- obstacles to female teachers' advancement to education management positions
- female teachers' deployment and retention in rural communities
- sexual violence in schools
- application of gender-responsive teaching approaches



Gender parity in teaching and education management

- male teachers outnumber female teachers in primary and secondary education (*primary: 52.2%/47.8%, secondary: 69.2%/30.8%*)
- regional disparities in female/male representation (*75% male primary teachers and 90% secondary teachers in the Far North vs. 44% and 60% in the Northwest*)
- more male teachers in rural zones, especially ZEPs (*82% of rural primary teachers in the Far North and 62% in the East are male*)
- education management dominated by men (*86.4% of primary school principals and 94.3% of secondary school principals are men*)



Gendered impacts of family responsibilities on teacher experiences

- impact of family responsibilities on female teachers' punctuality, performance, stability and access to incentives
- breast-feeding hours and paternity leaves not always respected, maternity leaves cause extra work for (male) teachers

Obstacles to advancement to education management positions

- female teachers face particular obstacles in accessing continuing studies (ex., family responsibilities)
- barriers to women's appointment to positions of responsibility: domestic responsibilities, personal choice, insufficient professional criteria



Female teachers' deployment and retention in rural zones

- female teachers are particularly vulnerable to challenges in rural communities, including isolation, transportation/access difficulties, sexual harassment
- female teachers make significant efforts to be transferred from rural zones, more female teachers in urban zones than rural zones

Sexual violence in schools

- female teachers' experiences of sexual violence by colleagues, managers, male students
- lack of concrete (and enforced) reporting and discipline procedures, no specific measures to address violence between teachers



Application of gender-responsive teaching approaches

- lack of awareness/understanding of specific pedagogic approaches: gender not specifically integrated in teacher training, barriers to gender-responsive pedagogic supervision and support
- gendered interactions between female and male teachers and students influence teaching and learning

Challenges in gender-responsive policy development, implementation, and monitoring



- inconsistent understanding of *gender*, *gender inequity*, and *gender equality* amongst teachers and education managers, no clear definition at the policy level
- obstacles to effective decentralisation limit responses to regional disparities/challenges
- no systematic policy communication from national ministries to the ground (lack of awareness among teachers, school managers)
- lack of clear, measurable (and gender-responsive) objectives and indicators



Gender in policy strategies

Only a small number of policies specifically address gender in teaching and teacher management:

- deployment of local female teachers to 'priority' rural zones (ZEPs)
- references to women as beneficiaries of teacher housing and gender mainstreaming in benefits instruments
- consideration of a gender approach in teacher pedagogic training and supervision

No specific policy objectives or strategies to encourage/facilitate women's recruitment, retention, and advancement in teaching and education management

Recommendations for gender-responsive policy development



- specific gender components in teacher training and pedagogic supervision
- clear, measurable targets and indicators for gender equality in teaching and management (ex., policies to increase female teachers in secondary education)
- strategies to address impacts of family responsibilities (ex., arrange work hours to accommodate family responsibilities, ensure access to full paternity leave)
- enhanced supports for (female) teachers deployed to rural zones



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- gender training for education managers
 - access to continuing professional development for (female) teachers
 - clear procedures for communication of policy information to the regional and school level
 - national regulations and procedures addressing sexual violence in schools
 - consideration of regional realities in policy development (targets, strategies, indicators)



**The research report will be available on the VSO website:
www.vsointernational.org/valuingteachers**

“We have met many groups... groups of teachers, of female managers, of students from the lycée, from primary... After a brief definition of the gender concept, these women realised that they do gender activities, they are sensitive to certain behaviours of men with respect to girls/women, without realising that it's gender” (PTA board member)