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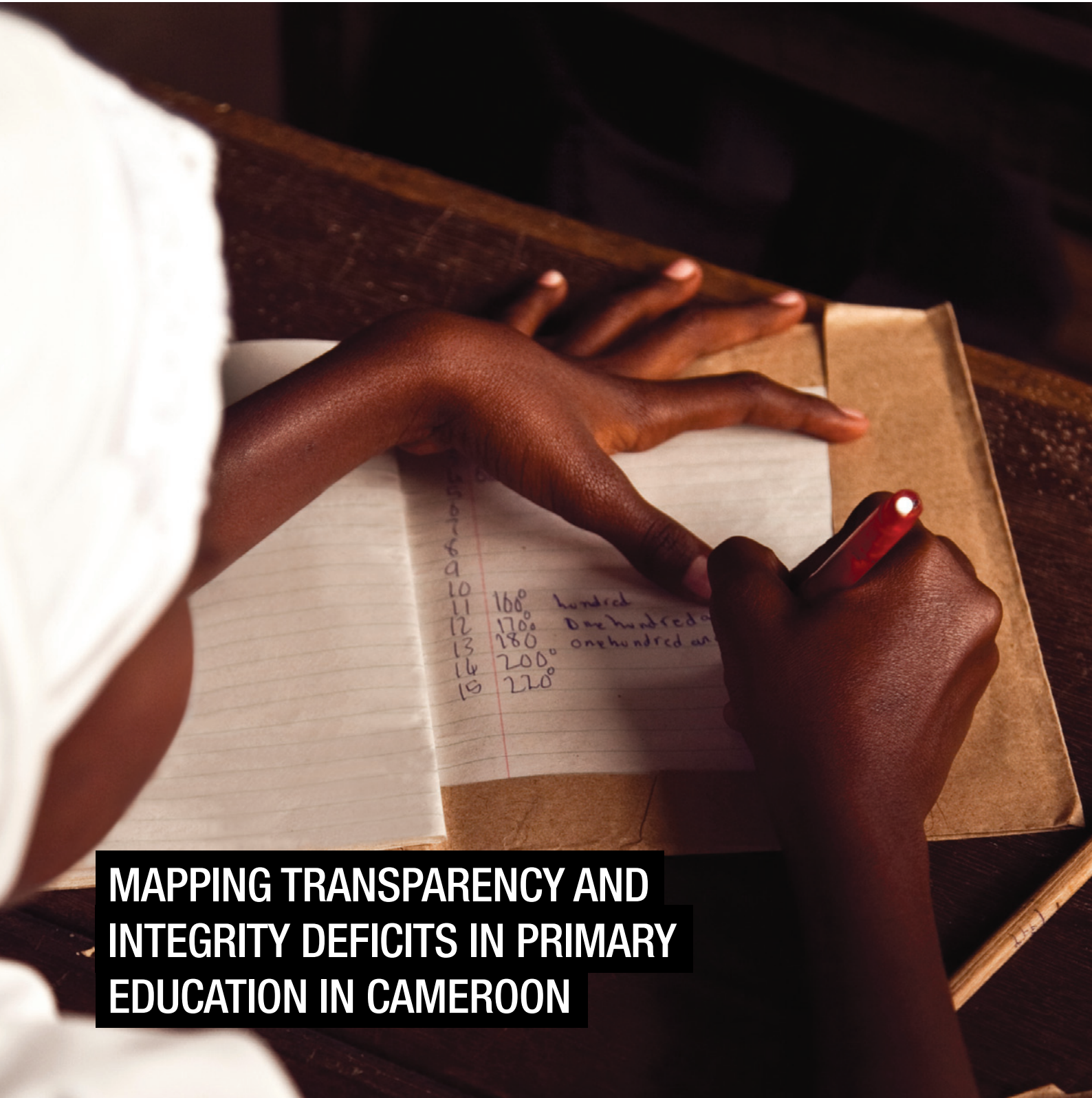
Mapping Transparency and Integrity Deficits in Primary Education in Cameroon

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Item Type	Book
Authors	Ambassa, Léonard;Ngwe, Gabriel;Dossing, Helle
Publisher	Transparency International
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-10 11:55:00
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/187611



TRANSPARENCY
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**MAPPING TRANSPARENCY AND
INTEGRITY DEFICITS IN PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN CAMEROON**

Transparency International (TI) is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. Through more than 90 chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, TI raises awareness of the damaging effects of corruption and works with partners in government, business and civil society to develop and implement effective measures to tackle it.

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TI-Cameroon, TI national chapter, was created in 2000 and fully accredited to TI in 2007. The goal of TI-C is to prevent and combat corruption in all its forms. TI-Cameroon attracts the attention of the Cameroonian government and of public and private partners to the harmful consequences of corruption in society in general and advocate for the promotion of good governance in all sectors, including education.

Transparency International's programme Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa (TISDA) aims at contributing to greater integrity, transparency and accountability in key social service sectors, and thus lead to better access to basic services.

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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of May 2011. Nevertheless, Transparency International Cameroon cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

Preface

Corruption is harmful to society as a whole and to its future. Any form of corruption is destructive because it leads inevitably to the violation of human rights by depriving our people, already burdened by so many ills, of their most basic needs. In Cameroon, the education sector is fertile ground for the development of corruption and poor governance, which has implications for all other sectors of society.

Education in Cameroon has been a national priority since the State decided, in 2010, to dedicate nearly 15% of its national budget to the sector. Among other objectives are areas of focus such as improving the sector's management and governance, as well as increasing access to education in order to reduce social inequality.

These are noble objectives, but we must bear in mind that the fight against corruption has never been a priority in our education system. This has led to corruption having an impact in all sectors of society. By way of illustration, there is no code of conduct and school curricula do not include the promotion of ethics to instill fundamental values in our future citizens.

The TISDA program (an acronym derived from the English meaning Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa) is a great opportunity for Transparency International Cameroon to raise awareness of corruption in the education system and the damage it inflicts on our society.

Investing in human capital leads to an improved quality of life for all because the school has the task of forming a civic consciousness and stimulating change in the ethics of our society. In Africa today, driven by a tendency to populism and short-term goals, our rulers focus too heavily on the quantity of education available rather than its quality. This results in money being used up on the construction of infrastructure and massive recruitment of teachers, qualified or not.

To achieve the Millennium Development Goal for education of 40 students per teacher per classroom, the latest estimates indicate that Cameroon would have to recruit 13,306 teachers and build 16,612 classrooms. Perhaps we will achieve this by 2015, but at what price?

For our part, in order never to lose focus, we strive to fulfill and always refer to the following Chinese proverb:

"If you count in weeks, plant flowers
If you count in years, plant trees
If you count in centuries, educate your children."

*Mr. Charles Nguini
Chairman of TI-C*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APEE	:	Parent-Teacher Association
BEPC	:	Certificate of first cycle of secondary study (GCE/OL)
Class 5	:	Primary school class 5
Class 6	:	Primary school class 6
DREB	:	Regional delegation of basic education
DDEB	:	Divisional delegation of basic education
GS	:	Government school
IAEB	:	Sub-divisional inspector of basic education
MINEDUB	:	Ministry of Basic Education
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
TI	:	Transparency International
TISDA	:	Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa

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Glossary

1. Risk mapping in the field of governance and governance indicators

This risk mapping includes a description of the *transactions* likely to entail corruption practices, which are produced in the course of the *interaction* between *actors* active in the education sector.

It permits a better understanding of why corruption risks or other governance deficits exist in the education system and, where applicable, pinpoints such risks. In addition, it permits detecting where such risks have been reduced or successfully eliminated.

Good governance, which promotes respect for the rule of law and the mitigation of corruption risks; it refers to a participatory process, based on accountability, transparency, effectiveness, responsiveness and the avoidance of any form of exclusion.

This risk mapping exercise has thus been structured around the indicators defined below. Although no causal link or hierarchy exists between them, all of these indicators constitute a pre-requisite to securing good governance. An analysis and illustration of this in our mapping should permit identifying particularly high-risk areas requiring intervention.

All of the data collected was aggregated and converged in accordance with the data analysis plan, to obtain a score determining the risk level, based on an individual indicator. Aggregating the scores for individual indicators provides a general score determining the governance risk level. These scores are spread across three levels: low, medium and high.

Transparency is defined as the clear and public disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions on the part of governments, businesses, organisations and individuals. This is the principle that public affairs should be conducted openly and that the individuals responsible are under a duty to justify their decisions and performance, for which they may be held accountable.

In this study, issues in connection with transparency focus on financial management, accounting records and knowledge by stakeholders of the financial status of schools.

Accountability is defined as responsible individuals and organisations being held to account for the regular exercise of the powers entrusted to them (in accordance with the rules and duties attached to their status), in particular by taking into account the more vulnerable fringes of the population.

Accountability is more specifically related to the responsibility of actors to be accountable upwards and downwards (to their superiors and to users), to participation, and lastly to the sanction taken against those guilty of improper conduct.

Accountability also implies:

- **The ability** of actors to take on the role and assume the responsibilities entrusted to them, in particular by permitting participatory engagement by the most vulnerable population groups.

- **Participation** refers to the process that explicitly gives time and space to citizens, permits them to participate via consultations, hearings, or even by the delegation of certain decisions and activities to citizen-based committees.

As part of this study, issues concerning accountability, targeting the majority of the stakeholders, place special focus on the frequency of school inspections, the adherence to national laws, as well as compliance therewith, and codes of conduct in the field of management and finance. Existing complaint procedures were also examined.

Integrity refers to behaviours and acts that are consistent with a set of principles and moral or ethical standards, which act as a barrier to corruption, whether by individuals or institutions. Integrity is a general attribute of the system of checks and balances that permits the control of corruption.

The Implementation of integrity entails, in particular, the existence of rules aimed at preventing corruption (codes of conduct, codes of ethics, integrity pacts etc.) in the interactions between the various actors who deliver services in any given sector.

To measure the degree of integrity in primary education, several stakeholders were asked questions regarding their knowledge of the rules and regulations concerning governance and the general functioning of schools.

2. Corruption indicators

Corruption is defined as the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain.

To measure corruption, stakeholders answered questions on the general level of irregularities perceived in the sector, and the levels in the education system considered to be the most implicated in diverting funds and corrupt decision making, in particular under the influence of external actors in decision-making concerning the purchase of teaching materials, the posting of teachers etc.

The answers to those questions were used to draw up scores to measure transgressions and perceived corruption in various interactions.

While governance risk maps illustrate the strong and weak points of the governance system in the education sector, the scores calculated for corruption reflect actual perception of the stakeholders of corruption in the sector, such as experienced by them.

3. Performance indicators

To be able to measure performance, stakeholders answered questions involving an assessment of the quality of education, in particular the number and qualifications of the teachers (internal performance), as well as of the infrastructures and equipment (external equipment). Data deriving from the information cards of the schools were also collected so as to verify the actual situation in the field.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report focuses on the governance deficits that have been identified in state primary schools in Cameroon based on a survey of key stakeholders and actors. Governance deficits are structured around the four indicators of transparency, integrity, accountability and participation. The perception of corruption was also measured.

The results and recommendations are based on the responses of more than 1400 school staff, households, and regional and divisional delegates to questionnaires distributed to 48 schools in three regions. The findings also draw on data obtained through school information cards and on focus group interviews with teachers, students and school councils. Taken together, this information has been used to produce a governance and corruption risk map to identify potential governance gaps along with the perceived levels of corruption. The results on governance and corruption were grouped in categories based on a scale going from very low risk to very high risk. In the same manner, findings related to performance were measured and analysed.

The absence of good governance practices in Cameroon leads to risks of corruption and the potential mismanagement of vital resources that are needed to educate a new generation of Cameroonians.

The key findings for Cameroon show:

- Medium to high governance deficits exist between local level educational officials and school head masters. These gaps primarily concern compliance with the laws and procedures in force and the need for financial management reporting and accountability, particularly in regards to the poor management of the minimum package (paquet minimum) of resources (comprised of educational materials and operational funds) that is provided to schools. In these instances, the minimum package is either inadequate, arrives late or is managed non-transparently at all levels.
- The system of transfers to schools is not transparent and, at the end of the distribution chain, headmasters often do not know the rationale behind decisions concerning their budget. This is partially due to legal loopholes and to imprecise official texts.
- At the level of the school, medium governance deficits are observed. One-third of parents surveyed in the study believe that school decisions are taken without any previous consultation with them. Some of the problems are mainly due to a lack of or inadequate knowledge about applicable rules and compliance with them. For example, the study finds that parents are sometimes asked to pay membership fees to parent-teacher associations (PTAs) although mandatory fees have been abolished by law.

- High corruption risks are identified in the dealings between the ministry of education and the regional education system officials. Headmasters, teachers and sub-divisional inspectors that responded to the survey primarily consider corruption between these two actors to be highly prevalent. It is also believed that external actors influence decisions taken by the ministry of education. Politicians and businessmen are among those most often cited and their influence is perceived as affecting decisions about the local education system, including where schools are located.
- The survey also shows that primary schools in Cameroon are exposed to a serious shortage of equipment and infrastructure. More than half of the state primary schools in the sample have some type of problems with their buildings. Only 19 per cent of schools have working toilets, 30 per cent have access to a water tap, and barely 30 per cent have enough tables and benches for their students. These problems are perceived by all actors as the main obstacle to improving the quality of education in Cameroon.

Many of the problems related to governance and performance are linked to a general lack of knowledge by actors about the laws and policies that are supposed to govern the functioning of schools, including school budgets. Information on the official policies and rules is a sine qua non condition for accountability to other actors.

Based on these findings, the following *recommendations* are put forth for all actors, both at the national, regional and sub-regional levels:

- Undertake a thorough review of the circulars and official texts which govern both transfers to schools and specify the responsibilities of actors in the educational system and the standards. The decentralisation process and the transfer of competencies to communes offer the possibility of engaging decision-makers more, and through them, citizens and users of public services.
- Provide information on the official policies and rules to regional and local actors in education system about the system of transfers, responsibilities and administrative duties etc.
- Ensure headmasters are familiar with official policies, rules and standards governing the functioning of state primary schools in Cameroon, such as the guidelines regarding the cost of textbooks.
- Create standards for service delivery at each school, including a code of conduct for headmasters, teachers, and members of school councils as well as PTAs.
- Establish procedures that allow parents, students, and teachers to lodge complaints with school councils, and facilitate whistle blowing where illegal fees are paid or embezzlement is observed.
- Improve the budget planning skills of related staff at the school level.
- Strengthen parent participation, in particular by the inclusion of the poorest, in school activities. This would help to empower them and respond to the demand for transparency and accountability of the educational system.

- Establish criteria and policies on the role of and relations with external actors in order to mitigate their influence in school decisions.

The study on Cameroon was conducted as part of the *Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa* programme, TISDA. This is a three-year, seven-country program implemented by Transparency International in Africa. It seeks to support civil society in seven African countries in working with citizens to demand greater transparency, integrity, and accountability in the management of resources for basic services in primary education (Cameroon and South Africa); the health sector (Uganda and Zambia); and the water sector (Kenya, Ghana and Senegal).

1. INTRODUCTION

School has never been free, we keep paying. You need to pay the teacher for your child to benefit from school supervision; otherwise they're placed at the very back of the classroom. The PTA asks for 5,000FCFA in membership fees. I think that the Minister must be getting a share since this situation is general knowledge, but the hierarchy doesn't react. If the child does not pay the PTA fees, he will not be enrolled, so the PTA fees have replaced the enrolment fees. I had to pay for a bench for my child at Camp SIC Longkak state school, and after having paid the PTA fees, as my child sat on the floor, the bench was used by other students.

You are better off paying the enrolment and being left in peace afterwards, rather than contributing all the time to supplies throughout the entire year.

MINEDUB must be receiving a share of the fees paid to PTAs, otherwise they would never allow them.

I sometimes have annual expenses of up to 30,000FCFA in intermediary fees.

Mr. Guy K., 28/12/2010 (parent)

Corruption and poor governance are both a cause of poverty and a barrier to overcoming it. Where transparency and accountability mechanisms are weak or lacking, the needs of the poor are marginalised and funds intended for basic service sectors – such as education, health and water – are at risk of being lost, misused or misallocated. To help communities enjoy a better way of life, systems of checks and balances need to be strengthened to put an end to the diversion of funds for private interests.

This report relates the findings of an assessment of transparency and integrity in the basic education sector in Cameroon. This assessment is part of a larger programme to promote *Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa*, (TISDA). This three-year research and advocacy programme is implemented by Transparency International (TI) in seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its goal is to contribute to greater integrity, transparency and accountability in key social service sectors, and thus lead to better access to basic services.

Through participatory engagement of a broad range of stakeholders and extensive research, TISDA explains how these actors are reliant on each other; what defines these relationships, and how transparency, integrity and accountability can reduce the risk of corruption and contribute to making basic service delivery more effective.

By promoting dialogue and strategic partnerships between civil society, political decision-makers and key stakeholders in different basic service sectors, TISDA supports African civil society in promoting positive changes and reforms at various levels, and empowers local citizens to hold their governments accountable for transparent and effective service delivery.

Country-specific risk maps show how the relationships between sector stakeholders work and help identify specific governance risks caused by a lack of transparency and accountability in the delivery of a particular service. Based on this country analysis, TISDA risk maps inform targeted advocacy recommendations aimed at increasing transparency, integrity, and accountability.

In Cameroon and South Africa, the programme focuses on the delivery of basic education services.

The research methodology in the education sector was modelled on another TI programme, namely *Africa Education Watch*,¹ and then developed by the TI International Secretariat (TI-S) with the local chapters of the three countries concerned and an international consultant. In the framework of this methodology, we used a set of tools to collect information on the official texts and laws in force in the sector as well as on the knowledge and practices of users and service providers. A preliminary study was carried out before collecting the main data and implementing the methodology in the field.

This study covers governance areas, organised around the following categories: transparency, integrity, accountability, participation.

Risk maps, which were drawn up based on the data collected, allowed underlining the problematic relationships existing between actors in the area of governance and of the perception of corruption. This mapping will serve as the basis for targeted advocacy in view of bolstering governance and reducing corruption in the education sector, thereby contributing to improving service delivery in this sector. This risk mapping was validated in the Centre, Littoral and Southern regions at feedback workshops, in which local officials in charge of educational issues, press representatives and development partners participated.

In Cameroon, the programme deployed in 3 regions, concerns 48 schools. It is implemented by *Transparency International Cameroon* (TI-C) and organised by a national coordinator with the support of a sector coordinator at the level of the TI International Secretariat. A consultant's services were relied on for the collection and analysis of the data and the final report benefited from a peer review process.

Following this introduction, the next part will address the methodology followed for this study. We initially conducted a series of field interviews with headmasters, members of school councils as a group and individually, teachers as a group and individually, students as a group, households, sub-divisional inspectors, and with divisional and regional delegates. We then relied on school information cards to take observable data into consideration. Lastly, the risk map exercise involved attributing a score to questions involving integrity, transparency, accountability and participation. The same approach was used to assess the performance indicators.

¹ *Africa Education Watch* is a regional three year programme (2007-10) being implemented by TI in Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierre Leone and Uganda.

Part three presents the study results. What is involved is to present both the different actors by taking stock of the state of the primary education sector, and mapping documented risks in terms of governance and corruption on the one hand, and performance on the other.

Lastly, part four will present the study conclusions and recommendations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Data collection tools, number of questionnaires and geographic distribution

For data collection purposes, we primarily relied on closed questionnaires intended for households, headmasters, teachers, members of school councils and sub-divisional inspectors and semi-open questionnaires for regional and divisional delegates and, lastly, focus group guidelines for group interviews with teachers, school councils and students. School information cards served to record direct observations at the school level.

We carried out surveys among forty-eight state primary schools and their officials in the three selected regions, namely the Centre, Southern and Littoral regions,² covering six divisions and twelve sub-divisions, comprising all of the links in the primary public education chain. The sampling of interviewee categories is summarised in the two tables below.

Table 1 – Questionnaire for schools

Targets	D	R	NR
School information	48	48	0
Headmasters	48	48	0
School council (Group)	48	26	22
School council (Individual)	240	86	154
Teachers (Group)	48	46	2
Teachers (Individual)	240	206	34
Students (Group)	48	48	0
Households	960	949	11
TOTAL SCHOOLS	1680	1457	221

Table 2 – Questionnaire for officials

Questionnaires for Officials	D	R	NR
Regional delegate	3	1	2
Divisional delegate	6	4	2
Sub-divisional inspector	12	12	0
TOTAL OFFICIALS	21	17	4

N.B. D = Distributed R= Received
NR = No Reply

Regional delegates of basic education are the highest level officials who participated in the interviews conducted in the scope of this study. In some cases, when it was not possible to obtain a meeting with them, it was necessary to conduct interviews with divisional delegates. Accordingly, we interviewed 1 regional delegate and 4 divisional delegates. The information collected on these two levels of responsibility was, however, referenced as issuing from national officials.

We also interviewed 12 inspectors, of which four in each of the regions covered by the survey. Two inspectors were interviewed in each of the divisions concerned. All of the inspectors interviewed have the status of civil servants and worked as teachers before being appointed to their current post.

² It should be stressed that schools in English-speaking subsystem were excluded from this study as a similar study was being conducted during the same period by our partner in the two regions of the North and South-West. As part of our partnership with the *Cameroon Centre for Peace Research and Initiatives*, two training were organised by TI-C in Kumba and Bamenda so as to heighten the capacity of the educational community to adopt a more honest, transparent and participatory approach to the management of state primary schools.

Headmasters are at the centre of the school system in Cameroon. This is why all 48 headmasters were interviewed. The rate of headmasters having previously worked as teachers was 90%, with an average length of service of 14.5 years.

The school council constitutes the third link in the basic education chain. Only half of the 48 schools had a functioning³ school council, depending on their degree of organisation and capacities. By way of example, there was no functioning school council in Wouri (Douala and its region) due to a lack of organisation or interest by the educational community in engaging in school life. In most cases, members occupying the functions of treasurer and head of the council personally participated in the group interviews with the school councils; however the functions of secretary and representative of the teachers were also relatively well represented. Lastly, the rate of representation of women, interviewed individually among the members of school councils, was 36.7%.

As regards the teachers interviewed, we noted an overall rate of representation that was slightly above 70% in school councils, urban areas having a slight advantage over rural areas. Lastly, the average age of the members of the teaching staff interviewed was approximately 38 years old.

As regards the students, there was an average of 6.4 schoolchildren per group comprising 5 to 10 persons. Both genders were equally represented, however the proportional representation of students from Class 2 and Class 5 was different depending on the class level.

Parents, who were interviewed in the category of households, are the last link in the education chain, the majority of the parents met being women. More than four out of five parents had an education level below the BEPC, while the educational level of men was slightly higher than that of women.

2.2 Analysis of the data

All of the data collected was aggregated on the basis of an analysis plan and then converged to obtain a general governance score. This score is based on the result of the four main governance indicators, namely transparency, participation, accountability and integrity, as previously defined in the introductory glossary to this report.

By way of example:

The heading “school/tuition fees” pertaining to knowledge of national rules can be found under the integrity criterion in the following questionnaires.

- “S03Q11A” in the questionnaire for headmasters;

³ A school council is considered as functioning when the team responsible for data collection was able to meet with at least two members of the council. However, in some cases, the headmaster reported the existence of a school council, when in reality no such structure was in place. At times, headmasters invited teachers to play the role of members of a school council, without their being aware of this. Another example involved a student who was purported to be on the school council who cried when interviewed, stating that he had never heard of any such council. In that case, the school council was not considered as functioning.

- “S05Q09A” in the questionnaire for teachers;
- “S07Q11A” in the questionnaire for school councils;
- “S09Q35A” in the questionnaire for households.

The answers to the questions were analysed as a percentage with a score of “0” or “1”.⁴

These percentages were calculated based on the number of “score 0” answers obtained out of the total number of questions asked in the framework of the *governance* assessment and based on the number of “score 1” answers obtained out of the total number of questions asked, and the total scores was aggregated to obtain the total risk level. The higher the score is, the higher the governance deficit.

An analysis of these various criteria allows for the creation of a graphic representation, based on the following scorecard:

- For the *governance* criterion, for example, a heading called “very low risk” (VLR) includes schools where the risk is less than 20%.
 - “Total VLR” gives the number of schools, out of the 48 schools surveyed as part of the study, which meet this criterion.
 - “AVR VLR” gives the sum of the assessment percentages of schools presenting a very low risk among the number of schools meeting this criterion.
- For *performance and service quality* also, a “very weak performance” (VWP) heading includes schools where performance is less than 20%:
- “Total VWP” gives the number of schools, out of the 48 schools that were the subject of this study, meeting this criterion.
 - “AVR VWP” gives the sum of the assessment percentages of schools presenting very weak performance out of all of the schools meeting this criterion.

The risk maps are based on the results of the analysis plan; they enable a view of the governance deficits and corruption risks in the relationships between actors in the education system.

The risk maps were validated at study feedback sessions with the different actors concerned by educational issues. The first validation session took place on 4 November 2010 in Yaoundé, the capital of the Centre Region. A second validation session took place on 2 December 2010 in Douala, the capital of the Littoral Region and on 28 January 2011, the study results were validated in Ebolowa, the capital of the Southern Region. These validation sessions showed that the issue of management of the minimum package generated a lot of emotion and discussion across all regions. The exchanges and discussions that took place during those sessions allowed to better adjust the advocacy plan to the expectations of the target audience. They also permitted the consideration of criticisms and observations and thereby enriched the final version of this study.

⁴ In some cases, the score -1 was also assigned to some questions, indicating that something was done to counter governance problems. This is reason why the score “-” figures in some of tables. It indicates a positive result.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. The educational system and its actors

The school-age population of Cameroon is 4 to 5 years old in nursery classes and 6 to 11 in primary school. Basic education, a key national priority, is ensured by the State, with the assistance of private partners. The State guarantees children's right to education, equal opportunity of access to education for all without discrimination based on gender, political, philosophical or religious views, social, cultural, linguistic or geographic origin. Primary education is mandatory.⁵

The Cameroonian educational landscape comprises different categories of schools, divided into two main groups: state schools and private schools (private secular and denominational schools).⁶ Denominational schools comprise Catholic, Protestant and Muslim schools, spread across the three regions. According to estimates, 28.2% of school-age children are enrolled in private schools. Of these, 41% are enrolled in private secular schools, 39% in Catholic schools, 16% in Protestant schools, and 4% in Muslim schools.⁷ The number of school-age children has gone from 2.5 million in 2000, to more than 3 million in 2008 and might even go up to 3.5 million children in 2015.

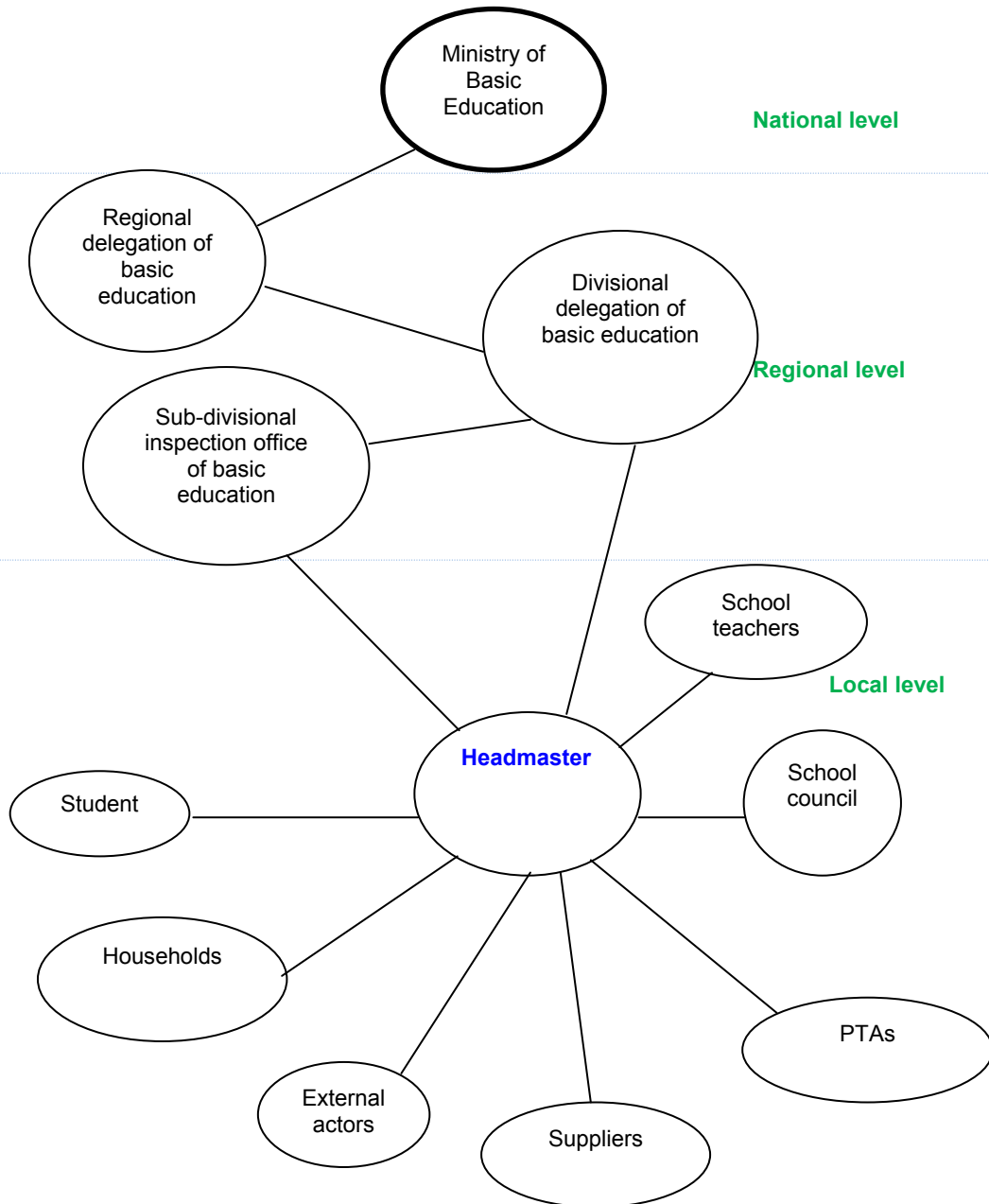
⁵ Law 98/004 of 14 April 1998 to lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon, Articles 2, 6, 7 and 9.

⁶ One of the duties of the State is to ensure primary education for all school-age Cameroonians, private schools were excluded from the scope of this study. The focus here is therefore on public and not private education services.

⁷ Statistical directory 2007/2008, MINEDUB, p.109

3.1.1 Actors: their roles and responsibilities

Figure 1: Map of actors and of their relationships



Pursuant to the Decree 2005/140 of April 25th 2005 setting up the organisation of the Ministry of Basic Education, MINEDUB is in charge of preparing, implementing and assessing Government policy in the field of basic education, while the regional delegation's responsibilities include coordinating and leading, at regional level, pedagogical activities of primary and nursery school teaching.

The divisional delegation, for its part, is responsible for overseeing the application of teaching programmes and methods, as well as promoting actions likely to make schools more rooted and exert a wider influence in their communities. The divisional delegation has an indirect relationship with MINEDUB, but it is placed under the authority of the regional delegation with which it has a direct relationship.

As regards the sub-divisional inspection office, one of its roles is to identify and formulate the requirements of the sub-division in terms of schools and staffing, by ensuring the administrative and educational inspection of schools or school groups under its authority, and the physical organisation of examinations and competitions for which it is responsible. IAEB is placed under the direct authority of, and reports to, the divisional delegation.

The headmaster has administrative, teaching and financial roles within the school. It is the headmaster who is responsible for organising and supplying the content of school programmes. The headmaster is placed under the direct authority of, and reports to, the sub-divisional inspector.

3.1.2. The minimum package

The “minimum package” is an allocation of teaching and learning materials that is granted at the start of every school year by the Government to state primary schools for their functioning. The history of the minimum package dates back to 2000 when, in his message on February 10th 2000, during the 34th National Youth Day, the Head of State announced the abolition of school/tuition fees at state primary schools, upon the resumption of classes in September 2000. This decision implies free access to state primary schools, the operating costs of which are now assumed by the State. At the level of every regional capital, a Regional Committee for the supply of state primary schools was created. Under Circular 21/B1/1464/MINEDUC of July 24th 2000, “the distribution and packing of the minimum packages must imperatively be completed by the 5th of August” at the regional level and, at the level of the Divisional Commission, by the 12th of August. Lastly, by the 31st of August at the latest, all state primary schools must have their minimum package,⁸ that is to say before classes resume in September of every year. Circular 21/A/135/MINEDUC/CAB of September 20th 2001 specifies the terms and conditions of budget execution in government schools. The required individual contribution earmarked to sub-item expenditures may not exceed the amount of 3,550FCFA (three thousand five hundred CFA francs)⁹ per student. The fact that a minimum amount was not guaranteed in this circular complicates the planning at school level, since the amounts of money received by headmasters varies from year to year.

Below are the expenditures per item lines that should cover the required individual contribution:

⁸ Circular 21/B1/1464/MINEDUC/SG/DRFP of 24 July 2000 organising the practical arrangements for the sourcing of state primary schools in teaching and learning materials.

⁹ Circular 33/A/135/MINEDUC/CAB, supplementing Circular 21/A/135/MINEDUC/CAB on the execution of government schools. It should be noted that the teaching and learning materials, and the operating budget for sub-item expenditures form a whole that is known as the minimum package in the analysis below.

- School insurance
- Pharmacy
- Functioning of the school council
- Library
- Cooperative
- Practical activities
- School identity card
- Monthly report card
- Teaching materials
- Maintenance of infrastructures and equipment
- School project
- Sports activities
- Performance incentive bonuses
- Cultural events.

3.1.3. Decentralisation

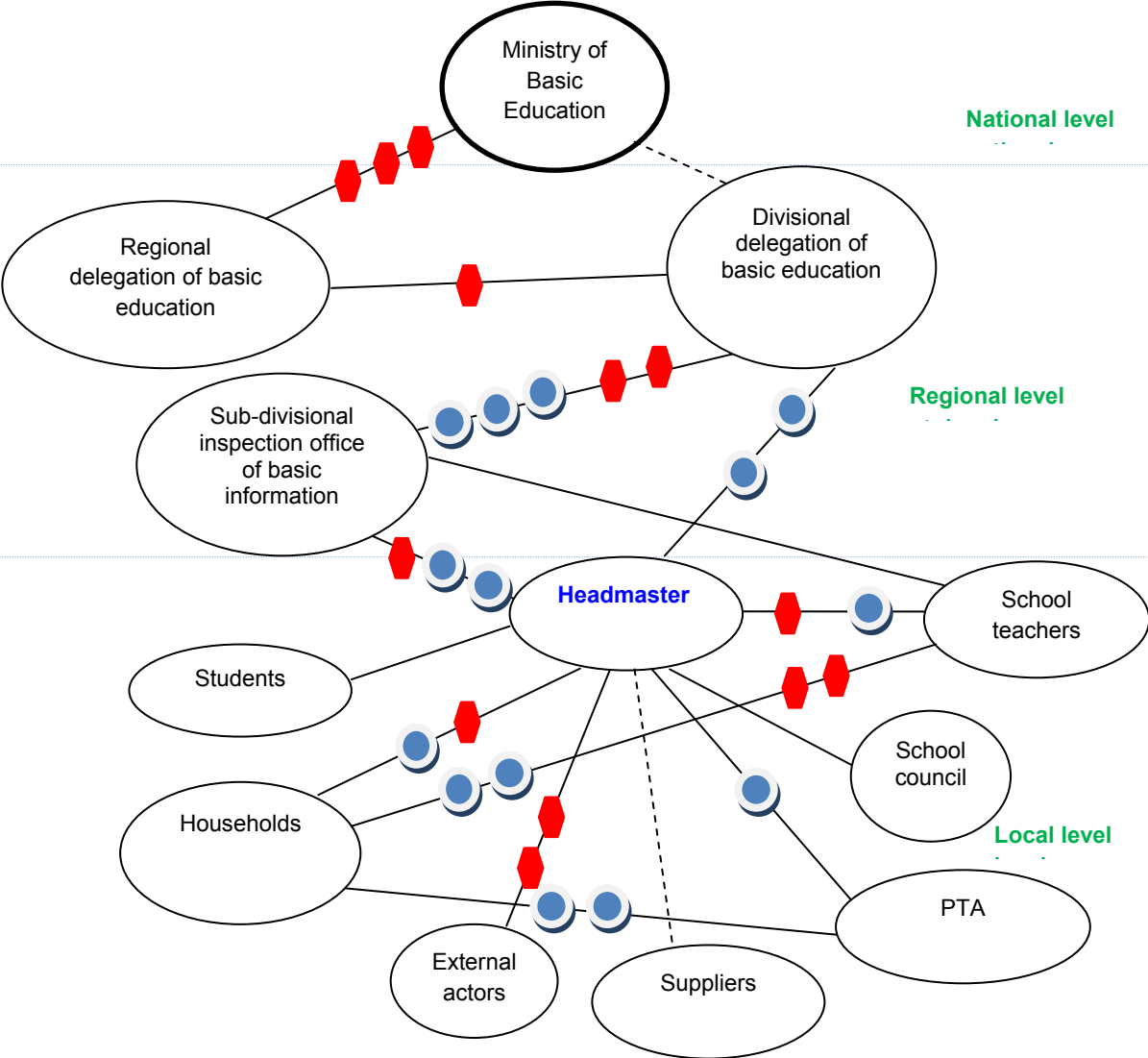
At the time when this study entered into its final phase with the publication of this report and the beginning of the advocacy phase, Cameroon was implementing a decentralisation process. When the TIDSA study began (in July 2008), service delivery to state primary schools was fully ensured by the regional delegations, divisional delegation and sub-divisional inspection offices of basic education, on completion of this project in 2011, elected officials (mayors) were playing a role in the process. Indeed, since January 1st 2010, when decentralisation entered into force in Cameroon, communes have been responsible for the construction, equipping, upkeep and maintenance of state primary schools, purchasing classroom materials and supplies, and lastly for hiring and assuming the cost of temporary support staff. These services, which were previously the responsibility of MINEDUB representatives in the field, are now transferred in part to elected officials.¹⁰ However, MINEDUB's decentralised services have not completely disappeared from the distribution chain of classroom materials. DREB and DDEB have retained their previous role. It is at the IAEB's level that the roles have been redistributed. Communes have now replaced the IAEB in distributing teaching and learning materials to schools. Such materials are made available to schools by MINEDUB. In this way, the communes have become project owner representatives; hence some of

¹⁰ During the data collection period from 11 March to 6 April 2010, the decentralisation process was already applicable, but mayors had not yet taken charge of the management of schools, due to administrative slowness and problems associated with the transfer of competencies. This is the reason why they were not interviewed.

the problems in connection with transparency, governance, and accountability are now within the scope of responsibility of the communes.

3.2. Risk maps

Figure 2: Governance and corruption risk maps



Unregulated relationship		Caption	
-----	No risk	— [red hexagon] —	Low risk of corruption (score less than 10%)
— [blue circle] —	Low governance deficit (score < 30%)	— [red hexagon] [red hexagon] —	Medium level of corruption (score between 10% and 20%)
— [blue circle] [blue circle] —	Medium governance deficit (score between 30% and 60%)	— [red hexagon] [red hexagon] [red hexagon] —	High level of corruption (score above 20%)
— [blue circle] [blue circle] [blue circle] —	High governance deficit (score > 60%)		

The analysis of the data collected permits the production of the risk map in Figure 2 as well as the information detailed in Table 3 below. The higher the figure is, the higher the governance deficit.

Table 3 – Average score of various governance indicators for the various relationships

Relationships	Governance				
	Integrity	Participation	Accountability	Transparency	Together
Sub-division<>Headmaster	62.0%		45.1%	23.1%	45.0%
Division<>Sub-division			68.6%		68.6%
Division<>Headmaster			62.7%	38.0%	55.1%
Headmaster <> PTA	46.8%	-76.7%	12.8%	30.6%	20.1%
Headmaster<>Teachers	47.7%	30.3%	-4.8%	31.5%	8.5%
Headmaster<>Households	55.4%	13.8%	48.5%	-1.3%	27.7%
Teachers<>Households	24.0%		40.7%		38.3%
PTA<> Households	50.7%	21.3%	28.4%	71.2%	39.4%
Together	52.6%	12.8%	33.9%	13.6%	29.9%

The relationships between sub-divisional inspectors and the divisional delegate (68.6%) and between headmasters and the divisional delegate (55.1%) suffer from the highest governance deficits. In point of fact, it would appear that the division does not fully fulfil its obligations towards inspection offices or schools, since it is ultimately at the divisional level that teaching materials are allocated to the sub-divisions and the funds for the sub-item expenditures are paid to the schools.¹¹

In view of these factors, the high governance deficit is primarily expressed in terms of inadequate integrity and accountability. To put it differently, knowledge of national rules, as well as the obligation to render accounts and the application of the rules are major impediments that can have a negative impact on the quality of education. The answers given by the different actors concerning their knowledge of the rules (integrity) and compliance therewith at the level of the school (accountability) are addressed below.

¹¹ This function is filled by the divisional delegation until data collection until March 2010.

3.2.1. Integrity

An evaluation of the knowledge of all rules governing school activities allowed for an assessment of the integrity criterion. In that aim, the opinions of four key actors (headmasters, teachers, school councils and households) were compiled. A summary of the results of that assessment is provided in Table 4 below.

As regards the level of knowledge of the rules, three possibilities were contemplated (1 = the person interviewed has very good knowledge of the rules; 2 = the person interviewed does not have very good knowledge of the rules; 3 = the person interviewed does not have knowledge of the rules). It can be seen from the data in Table 4 that headmasters are the group of actors with the most familiarity with the rules, by opposition to households which show clear knowledge gaps in this respect. The rules on school/tuition fees and on financial contributions to PTAs are among the two rules that are the best known by all actors.

Table 4 – Level of knowledge of the rules by actors at the school level (as a % of all interviewees)

	Level of knowledge of the rules														
	Headmasters			Teachers			School councils			Households			All actors		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
school/tuition fees	100	0	0	82	4	14	85	8	7	58	10	32	81	6	13
the cost of textbooks	36	25	39	28	15	57	37	24	38	24	13	63	31	19	49
examination fees	69	21	10	18	19	63	29	27	44	17	14	69	33	20	47
financial contributions to PTAs	97	3	0	57	17	26	79	15	6	38	20	42	68	14	19
the role and responsibilities of PTAs and school councils	74	25	1	44	36	20	69	21	10	26	25	49	53	27	20
PTA and school council elections	81	17	2	43	29	28	77	16	7	20	20	60	55	21	24
presence of teachers				75	18	7				40	21	39	58	20	23
behaviour of teachers				75	17	8				38	18	44	57	18	26
the school meal system										7	5	88	7	5	88
fee exemptions										9	3	88	9	3	88
All rules (averages)	76	15	9	53	19	28	63	19	19	28	15	57	45	15	40

Among all interviewees, headmasters are the group benefiting from the best knowledge of the rules studied, with a rate of 76%, followed by members of school councils with 63%, teachers with 53%, and households with 28%. Overall, less than half of the school staff has good knowledge of the rules governing the functioning of primary education, i.e., an average of 45%. The least known rule in all categories concerns the cost of textbooks. In fact, 63% of households lack knowledge of the rules on the cost of textbooks, as compared to 57% for teachers. The percentage of headmasters who did not know the cost of textbooks was 39% and 38% for members of school councils. Lastly,

only 24% of households have very good knowledge of the rules on the cost of textbooks, a situation that is prejudicial for parents, since it is them who purchase their children's textbooks. Beyond their knowledge of the rules, questions remain concerning the application of these rules.

3.2.2. Accountability

In terms of compliance with the rules, the aim was to verify the following levels (1 = All rules are respected; 2 = Most rules are respected; 3 = Most rules are not respected). The results concerning compliance with the rules are presented in Table 5 below. The profile of compliance with the rules is very similar to that for knowledge described above.

Table 5 – Level of compliance with the rules by actors at the school level (as a % of all interviewees)*

R u l e s o n	Accountability: compliance with the rules														
	Headmasters			Teachers			School councils			Households			All actors		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
school/tuition fees	100	0	0	74	3	4	81	8	3	46	7	10	75	5	4
The cost of textbooks	40	5	2	27	8	2	33	8	3	21	8	1	30	7	2
examination fees	69	2	15	14	7	8	25	14	11	13	6	7	30	7	10
financial contributions to PTAs	83	4	13	44	15	10	69	7	12	23	9	19	55	9	14
The role and responsibilities of PTAs and school councils	53	18	28	28	23	16	59	24	5	16	10	44	39	19	23
PTA and school council elections	71	19	6	33	13	9	64	20	6	15	8	7	46	15	7
presence of teachers				62	19	8				25	18	11	44	19	10
behaviour of teachers				64	22	2				27	14	9	46	18	6
The school meal system										4	3	3	4	3	3
Fee exemptions										4	1	5	4	1	5
All rules (averages)	69	8	11	43	14	7	55	14	7	19	8	12	37	10	8

*: NB: the question of the level of compliance with the rules was raised, including with persons lacking knowledge of such rules.

The table below shows that the rules on the cost of textbooks and examination fees are the least respected, reaching only a rate of 30%. In contrast, the rule on school/tuition fees is the most respected among the different categories, with an average rate of 75%. If this reflection is to be further developed, a comparative analysis could be carried out of Tables 4 and 5 for each rule and for each actor so as to better understand the problems such actors face in schools in terms of knowledge of and compliance with the rules.

The average corruption perception score was 9.8% (Table 6). While the various categories of interviewees show medium scores with very little variations between them, significant disparities can be observed between levels of perception of corruption in the various relationships assessed.

Table 6 – Average corruption perception score depending on the relationship and interviewee group

Relationships	School council, individual members	Headmasters	Individual teachers	Sub-divisional inspector	Households	Together
Sub-division<>Headmaster	4.3%	2.3%	3.6%	0.5%		2.8%
Sub-division<>Teachers	4.4%	9.5%	2.5%	0.0%		4.1%
Division<>Sub-division	5.8%	13.0%	6.2%	17.5%		10.4%
Headmaster<>External actors				17.5%	7.0%	12.3%
Headmaster<>Teachers	1.9%	5.3%	24.9%	6.8%	6.0%	8.1%
Headmaster<>Households	9.4%	7.4%	10.5%	4.0%	24.6%	9.4%
Teachers<>Households				9.7%	13.8%	11.8%
State<>Region	16.2%	20.6%	22.7%	22.8%		20.5%
Region <> Division	5.6%	5.5%	5.3%	6.4%		5.7%
Together	8.1%	9.6%	10.1%	10.4%	11.7%	9.8%

All of the categories of persons interviewed on the perception of corruption in the school sector perceive a degree of risk in the region of 10%, with a variation of 8.1% (minimum) to 11.7% (maximum). By increasing order, households are the most sensitive category in terms of perception of corruption in service delivery, followed by sub-divisional inspectors, teachers interviewed individually, headmasters, and members of school councils interviewed individually. The relationship existing between the national and regional level (20.5%) showed the highest perception of corruption, followed by the relationship between schools and external actors (12.3%).

The section below presents a description and analysis of the possible forms corruption can take based on Figure 2.

3.3. Risk map description

3.3.1. Governance deficits and perception of corruption

Table 3 shows that governance problems are more pronounced in the relationships between the following stakeholders:

- DDEB and IAEB (68.6%)

- IAEB and headmasters (45%)
- DDEB and headmasters (55.1%)
- Teachers and households (38.3%)
- PTAs and households (39.4%)

In addition, the following relationships present medium to high levels of corruption:

- MINEDUB and DDEB (20.5%)
- DDEB and IAEB (10.4%)
- Teachers and households (11.8%)
- External actors and headmasters (12.3%)

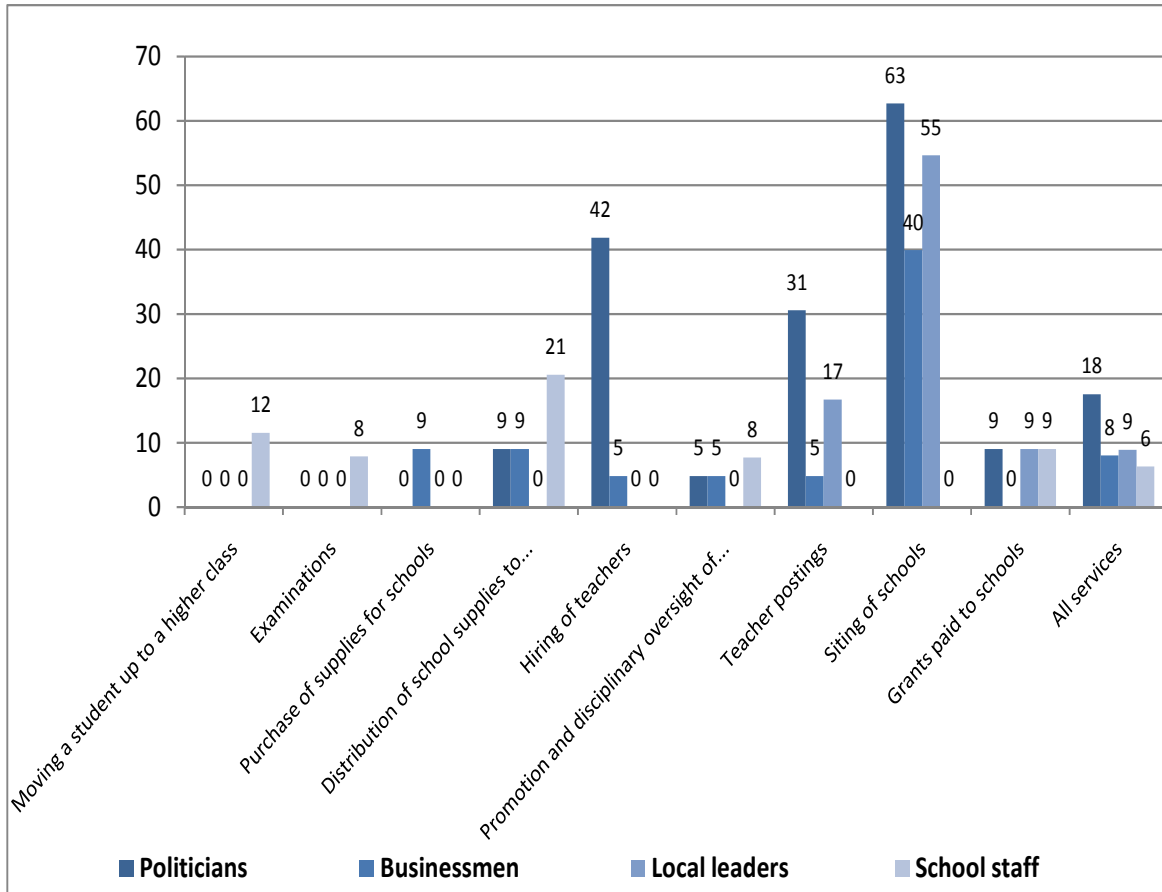
The analysis below offers a summary of the different relationships studied as well as of the governance deficits and perceived corruption risks.

- **National level**

The perceived corruption rate in the relationship between the ministry and the regional delegation is 20.5%, which is in fact the highest perception level. Among the interviewees, sub-divisional inspectors in particular slammed the dealings between these hierarchical levels, as did individual teachers, headmasters and individual members of school councils.

Corruption at a national level is manifested, for example, by the influence external actors exert on the decisions taken by MINEDUB, as stressed by sub-divisional inspectors.

Figure 1: Opinion of inspectors on cases of ascertained influence



Politicians¹² and businessmen are among those most often cited among the four groups of persons likely to influence the running of state primary schools. In effect, school location choices generate all sorts of controversies. For instance, the decision to set up a school in a given area is not always based on the needs of the local population, but rather on the goodwill of politicians, businessmen and local officials in the area. The rate of interventionism, reflecting the degree of influence on the location of schools totals 63% for politicians, 55% for local officials, and lastly 40% for businessmen. This data allows for a better understanding of the reasons for the disparities existing between certain localities which, contrary to others, register a strong concentration of schools, are equipped with good school infrastructures, as well as overstaffing in teachers. Teacher recruitments are a second area of influence, and here too, politicians dictate the law, followed by local officials and businessmen. Lastly, the hiring of teachers is also strongly subject to the influence of politicians and businessmen. Based on the scheme of roles and responsibilities of actors in the education sector, inspectors are supposed to occupy a central role in connection with school and staff requirements, which explains the high level of frustration they expressed. Overall, politicians seem to be the locus

¹² What is involved here is a category of persons likely to influence ministerial decisions due to their knowledge of the system and their network of contacts within the public administration.

of decision-making power, since they intervene in almost all decision-making processes at the ministerial level. These practices result in villages and hamlets being neglected as lacking political elites, despite the extreme shortage of school infrastructures in precisely those areas.

The highest corruption risk at the national level concerns embezzlement of education funds, as can be seen from the table below.

Table 7: Question: “In your opinion, at what level are corruption risks in the educational system located? If they exist, at what level are they the highest for each of the risks identified below?”

Transactions	Actors	Level where the risk is highest (as a %)					Overall scores ¹³
		School level	Sub-division level	Divisional level	Regional level	National level	
Embezzlement of education funds	Inspector			49		30	72
	Headmaster	6		17	7	46	
	Teacher	4	2	10	4	47	
	School council	6	2	5	7	43	
Poor use of funds at the school level	Inspector	21	6	25			51
	Headmaster	14	4	19	2	11	
	Teacher	18	2	8	5	18	
	School council	15	4	10	5	15	
Purchase of textbooks	Inspector			28		16	31
	Headmaster	7		5	1	13	
	Teacher	6	5	2	1	15	
	School council	4	2	4	1	13	
Purchase of other teaching materials	Inspector			28		24	37
	Headmaster	5		6	3	19	
	Teacher	5	6	2	2	19	
	School council	9	3	4	2	12	
Purchase /building of premises	Inspector			13		49	48
	Headmaster			10	6	38	
	Teacher	3	0	2	6	21	
	School council	5	1	5	5	28	

This table shows that the embezzlement of funds remains a major problem in the educational system. All headmasters, inspectors, teachers, and members of school councils were invited to give their opinion on a series of questions covering topics such as the embezzlement of funds and problems with the building of premises amongst others. The embezzlement of education funds ranks at the forefront of the problems raised by the respondents, with an average of 72%! The divisional services and MINEDUB constitute the most incriminated levels in this respect. The

¹³ Average percentage of actors who think there is a corruption related issue in the concerned field at any given level.

problem concerning poor use of school funds ranks second, with an average rate of 51%. Schools are implicated in this case, as well as the role of DDEB in the process of sourcing schools with classroom materials. Lastly, building classrooms is another major problem in which DDEB and MINEDUB are especially implicated.

- **The divisional delegation and the sub-divisional inspection office**

The relationship between the divisional delegation and the sub-divisional inspection office shows a high governance deficit estimated at 68.6%, the highest rate for all of the relationships assessed. This deficit primarily covers compliance with the laws and regulations in force and the need for financial management reporting. The corruption risk perceived at this level is medium at 10.4%. Among all categories of interviewees, inspectors were the group most sensitive to corruption at the divisional level. Indeed, they are in permanent contact with schools and aware of the problems they face not only because they play a vital role in defining the requirements in terms of teaching materials and staff, but also because they ensure the educational and administrative inspection of schools. They therefore have the possibility to measure the consequences of unsatisfied requirements and are in a position to best identify embezzlement problems at higher levels.

- **Headmasters and external actors**

The relationship between headmasters and external actors presents a medium corruption risk. What is concerned here is the potential transactions between headmasters and local benefactors who wish to contribute to the running of the school. External actors, in this scenario, include non-governmental organisations and development partners at the local level, patrons, as well as any other form of assistance that contributes to improving the running of the school. However, the relationship existing between the headmasters and these actors is tainted, with a medium level of corruption. In other words, aid from such benefactors is not always managed with transparency, integrity and accountability.

- **IAEB and headmasters**

A medium governance deficit can be seen in the relationship existing between headmasters and the sub-divisional office.

According to headmasters, during the course of the last two school years, virtually all of the schools received their minimum package, which they obtained from the sub-divisional inspection office of basic education.

However, the grievances expressed by headmasters (see Table 8) concerning the content of the minimum package are widely shared by members of school councils. As regards the rest of the answers processed, most of the information concerning the acquisition and management of the “minimum package” escaped the members of the school councils as, in practice, the headmaster is

responsible for this and communication in this respect is not always guaranteed. Also, in many schools, functioning and organised school councils are still lacking.

Funds for sub-item expenditures derive from State allocations, and the annual inspection of the school's accounts is the responsibility of the sub-divisional office. Proposals made by headmasters for the improvement of the management of the minimum package concern in particular its timely nature, completeness, quality and match with needs. Outside the fees collected for the final examination, it seems that state primary schools do not apply any mandatory fees. However, the reality in the opinion of both headmasters and members of school councils shows that fees are sometimes collected.

According to headmasters, the minimum package only arrived on time in 12.5% and, it was sufficient in 22% of cases, of good quality for 30% of the schools; lastly, it matched the school's requirements in 43% of cases. Only 8% of schools kept their statements of account, i.e., less than 1/10th of all schools. The answers to the questions concerning the management of the minimum package enable a relatively alarming assessment of the situation, all of the information received being summarised in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Opinion of headmasters on the treatment of the minimum package (as a %)

Questions	Answer	
	Yes	No
• Did you receive the minimum package in 2007/2008?	95.2	4.8
• Did you receive the minimum package in 2008/2009?	97.6	2.4
• Did you receive a letter informing you of the availability of the minimum package?	31	69
• Did you collect the minimum package from the sub-divisional office of basic education?	98	2
• Did you receive transportation fees?	48	52
• Were the transportation fees sufficient?	29	71
• Was the school council informed of the content of the package?	75.8	24.2
• Were parents informed of the content of the package?	49.7	50.3
• Did the materials and supplies arrive on time?	12.5	87.5
• Were the materials and supplies sufficient?	22	78
• Were the materials and supplies of good quality?	30	70
• Were the materials and supplies useful or match the requirements?	43	57

Poor management of the minimum package has induced some headmasters to look for other ways of contributing to the functioning of their school. Accordingly school/tuition fees are still collected in some schools, and in virtually all schools PTA fees are still mandatory.

Decree 2001/041 of February 19th 2001 qualifies these fees as “voluntary contributions” by parents; but the reality is very different. All of the fees collected by headmasters, except for the fees for official examinations, can thus be qualified as illegal, as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9: Characteristics of contributions to fees as reported by households (total interviewees)

Heading	Households			
	Status most observed	Frequency (%)	Maximum amount observed	Average
Enrolments	no contribution	75	35,500	3,783
Contribution to the PTA	mandatory	74	30,000	3,180
Textbooks	no contribution	90	33,000	3,924
Intermediary examinations	mandatory	60	36,000	2,099
Final examination	mandatory	50	23,000	8,899
Contribution to maintenance fees	no contribution	91	25,000	1,325
Academic support courses / private lessons	no contribution	74	45,000	3,205
Culture, art and sports	no contribution	85	7,200	394
Moving a student up to a higher class	no contribution	93	10,000	385
Payments to school authorities	no contribution	88	10,000	1,022
Contribution to building expenses	no contribution	90	10,000	1,091
Works carried out by parents or students	no contribution	90	1,000	87

This table tells us that parents continue to pay school/tuition fees in some state primary schools in Cameroon, contrary to the declaration made by the Head of State in 2000 advocating free access to state primary schools throughout the entire country. Similarly, despite official texts specifying that payment of membership fees to PTAs is voluntary; parents are still forced to pay these fees to enrol their children in a state primary school in Cameroon. Indeed, the data collected in Table 9 tells us that 74% of households think PTA fees are still mandatory. So the collection of illegal fees applies not only to intermediary examinations but also to the cost of building classrooms, the payment for mandatory academic support courses and other activities. These practices lead some parents to complain about the cost of educating a child in a state primary school in Cameroon, as expressed in their own terms.

Primary school in Cameroun has become more expensive although we were told it would be free. Today, people are forced to join the PTA and to pay the latter at least 15,000 FCFA whereas previously only a maximum of 2,000 FCFA was involved. So primary school has never been free in Cameroon. (Mr Moyo, parent, 30/12/2010).

People say that schooling is free, but the PTA fee is mandatory and is now higher than when school/tuition fees were paid. What do the PTA fees cover if the parents also have to contribute to paying for:

- *tables-and benches = 5,000 FCFA*
- *toilet paper = 3,000 FCFA*
- *reams of paper for terms = 2,500 FCFA*
- *mandatory rehearsal fees = 500 FCFA per week-end and per child*

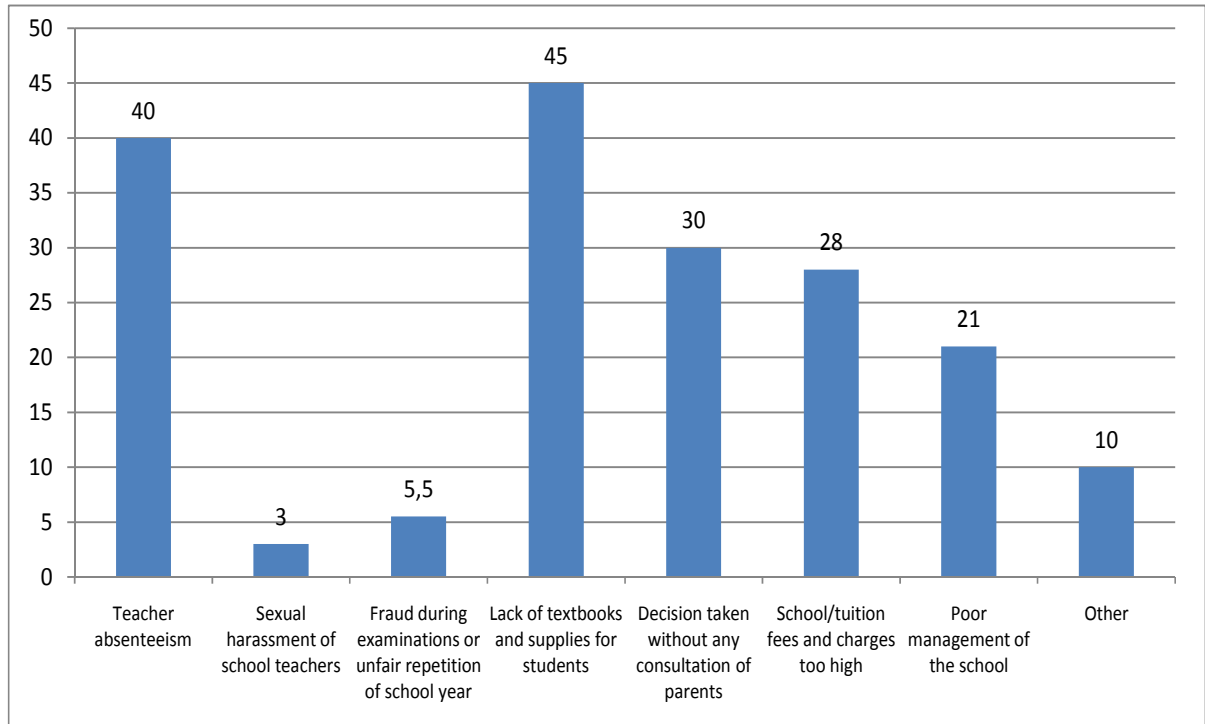
(EP de Nkoldongo, Group 2B - Mr André Z., parent, 31/12/2010)

What is free in a government school when it is the parents who pay for the textbooks, school uniforms and PTA fees? The enrolment fees are nothing compared to what the parents pay. The minimum package always arrives late, towards March while the school year has already begun. The PTA fees pay teachers' salaries and for the building of classrooms by the PTA. Access to government schools can't be free so long as this situation continues. (A Divisional Officer, 28/12/2010)

- **Teachers/PTAs and households**

A medium governance deficit and medium perceived level of corruption in the relationship between teachers and households is observed, as well as a medium governance deficit between parent associations and teachers.

Figure 2: Profile of irregularities identified by households in schools attended by their children. (*Have you ever observed any of the following irregularities?*)



The above figure shows that buying textbooks for their children is a major problem for households. Almost one half of the students (45%) lacked textbooks and other school supplies needed to properly follow their lessons. Teachers' absenteeism constitutes the second problem identified by households, with 40% of parents considering it to be a major problem. In this respect, it should be specified that *Transparency International Cameroon* conducted another study in 2010 on teachers' absenteeism within state primary schools in the Centre Region of Cameroon. The study is based on factual data since the team in charge of collecting the data carried out unannounced visits to schools to check the presence or absence of teachers. The survey results showed a rate of absenteeism averaging 15.1%. In view of that percentage the problem of teachers' absenteeism should be taken very seriously. Similarly, in declining order, 30% of households consider that decisions concerning how schools function are taken without any prior consultation of parents, 28% think that school/tuition fees and other charges are high, while 21% consider that the school is poorly managed.

Students who don't pay the PTA fees are chased out; the certificate of schooling has to be paid for. In my village our children don't go to school because of the problems. They are still chased out even though their parents are poor. (Mr Alhadji A., parent, 1/1/2011)

I take care of the schooling of my dead aunt's child who is in Class 5. In the 1st semester, his grade average was 19/20. The schoolmistress advised me to send the child to Class 6. To get the child into a higher class, the schoolmistress requested a payment from me. After I paid 10,000 FCFA, the child moved up to Class 6, so yes there are cases of corruption. (Mr Georges Clément E., parent, 27/12/2010)

3.3.2. Performance and service delivery quality deficit indicators

As specified above in the section dealing with the methodology (2.2) employed for the risk maps, to measure *performance and service quality*, a heading entitled “very weak performance” (VWP) includes schools where the performance score is less than 20%, another heading entitled “weak performance” those with a performance score between 20% and 40%, and a last heading, entitled “medium performance”, includes schools with a performance score between 40% and 60%, and so forth until very high performance. Information on service delivery quality was collected using school information cards based on field observations.

Table 10: performance indicator deficits

PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE QUALITY		Very weak performance (VWP) $X < 20\%$		Weak performance (WF) $20\% \leq X < 40\%$		Medium performance (AP) $40\% \leq X < 60\%$		High performance (HP) $60\% \leq X < 80\%$		Very high performance (VHP) $80\% \leq X \leq 100\%$		General assessment of performance ¹⁴
		Total VWP	AVR VWP	Total WP	MOY PF	Total PM	AVR WP	Total AP	AVR AP	Total VHP	AVR VHP	
INSTALLATIONS												
N	Playground	25	5 %	5	29 %	13	47%	4	71%	1	86%	Very weak performance
O	Building	10	12%	7	29%	18	50%	10	70%	3	88%	Medium performance
P	Property	0		19	34%	11	50%	16	70%	2	94%	Weak performance
STAFF												
Q	Number of teachers and assiduity	0		0		12	56%	35	71%	1	83%	High performance
R	Qualifications of the teachers	0		0		1	50%	1	67%	46	96%	Very high performance
SUPPLIES												
S	Textbooks	10	13%	22	27%	0		11	74%	5	90%	Weak performance
T	Classroom materials (textbooks, chalk, supplies)	28	14%	14	33%	4	50%	2	67%	0		Very weak performance

¹⁴ The highest number of schools in any given domain turned out to be decisive in order to carry out a general assessment. .

The objective, at this level, is to assess the physical condition of school infrastructures. Our approach suggests that a correlation should be made between governance indicators and performance indicators. Indeed, the initial assumption was that infrastructures of better quality and of higher number would result from transparent, sound and accountable management of the funds dedicated to primary education. Beyond theory, the aim of this part was to assess the materialisation of governance indicators in the field. In other words, the study objective was to determine whether good governance automatically went together with school infrastructures of better quality and of higher number. So as to establish this correlation, we separately observed the quality and quantity of playgrounds, as well as school buildings and property, the number of teachers and their qualifications, as well as textbooks and classroom materials.

- **Playgrounds**

The availability of playgrounds for students seems to pose a major problem in virtually all state primary schools. More than half of the schools in the sample studied show very weak performance on this point, and by adding the five schools with weak performance, we reach a total of 30 schools with a performance level wavering between weak and very weak. A single school, out of the forty-eight schools studied, showed very high performance in terms of the availability and quality of playgrounds. We would therefore invite the persons responsible for building new schools to take the availability of playgrounds in account, upstream of the plan to create a school.

- **Buildings**

This indicator shows that the majority of the schools demonstrate a medium performance (18), despite the extreme scores of ten schools having very weak performance and three schools with very good performance. The general trend indicates that more than one half of state primary schools are disadvantaged in terms of school buildings. It is also necessary to ensure the maintenance of existing infrastructure and lastly it is up to MINEDUB to promote the construction of additional buildings.

- **Classroom materials**

Classroom materials show one of the lowest scores among the performance indicators. More than half of the schools, i.e., 58%, show very weak performance at this level. The inadequate quality and quantity of classroom materials in most schools has a negative impact on the quality of education. In addition, many students do not own textbooks.

Figure 3: Equipment rate for certain basic equipment in schools (as a %)

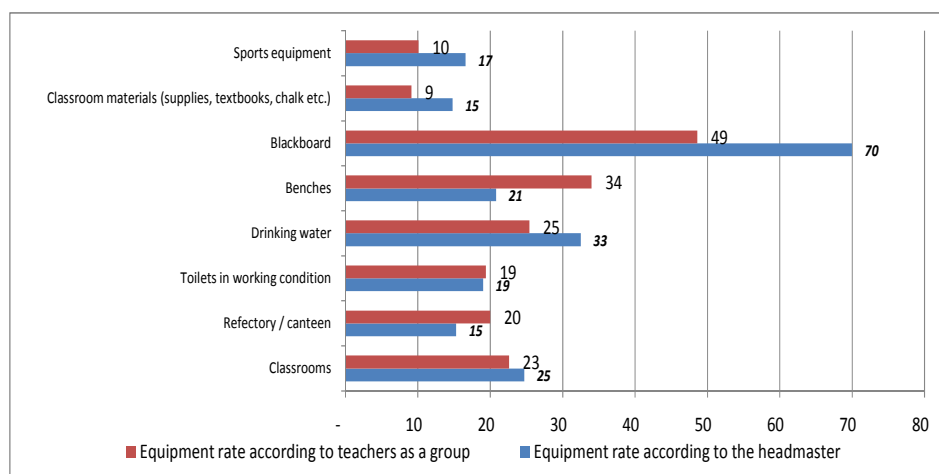
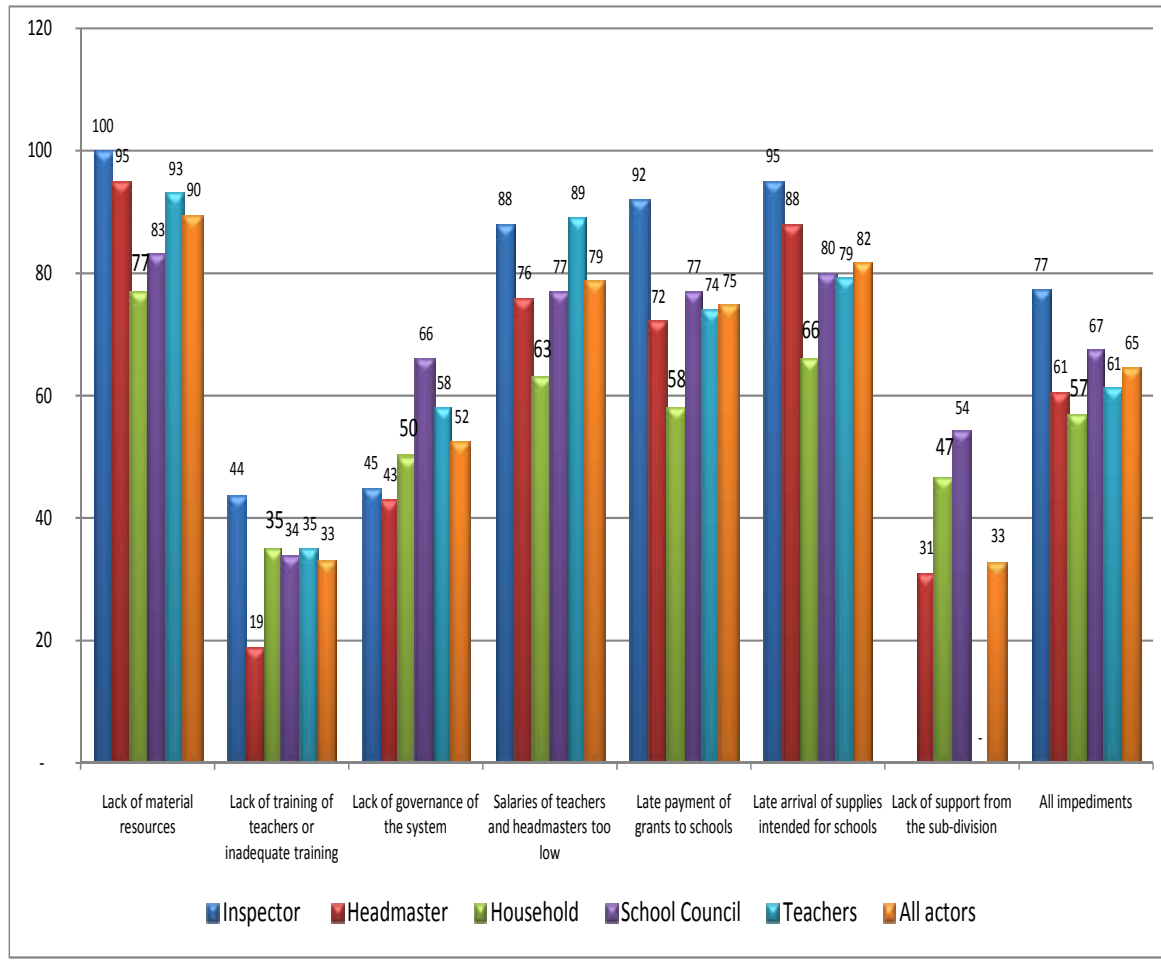


Figure 3 above provides a general view of the availability of certain basic materials and equipment present in state primary schools. According to headmasters, 70% of schools are equipped with a blackboard, while according to teachers, this rate is only of around 49%, and questions remain as to the reasons behind this gap in perception. It is possible that the answers given take into account an assessment of the quality of such blackboards. However, teachers use the blackboards on a daily basis, unlike headmasters who consider that the physical presence of the blackboard suffices while for a teacher, this is necessary but not sufficient. Another variance appears in the answers to the questions concerning the availability of table-bench units, drinking water, sports equipment, school equipment, and the refectory. Questions regarding the availability of classrooms and toilets seem to be the only ones where the two professions seem in agreement. Less than 19% of the schools in the sample studied have enough toilets that work, approximately 24% have enough classrooms. The lack of school equipment, in particular sports equipment, is alarming. We surveyed certain actors, including inspectors, headmasters, households, members of school councils, and teachers, to try and determine how to improve the quality of the teaching in state primary schools, and their opinions are summarised in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Question: what are the main impediments to improving the quality of education in schools?



Based on that figure, there are many impediments to improving the quality of education. Factors relating to the lack of material resources, including inadequate teachers' salaries, the late receipt of materials intended for schools and the late payment of grants to schools are among the problems most often cited by actors. The governance deficit is cited by more than 50% of actors as an impediment to improving the quality of education, in particular by school councils which attach great importance to this factor.

- **Rating of governance and performance/service quality**

The data obtained after a comparison of the ratings of schools in terms of governance and performance are indicated in Table 11 below. To establish a link between these two ordinal variables (performance rank and governance rank), we calculated a linear correlation coefficient R, which proves to be very weak. This weak correlation level may be explained by the fact that on a

methodological level, performance variables include as many questions relating to the quality of the teaching as relating to the quality of the infrastructures.¹⁵

Table 11 – School ratings in terms of governance and performance

School code	1111	1112	1113	1114	1115	1121	1122	1123	1124	1211	1212	1213	1214	1215	1221	1222
Governance rank	30	15	19	27	2	5	7	26	12	10	6	1	22	11	18	25
Performance rank	45	47	38	13	26	37	35	25	14	27	36	2	46	41	28	42
School code	1223	1224	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2121	2122	2123	2124	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215
Governance rank	21	31	45	47	46	42	43	35	28	23	9	32	24	17	33	20
Performance rank	29	34	12	19	21	16	44	9	8	17	1	11	6	4	24	40
School code	2221	2222	2223	2224	3111	3112	3113	3121	3122	3123	3211	3212	3213	3221	3222	3223
Governance rank	16	29	8	40	36	39	48	38	44	41	14	4	3	13	34	37
Performance rank	15	10	5	32	7	3	43	48	33	31	18	23	30	22	39	20

It should be noted that schools which depend on a same inspection office often tend to face the same risks; this is the case for the sub-divisions of Mfoundi, Sanaga Maritime and Wouri. In addition, an in-depth analysis through a case study would permit the collection of more information about certain schools which, despite everything, display a correlation between governance and performance, such as the schools corresponding to code numbers 1213, 2115 and 2221. An analysis specifically focused on those schools would allow identifying similarities that could show standard types, the presence of which would justify good performance, and the absence poor performance.

¹⁵ During the course of the study, indicators relating to the quality of the teaching and school results were referenced as “internal performance” while those in connection with school infrastructures and equipment as “external performance”. It should be noted that a correlation between governance indicators and internal performance indicators could have given rise to a different type of result.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study on transparency and integrity in the primary education sector in Cameroon ends with a general conclusion that is relatively alarming.

Risk maps in the area of governance and corruption points to medium and high risk associated to governance deficits and the perception of corruption on a national, regional and local level, which is that of schools.

By way of illustration, governance problems are more pronounced in the relationships between the following stakeholders:

- DDEB and IAEB (68.6%)
- IAEB and headmasters (45%)
- DDEB and headmasters (55.1%)
- Teachers and households (38.3%)
- PTAs and households (39.4%)

Medium to high levels of corruption is for their part to be seen in the following relationships:

- MINEDUB and DDEB (20.5%)
- DDEB and IAEB (10.4%)
- Teachers and households (11.8%)
- External actors and headmasters (12.3%)

Integrity, which in this study implies knowledge of the rules and legal procedures in the area of basic education, is the indicator that best explains this situation. In fact, the focus is on the rules about the payment of fees to schools, the functioning of school councils or the behaviour of teachers. The answers to these questions teach us that actors at all levels in the educational system act in a completely opaque way. In effect, the texts that are supposed to govern how schools function, including those concerning school budgets, remain largely unknown to those responsible for implementing them. By way of example, circulars governing the distribution of the minimum package and budget of state primary schools are largely unknown, even by some inspections and divisional delegations of basic education.

Knowledge of official texts and rules is a prerequisite for accountability towards other actors. As matters now stand, headmasters do not have advance knowledge of the amount of the sub-item expenditures they will receive from the divisional delegations of basic education. More often than

not, they are put before a *fait accompli* and as a result cannot complain about the amount received, since they have no legal basis on which to rely. Similarly, school councils are not always informed of the receipt of the minimum package or of the budget of sub-item expenditures by headmasters, who often collect this budget in the absence of the members of the school councils and only provide them with information on an arbitrary basis.

In such a context of opacity and generalized ignorance, satisfactory accountability is not possible with the result that this situation gives rise to all sorts of speculation on perceived corruption. When most schools receive budgets and classroom materials that are not only inadequate in number but also of poor quality, it is easy for local officials to justify this shortcoming by embezzlements at a higher level. The poor use of school funds, the building of premises, hiring as well as the promotion and posting of staff remain areas that are perceived as being very exposed to corruption risks. Finally, the legal framework of the primary education sector fuels all types of suspicions.

As regards performance, it was not possible to establish a correlation between the selected performance and governance indicators, which might be explained by the nature of the indicators selected in this study. However, the performance indicators as well as the answers received on the topic of the management of the minimum package and of the budget for sub-item expenditures point to the fact that schools are operating in a context of generalised scarcity, whether as regards infrastructures (classrooms, toilets in working order, benches, etc.) or equipment (school equipment, sports equipment etc.). Indeed, this shortage is perceived by all actors as representing the main impediment to the improvement of the quality of education. Better access to the official texts and rules in force would facilitate higher participatory engagement by actors and contribute to placing more pressure for better use of resources.

What are this system's strong points and weak points?

MINEDUB is a relatively recent ministry, the creation and organisation of which date back to 2005. At the time of conducting this study, the ministry had only been in existence for six years. MINEDUB was previously part of the former ministry of national education, from which it inherited texts and decrees without having yet fully adapted them to its own context. One of MINEDUB's strong points is that in just six years of existence, it has been able to organise and appropriate certain texts of the former ministry of national education, while promulgating new decrees necessary to its operation. Despite the ambiguous quality of certain circulars and the unavailability of texts at the local level, basic education does not suffer from a total lack of official texts.

However, the system's weakness stems from the fact that MINEDUB does not sufficiently communicate in its transactions with decentralised services at the local level. In other terms, the officials of MINEDUB's central services do not show transparency, integrity and accountability in their transactions with decentralised services. This lack of communication stems from lack of knowledge of the official texts at the local level, whether by headmasters, members of the PTA or members of school councils and from an accountability deficit.

The system's weakness is the subject of constant criticism on the part of local actors who, rightfully or wrongfully, justify problems such as poor schools results, demotivation or dilapidated school infrastructures by breaches at the hierarchical level. This is why the Minister of Basic Education seems for actors to be the real locus of decision-making power capable of bringing about changes allowing improvement of service delivery to users. This transfer of responsibility at the national level thus risks making things even worse at the level of local officials, who consider their responsibilities as being diluted and therefore ascribing less significance to irregularities taking place at their own level.

Changes at the level of standards and habits, in view of increasing the degree of transparency and accountability at the level of MINEDUB, could thus have a catalytic effect on the entire sector.

This report proposes conclusions and detailed recommendations to be applied at the level of the different relationships. The recommendations stemming from this study apply to MINEDUB and to its decentralised services, as well as to all participants in the decision-making process for educational issues in Cameroon, namely communes which henceforth occupy a more important role in this sector with the implementation of the decentralisation process. However, it should be borne in mind that communes do not yet enjoy financial autonomy, and continue to receive funding earmarked from MINEDUB for the promotion of the primary educational sector.

MINEDUB and DREB

The relationship between MINEDUB and DREB suffers from a high perception of corruption. This situation is explained firstly, by the influence of politicians, businessmen and local officials in the decisions taken by MINEDUB on the creation of schools, hiring of teaching staff or the equipping of schools with basic infrastructures and, secondly, by the fact that most of the interviewees consider that the locus of problems such as the embezzlement of funds and the causes of permanent underfunding of the education sector are at the ministerial level.

The system of transfers to schools is not transparent and, at the end of the distribution chain, headmasters often do not know the rationale behind decisions concerning their budget. This is partially due to legal loopholes and to imprecise official texts, such as ministerial circular 21/A/135/MINEDUC/CAB of September 20th 2001, which indicates in its definition of operating budgets the sub-item expenditures to be transferred to schools. As regards the minimum package, the study also shows that transfers of basic teaching materials do not meet schools' requirements.

The improvement of the relationship between MINEDUB and DREB, and indirectly with the persons responsible at the local level (for the school and for their community) goes through a review of the circulars and official texts which govern both transfers to schools and specify the responsibilities of actors in the educational system and the standards that could guide the administration and encourage increased accountability at all levels. In that aim, the decentralisation process and the transfer of competencies to communes offer the possibility of engaging decision-makers more, and through them, citizens and users of public services.

To increase their effectiveness, official texts need to be precise and transparent, in particular by being circulated to decentralised services and local officials.

The elaboration of more precise and transparent models, criteria and policies accompanied by increased accountability and complaint procedures, would contribute to mitigating the influence of external actors in decisions concerning the location of schools and the posting of staff.

It should be borne in mind that despite the *Fast Track* or the Education for All Initiative (EFA) recommending that 20% of the State budget be earmarked for education, with 50% to revert to MINEDUB, this has not been done to date. It is essential that the State redefine its national priorities and carry out an in-depth review of the content of the minimum package, such as to better adapt it to schools' requirements and especially to ensure prompt availability, as well as higher quality and quantity of the materials distributed to schools.

DDEB and IAEB

The relationship between DDEB and IAEB shows a high governance deficit and a medium perception of corruption. This high governance deficit mainly corresponds to noncompliance with laws and regulations and the obligation to render accounts. The perception of corruption relates to the key role played by DDEB in the process of distributing the budget for sub-item expenditures to schools. The sub-divisional office is not involved in the management of the funds allocated to schools, yet it is continually confronted to the problems caused by the inadequacy of the funds disbursed by DDEB. This inadequate funding has thus fed the perception that the divisional delegates manipulate operating budgets for their own benefit.

IAEB could, thanks to its knowledge of the requirements of a sub-division's schools, take on a more important role in the establishment and inspection of school budgets.

As regards the operating budget, since headmasters receive funding in cash, it is recommended that DDEB should henceforth require the release document to be signed by co-signatories, in particular the sub-divisional inspector, headmasters themselves, and the heads of school councils. This procedure would facilitate budget monitoring by inspectors and users of this sector and contribute to placing more pressure for heightened accountability at this level.

IAEB and headmasters

Between IAEB and headmasters, a medium governance deficit is observed, mainly related to the minimum package. In addition, the date of receipt of the minimum package by headmasters, scheduled for 31 August at the latest, is almost never respected. The minimum package almost always arrives late, is of poor quality, inadequate in volume and unsuited to schools' needs. As a result, communes, like sub-divisional inspection offices previously, now need to be more diligent in making school materials available to schools. It is true that the communes await the delivery of the materials from MINEDUB so as to be able to distribute them to schools. However, communes have the possibility of advancing part of their operating budget so as to finance the purchase of the minimum package, and thus allow schools to receive the supplies in time and recover the

expenditure subsequently, once the government releases the funds. Communes could also place more pressure on Government to make appropriate minimum packages available. The transfer of responsibility for the distribution of the minimum package to communes brings with it the advantage that those in charge of schools can now orient the purchases of supplies, as they are now closer to the hierarchical superior who is the mayor of the locality, without forgetting that upon the next vote, the work of the elected official will be judged by voters at the polls.

Teachers/ PTA and households

The relationship between teachers and households shows a medium governance deficit and a medium perception of corruption, and that between the PTA and households presents a medium governance deficit. To attract parents' good graces, teachers often offer them preferential treatment for their children in schools. From time to time, they thus have the possibility of taking advantage of a few benefits ranging from simple thanks to financial rewards. Moreover, some heads of PTAs require parents to pay membership fees; despite the fact that the law abolished them and made them optional, causing friction and misunderstandings between heads of PTAs and parents.

To remedy these problems, standards need to be set for service delivery at the school level, including a code of conduct for the headmaster, the teachers, members of school councils or of PTAs. It is also essential that such standards be accompanied by a procedure that allows parents, students, and teachers to make complaints to school councils, and report illegal fees and the diversion of funds.

Improving the skills of school personnel in terms of budget planning at the school level, as well as their ability to communicate with users will also be important. Lastly, improved parent participation, in particular by the inclusion of the poorest among them in school matters will enable a better parental engagement and response to the demand for transparency and accountability of the educational system.

In a nutshell, this study on transparency and integrity has allowed for a clear understanding of the problematic relationships existing between the various actors of the educational system. The next step, dedicated to an advocacy campaign, will primarily focus on improving the management of the minimum package and on the disclosure of certain basic texts the blatant absence of which was observed in the field. To achieve an adequate level of accountability, it is essential that actors have prior knowledge of their roles and of their responsibilities.

This study thus paves the path for in-depth thinking about service delivery to state primary schools. A case study would allow more in-depth analyses to be carried out and the identification of the key variables that are essential to good performance of schools, serving as the basis of advocacy for their consideration in the functioning of other schools. Such an approach would allow establishing a list of schools that are success stories in this area (*best performers*) and serve as a model for other schools looking for better results.

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