

Original Research Article

Integration of Internally Displaced Children in the Labour Market During a Period of Crisis Related to Cultural Depravity in the Mayo Tsanaga Division - Far North Region of Cameroon

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Article History

Received: 28.01.2024

Accepted: 05.03.2024

Published: 15.03.2024

Journal homepage:

<https://www.easpublisher.com>

Quick Response Code



Abstract: Objective: This article takes a holistic look at the integration of internally displaced children, who have graduated or are in the final stages of a general education course, into the labour market in a crisis situation in the Department of Mayo Tsanaga. **Method:** This anthropological research is based on empirical data collected from students, MINEDUB/MINAS officials, NGOs and members of the host community. Before going into the field, an information note indicating the purpose of the study, the period of the study and the profile of the interviewer was sent to the administrative authorities. As in all qualitative research, the saturation point was reached after ten interviews, i.e. until it seemed that no new information could be obtained. The interviews were conducted individually in the locations requested by the respondents, and then recorded using a Dictaphone, and sometimes by Android telephone. **Results:** This article takes a holistic look at the integration of internally displaced children who have completed their schooling into the labour market. The analysis shows that no specific measures are being taken by the Cameroon government and its implementing partners in charge of education to recruit this vulnerable group who, despite the difficulties they face as a result of forced displacement, have nonetheless managed to complete their schooling. **Discussion:** The particularity of this article is that, in addition to being situated between forced displacement, terrorism and formal education, as UNESCO states, "in a crisis situation you have to save education". With cultural connectivity as its Ariadne's thread, this article mobilises the measures taken by stakeholders to encourage or compel parents to contribute to their children's education despite the hostilities, insecurity and armed conflicts that have arisen. **Conclusion:** The IDPs who are the subject of this study come from villages and communities in the Mayo Tsanaga department, with different cultures and differing apprehensions regarding their children's education. The analysis carried out shows that the various approaches, the plethora of actors, and the perceptions of the communities studied, show that the system unfolds in a kind of 'cultural deliance' and reveals that education is by no means a guarantee on the labour market.

Keywords: Labour Market, cultural deliance, education.

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INTRODUCTION

More than 600 households affected by the rains and violent winds in the Mayo-Danay department since the end of April 2022. Nearly 5,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region as a result of insecurity between January and May 2022. (UN-OCHA, CAMEROON, 2022). Durable solutions to displacement involve the viable return of IDPs to their homes,

integration in their place of asylum or settlement and integration elsewhere in the country. For solutions to be truly sustainable, however, a number of conditions must be met. "Between 15 and 19 May, more than 100 new households returned to their places of origin in the Logone Birni arrondissement. The department of Logone et Chari had recorded a total of 12,600 returnees by 31 May 2022" (UN-OCHA, CAMEROON, 2022).

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Human displacement is governed by international legal instruments. The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa, known as the Kampala Convention, adopted in Kampala, Uganda on 23 October 2009, is an important benchmark for taking account of this segment of the population. It is therefore obvious to establish a link between schooling for IDPs and the development project.

The general education system in most African countries, including Cameroon, has no real identity. In the Cameroonian context, general education in this case, remains a real enigma from a scientific point of view; given that despite all the measures taken to combat school drop-outs, moral depravity and the exponential growth in unemployment among young graduates, the integration of young general education graduates at all levels of schooling is problematic. It would be tempting to believe that the Cameroonian education system, under the influence of colonialism, reproduces in its entirety Western methods based on the "cult of diplomas or long studies" before being competitive on the job market. As a result, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that education in Cameroon has lost its originality and direction. According to *Le Petit Ecolier*, there is an intellectual decline in Cameroon. Cameroon's education system is still plagued by numerous irregularities, making it necessary, indeed urgent, to find palliative measures. This seems to have become inevitable when the country is faced with a considerable number of internally displaced pupils as a result of crises or natural disasters. This is why UNESCO says that "*in a crisis situation, you have to save education*". The fact remains, however, that school remains the best way to change mentalities and thus achieve development.

This article focuses on the professionalisation of general education in crisis situations in relation to the social integration of internally displaced pupils. To ensure development through education for all in this hostile environment, it is imperative to involve all stakeholders, namely: the Cameroonian government, the parents and close relatives of IDPs, members of the community, and development actors in the process of schooling IDP pupils, during the planning phase. This involvement is of vital importance in the choice of educational routes for IDPs. At the same time, this would prevent not only school drop-outs, but also the non-integration of IDPs into society. To this end, it is of undeniable importance to retrace in the results the normal course of a school leaver in the formal Cameroonian education system and in a period free of unrest.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was conducted in the Department of Mayo Tsanaga, more specifically in the locality of Zamai in Mokolo, Far North Region. The field survey itself took place in several phases, from January 2019 to the present day, with the aim of updating the

data. For greater originality, it was carried out simultaneously with the documentary review in various libraries in the city of Yaoundé, the documentation centres of institutions in charge of the education of internally displaced children in Cameroon, such as MINEDUB, where we were able to obtain regulatory texts from the central and decentralised services of this ministerial department, and institutions in charge of youth employment. The same applies to private libraries and websites ("Google scholar" or cairn info).

This anthropological research is based on empirical data collected from students, MINEDUB/MINAS officials, NGOs and members of the host community. Before going into the field, an information note indicating the purpose of the study, the period of the study and the profile of the interviewer was sent to the administrative authorities. As in all qualitative research, the saturation point was reached after ten interviews, i.e. until it seemed that no new information could be obtained. The interviews were conducted individually in the locations requested by the respondents, and then recorded using a Dictaphone, and sometimes by Android telephone. In addition, two Focus Group Discussions were held with male and female children, supervisors, parents and civil society actors. Each interview was conducted in French, sometimes with the help of an interpreter, and lasted around 40 minutes. Before each interview, the interview guides were used to explain to the respondents that their statements were anonymous and confidential.

In addition, they were informed of the possibility of ending the interview, after verbal consent had been obtained and agreement had been given to the recording of any interviews using dictaphones. This article was written in a particular context where it is not easy to use the usual data collection techniques. Direct observation was carried out according to the indications contained in the observation grid, without omitting the informal interviews.

The data collected using these techniques was analysed and interpreted according to the content analysis used in the social sciences, mainly in anthropology. As Christian Leray states, "Qualitative analysis scans a corpus in depth by systematically searching, using fine categorisations and all the elements of its content that the researcher is obliged to trace, classify, compare and evaluate. Depending on the method used, this refined research takes varying amounts of time to carry out; because of the time required to process each document (unless you have substantial resources), it cannot be applied to a large corpus, which is a limitation when it comes to validating certain results" (Christian Leray, 2008).

Despite the methodological rigour, this article, most of the data from which are taken from the Ph.D. thesis (Dr. Noma Eloundou Damien), is limited insofar

as biases could obviously be introduced during transcription, analysis and interpretation of the data.

RESULTS

Although the Kampala Convention has yet to be internalised, it represents an innovative and comprehensive framework designed to meet the needs of both displaced persons and their host communities. Based on international humanitarian law and international human rights law, it serves not only as a basis for humanitarian interventions, but also for the global and sustainable mobilisation of a multitude of actors in the face of internal displacement. To better explain the phenomenon of the integration of internally displaced students into the job market, it is important to look at the education system in Cameroon in situations where there are no crises or forced displacements. In other words, the number of years it normally takes for a Cameroonian student to finish school in order to qualify for a decent job. This article focuses on pre-school education, primary education, basic education, secondary education, technical and vocational education and, finally, normal education.

Different cycles of Formal Education in the Cameroonian Education System

First level of Formal Education

Pre-school Education: Pre-school is the first level of formal education. It is responsible for the care, supervision, survival, protection and development of children from birth to six years of age. (Decree on early childhood protection of 20 March 2001). It lasts for 2 years, or 3 years in some cases in the private sector. The admission age is 4 in the public sector, although in some public schools, children are admitted from the age of three (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013). However, in a crisis context, this cycle is only a pipe dream for pupils who have been internally displaced by crises and natural disasters.

Second level of Formal Education

Primary Education:

This is the second level of formal education. The primary cycle lasts six years. The legal age for admission is 6 and is the only condition for enrolment, whether or not a child has attended nursery school. The school-leaving certificate is the Certificat d'Études Primaires (CEP) for the French-speaking sub-system or the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) for the English-speaking sub-system. (Education and Training Sector Strategy Document, 2013). For most, sending their children to school is a waste of time. Although some IDP parents pay the APEE and sometimes benefit from donations of school supplies from NGOs and volunteers, school drop-out among IDP children of all sexes remains a reality in Zamai. *"Many of the boys stop going to school either to look for work, or the girls get married very quickly. What's more, do we need to go to school to work in the fields?"* (Interview conducted with informant 13

on 28/01/2021 in Zamai). However, this phenomenon varies more and more from one family to another.

The direct causes mentioned by the beneficiaries show that, in the future, the school dropout phenomenon will be amply justified in these communities. When asked about the level of priority given to formal education, the field survey revealed that education is not a priority in a context of crisis. Prioritising education for this vulnerable segment of the population is becoming a challenge for a country that wants to develop. *"At home I do my duty as a father and at school I teach, because that's my main job. (...) Without doubt, education remains a priority for many people. We are teachers today because of education. Education is very important and is central to our daily lives. It enables us to be educated, alert and capable of understanding and responding to life's concerns"* (Interview conducted with an informant, 02/02/2021).

If we go by the statements made by a certain category of informants, such as teachers, it is clear that they do not clearly state their position regarding parents' determination to send their children to school. For them, *"even if the child doesn't go to school, he can carry out other activities and get by"* (FGD conducted on 08/07/2021 in Zamai).

Overemphasis on Religion

Very often, IDP pupils who have reached CM2 or Class 6 do not drop out of school solely because of economic barriers. Religion is also one of the causes of school drop-out and wastage in this part of the country. Parents, most of whom are Muslim, are strongly attached to cultural values/constraints, based on customs and traditions, and depending on the ethnic group. For this category of informants, *"Education is not an important activity in my community because they don't want to go to school. If you think of school as a tool for socialising children, you have to remember that IDPs come from areas with very little schooling"* (Interview with an informant on 02/02/2021 in Zamai).

As a result, IDPs in crisis zones have evolved in the same education system as those in the host towns. Even if they attend primary school, IDP pupils have very little chance of This is a prospect unknown to many parents, for whom the period of adolescence that displaced children enter at CM2/Class 6 corresponds more to enrolment in agro-pastoral activities than to enrolment in secondary school. Most parents of Mafa or Kanouri pupils recognise the Cameroonian education system, but are unwilling to put up with lengthy studies for their offspring, especially when they tend to outgrow puberty.

In this article, although the target populations are making efforts to get their children into school, it has to be said that most of them, strongly rooted in tradition, are responding to the laws of early marriage for young

girls of school age, as one informant testifies: *"We're fighting to avoid dropping out of school. But we still see these cases, which are often due to early marriages for girls or the search for money for boys. The people around them think that education isn't important, because even without school, a child can get by trading"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 28/01/2021 in Zamai). When we talk about early marriage among school-age girls, we tend to think that our target population is unanimous in its belief that the emphasis should be on educating boys, since boys have the right to go to school as much as possible. This is not the case, however, as some of our informants also consider that sending a boy to school is a waste of parents' time. In this context, forced displacement is a way of conforming to this attitude. *"I do petty trading for my children's education. Education is important for children's success. I pay their board every year so that they (the children) get a good education. A lot of girls drop out because there's no reason for them to do a lot of school"* (Interview conducted with an informant on 28/01/2021 in Zamai).

Middle part of the Education Sector

Secondary Education: The middle part of the education sector, secondary education is responsible for developing general education, technical and vocational education and normal education. (Document de Stratégie du Secteur de l'Education et de la Formation, 2013).

General Secondary Education

There are two cycles. The 1st cycle lasts four (04) years in the French-speaking sub-system and five (05) years in the English-speaking sub-system. The end of the cycle is marked by the Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (B.E.P.C) in the French-speaking sub-system and the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E/O.L) in the English-speaking sub-system. The second cycle lasts 3 years in the French-speaking sub-system and leads to the baccalauréat, while in the English-speaking sub-system it lasts 2 years and leads to the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (G.C.E/A.L.). (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013).

Technical and Vocational Secondary Education

Technical and vocational secondary education is designed to provide the initial levels of qualification needed to practise a trade or group of trades. Like general education, technical and vocational education has two cycles, the first lasting four (04) years and the second three (03) years in the two sub-systems. The first cycle of technical education leads to the Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (C.A.P.) and the second to the Baccalauréat de Technicien, the Brevet de Technicien (BT), or the Brevet Professionnel (B.P.). It should be remembered that at the end of the 2nd year of the second cycle, students are subject to a probationary examination, which remains the condition for access to the final year. (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013).

Early involvement of children in the traditional division of labour

By the time they reach school age, or puberty for some, children are considered as adults or are treated in the same way as heads of family. In the traditional division of labour, they are likely to participate in the search for the family's means of subsistence, depending in particular on their gender. Informal (traditional) education, which takes place within the family, is based on mimicry, the transmission of values and skills from father to son, mother to daughter, elders to younger siblings, etc. Boys are expected to support or take over from their fathers in income-generating activities to ensure the family's survival. In our study site, this is one of the reasons why internally displaced children, mainly the Mafa or Kanouri, drop out of school at CM2 level. For this informant, *"Male pupils drop out of school to accompany their fathers on transhumance, or to assist them during the harvest. As for the female IDP pupil, when she reaches puberty she becomes the second mother in the household, heavily involved in helping with household chores, preparing meals and looking after the younger children"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 06.10.2021 in Zamai).

This is not only the case in rural areas. In urban areas, this empowerment of displaced boarders or pubescent pupils gives rise to a single alternative, as the informant points out: *"... either the girl stays at home to look after her younger children and the mother goes out to do petty trading, or it is the mother who stays to look after the children so that the girl goes out to do petty trading: in either case, the girl ends up dropping out of school"*. (Interview conducted with informant 60 on 16.10.2021 in Zamai).

It is important to note that our study area is made up of several ethnic groups, so this phenomenon is much more common among the Mbororo, who are in the minority in urban areas. Predominantly Christian, this category of informant is more receptive to the education of children of both sexes. *"In urban areas, there are very few Mbororos among the IDPs, which means that almost all the families we met were Christian. Not sharing the reluctance of their Muslim compatriots, the parents are in principle open to girls going to school. However, household poverty means that girls are often called upon at a very early age to take part in the household chores or commercial activities that enable the family to survive (to which they belong), and these parents have little or no reticence about sending young girls to school"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 06.10.2021 in Zamai). The main obstacle, despite their desire to send their offspring to school, is the lack of financial resources.

Non-Formal Basic Education

Non-formal basic education is *"that which enables individuals, in a given historical, social and linguistic context, to acquire a level of knowledge, skills*

and attitudes that will enable them to understand their environment, interact with it, continue their education and training within society and participate effectively in its economic, social and cultural development". (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper, 2013).

Informal Education for Muslim Girls

Indeed, for most Muslim parents, a pubescent girl is a potential risk of pregnancy out of wedlock, which is perceived as a disgrace or defilement that no family would wish to suffer. A pregnant unmarried teenager brings dishonour on her family, tarnishes the parents' reputation forever and seriously compromises her chances of finding a husband, in a context where the predominant endogamy almost always leads young people to find a spouse within the lineage. As one informant pointed out *"To ward off this risk, which arises with puberty and is accentuated by co-education, promiscuity with boys seeking sexual relations and the desire for beautiful things (new clothes, fashionable shoes, various ornaments, etc.), parents take precautionary measures, which consist of removing the young girl from the school environment"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 04.10.2021 in Zamai).

They perceive the school environment as a place of deviance where parental supervision cannot be exercised, and where, moreover, the discourse on relationships with the opposite sex is part of a more permissive paradigm. As a result, Muslim IDP students are virtually absent from secondary schools. For those who manage to make it past CM2, entry to secondary school is never a guarantee of a curriculum leading to completion of the first cycle. As one interviewee put it: *"At the first opportunity, as soon as a serious suitor or a good match enables the family to get rid of a risk and hope for support, the girl will be married off"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 10.10.2021 in Zamai). This justifies the under-enrolment of girls in most of the public schools in our study area. *"There are few displaced girls who have reached the first year of secondary school"*. When asked why there is such hostility to girls continuing their studies at secondary level, even though a tiny minority of parents have enrolled their daughters, an education official believes that the parent who ventures into this area is exposing his or her offspring: *"It's the only one who has chosen to expose his or her daughter"*. If this attitude is already coming from a professional who should serve as a model in raising awareness of education for all, it is quite clear that the less educated will not be able to see the merits of sending girls to school. That said, in all places and in all circumstances, a teacher's words should be favourable to girls' schooling. This would avoid hostility from parents in this Mafa or Kanouri IDP environment, as in others, and could compromise consideration for the teacher who advocates educating girls. As one informant put it, *"This attitude earns the person who adopts it the reputation of being a bad parent, since he or she is "needlessly" taking a risk that could damage the family's honour and reduce*

its finances". (FGD Men conducted on 22.09.22 in Zamai).

This category of informants is convinced that they are making the best decision for their daughter by putting an end to her schooling. Their experience is that, in the absence of the crisis, young Cameroonians find it hard to find a job after higher education. So what would be the point of sending young girls to school in a crisis zone or a host area for internally displaced persons with an uncertain future? Some IDP parents see the continuation of a girl's education as a risky and pointless investment, since after all, according to the division of labour in these communities, the girl is expected to stay at home to look after household chores while hoping for the chance to find a husband.

When we talk about early marriage among school-age girls, we tend to think that our target population is unanimous in its belief that the emphasis should be on educating boys, since boys have the right to go to school as much as possible. This is not the case, however, as some of our informants also consider that sending a boy to school is a waste of parents' time. In this context, forced displacement is a way of conforming to this attitude. *"I do petty trading for my children's education. Education is important for children's success. I pay their board every year so that they (the children) get a good education. A lot of girls drop out because there's no reason for them to do a lot of school"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 28/01/2021 in Zamai).

Basic Education:

This covers the primary cycle on the one hand and the lower secondary cycle on the other (2-year observation sub-cycle and 3-year orientation sub-cycle). It is the common base of knowledge and minimum skills guaranteed to every child by the education system. Its aims are: to ensure that children mature with a view to their socio-professional integration; to prepare learners for general education, technical and vocational education and vocational training.

Enseignement Normal:

Enseignement normal is responsible for training teachers for nursery, primary and general and technical secondary education. The duration of training varies from 1 to 3 years depending on the level (Document de Stratégie du Secteur de l'Éducation et de la Formation, 2013). In view of the above, an internally displaced pupil in a crisis situation will have to spend all those years supporting the family through a job obtained after completing a school course.

In this article, although the target populations are making efforts to enroll their children in school, it has to be said that most of them, strongly rooted in tradition, respond to the laws of early marriage for young girls of school age, as one informant testifies: *"We fight to avoid*

dropping out of school. But we still see these cases, which are often due to early marriages for girls or the search for money for boys. The people around them think that education isn't important, because even without school, a child can get by trading". (Interview conducted with an informant on 28/01/2021 in Zamai).

For most, sending their children to school is a waste of time. Although some IDP parents pay the APEE and sometimes benefit from donations of school supplies from NGOs and volunteers, school drop-out among IDP children of all sexes remains a reality in Zamai. *"Many of the boys stop going to school either to look for work, or the girls get married very quickly. What's more, do we need to go to school to work in the fields?"* (Interview conducted with informant 13 on 28/01/2021 in Zamai). However, this phenomenon varies more and more from family to family. The direct causes mentioned by the beneficiaries show that, in the future, the phenomenon of dropping out of school will be amply justified in these communities. When asked about the level of priority given to formal education, the field survey revealed that education is not a priority in a context of crisis. Yet prioritising education for this vulnerable section of the population is becoming a challenge for a country that wants to develop. *"At home I do my fatherly duty and at school I teach the lessons, because that's my main job. (...) Without doubt, education remains a priority for many people. We are teachers today because of education. Education is very important and is central to our daily lives. It allows us to be educated and awake"*. (Interview conducted with an informant, 02/02/2021).

If we go by the statements made by a certain category of informants, such as teachers, it is clear that they do not clearly state their position regarding parents' determination to send their children to school. For them, *"even if the child doesn't go to school, he can carry out other activities and get by"* (FGD conducted on 08/07/2021 in Zamai).

Attachment to Cultural Values/Constraints

Very often IDP pupils who have reached CM2 or Class 6 do not drop out of school solely because of economic barriers. Religion is also one of the reasons for dropping out of school in this part of the country. Parents, most of whom are Muslim, are strongly attached to cultural values/constraints, based on customs and traditions, and depending on the ethnic group. For this category of informants, *"Education is not an important activity in my community because they don't want to go to school. If you think of school as a tool for socialising children, you have to remember that IDPs come from areas with very little schooling"*. (Interview with an informant on 02/02/2021 in Zamai).

As a result, the IDPs in crisis zones have evolved in the same education system as those in the host towns. Even at primary level, IDP pupils have very little chance of accessing secondary education, as this is an

unknown prospect for many parents, for whom the period of adolescence that IDP children enter at CM2/Class 6 corresponds more to enrolment in agro-pastoral activities than to enrolment in secondary education. Most parents of Mafa or Kanouri pupils recognise the Cameroonian education system, but are not prepared to put up with lengthy studies for their offspring, especially when they tend to outgrow the puberty stage.

Early involvement of children in the traditional division of labour

By the time they reach school age, or puberty for some, children are considered as adults or are treated in the same way as heads of family. In the traditional division of labour, they are likely to participate in the search for the family's means of subsistence, depending in particular on their gender. Informal (traditional) education, which takes place within the family, is based on mimicry, the transmission of values and skills from father to son, mother to daughter, elders to younger siblings, etc. Boys are expected to support or take over from their fathers in income-generating activities to ensure the family's survival. In our study site, all this is a factor that explains why internally displaced children, mainly the Mafa or Kanouri, drop out of school at CM2 level. For this informant, *"Male students drop out of school to accompany their fathers on transhumance or to help with the harvest. The female IDP pupil, on reaching puberty, becomes the second mother in the household, heavily involved in helping with household chores, preparing meals and looking after younger children"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 06.10.2021 in Zamai).

This is not only the case in rural areas. In urban areas, this empowerment of displaced boarders or pubescent pupils gives rise to a single alternative, as the informant points out: *"... either the young girl stays at home to look after her cadets and the mother goes out to do petty trading, or it is the mother who stays to look after the children so that the young girl goes out to do petty trading: in either case, the young girl ends up dropping out of school"*. (Interview conducted with informant 60 on 16.10.2021 in Zamai).

It is important to note that as our study area is made up of several ethnic groups, this phenomenon is much more common among the Mbororo, who are in the minority in urban areas. Predominantly Christian, this category of informants is more receptive to the education of children of both sexes. *"In urban areas, there are very few Mbororos among the IDPs, which means that almost all the families we met were Christian. Not sharing the reluctance of their Muslim compatriots, the parents are in principle open to girls going to school. However, household poverty means that girls are often called upon at a very early age to take part in the household chores or commercial activities that enable the family to survive (to which they belong), and these parents have little or*

no reticence about sending young girls to school". (Interview conducted with an informant on 06.10.2021 in Zamai). The main obstacle, despite their desire to send their offspring to school, is the lack of financial resources.

Education for Young Muslim Girls

For most Muslim parents, a pubescent girl is a potential risk of pregnancy out of wedlock, which is perceived as a disgrace or a stain that no family would wish to suffer. A pregnant unmarried teenager brings dishonour on her family, tarnishes the parents' reputation forever and seriously compromises her chances of finding a husband, in a context where the predominant endogamy almost always leads young people to find a spouse within the lineage. One informant stresses: *"To ward off this risk, which arises with puberty and is accentuated by co-education, promiscuity with boys seeking sexual relations and the desire for beautiful things (new clothes, fashionable shoes, various ornaments, etc.), parents take precautionary measures, which consist of removing the young girl from the school environment"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 04.10.2021 in Zamai).

They perceive the school environment as a place of deviance where parental supervision cannot be exercised, and where the discourse on relationships with the opposite sex is part of a more permissive paradigm. As a result, Muslim IDP students are virtually absent from secondary schools. For those who manage to make it past CM2, entry to secondary school is never a guarantee of a curriculum leading to completion of the first cycle. As one interviewee put it: *"At the first opportunity, as soon as a serious suitor or a good match enables the family to get rid of a risk and hope for support, the girl will be married"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 10.10.2021 in Zamai). This explains why there are so few girls in most of the public schools in our study area. *"There are few displaced girls who have reached the first year of secondary school"*. Asked why there is such hostility to girls continuing their studies at secondary level, even though a tiny minority of parents have enrolled their daughters, an education official believes that parents who venture into this area are putting their offspring at risk: *"He's the only one who chose to expose his daughter"*. If this attitude already comes from a professional who should serve as a model in raising awareness of education for all, it is quite obvious that the less educated will not be able to see the merits of sending a young girl to school. That said, in all places and in all circumstances, a teacher's words should be favourable to girls' schooling. This would avoid hostility from parents in this Mafa or Kanouri IDP environment, as in others, and could compromise consideration for the teacher who advocates educating girls. As one informant put it: *"the choice to let your daughter continue at secondary school is not without an implicit admission of acceptance of the risk of immorality to which she is exposed, an attitude that earns the person*

who adopts it the reputation of being a bad parent, since he is 'unnecessarily' taking a risk that could damage his family's honour and reduce his finances". (FGD Men conducted on 22.09.22 in Zamai).

This category of informants is convinced that they are making the best decision for their daughter by putting an end to the continuity of her schooling. Their experience is that in a non-crisis context, young Cameroonians find it hard to find a job after higher education. So what would be the point of sending young girls to school in a crisis zone or a host area for internally displaced persons with an uncertain future? Some IDP parents see the continuation of a girl's education as a risky and pointless investment, since after all, according to the division of labour in these communities, the girl is expected to stay at home to look after household chores while hoping for the chance to find a husband.

Atmosphere in the Zamai Host School Environment

To analyse the atmosphere in the host schools, we used the direct observation technique described in the methodology section of this report. During our visit to Zamai, we went beyond formal and informal interviews to monitor the target populations at various school sites, including public schools IA, IB, IIA, IIB, places of entertainment, pastoral activities; in short, the observation of the target populations in their daily life with the aim of evaluating the integration of the internally displaced pupils. With the formal authorisation of the Minister of Basic Education, then the Regional Delegate of MINEDUB, the Departmental Delegate of Mayo Tsanaga and the support of the District Inspector of Mokolo, we visited six state schools. The facts observed were as follows: *"The year is drawing to a close. At 7.30 a.m. on 05 May, the school playground was almost empty, and a teacher and a few pupils could be seen trying to raise the colours. The latecomers were eventually punished by the teacher and settled down"*. (Interview conducted with informant 79 on 23.11.2021 in Zamai).

Generally speaking, the atmosphere in these public buildings is the same as in regular schools. There are no distinguishing marks between children attending in a regular situation and internally displaced pupils. The pupils wear torn, very dirty clothes, from the lower SIL level to CM2 in primary school. Behaviour is the same, with rowdiness at its worst, especially when a stranger is present. In the classrooms, the pupils appear to be older than the rest of the class. Late arrivals are punished by whippings, cleaning of the room and being allowed to sit on the floor for all pupils, regardless of whether they are displaced persons or children of the host population. And yet, dress in the higher echelons of education predisposes learners to employment at the end of a school cycle. ENAM students are a case in point. That said, these dress habits should be prescribed from the first years of lower education. To deal with these crises, and in particular with the large number of school-age children

accompanying these populations, the Ministry of Basic Education, in partnership with UNHCR, UNICEF and their implementing agencies, have set up an intervention programme for these refugee and displaced children in emergency situations in the aforementioned regions. A particular focus of this action would be to raise community awareness of the link between education and development.

All societies aspire to development through schooling. But in a context of conflict, the reality is quite different. The Cameroonian government must involve communities in developing the education system in times of crisis. Whether they are members of the internally displaced persons community or those of the host communities, the belief systems, their customs and habits in relation to development must be taken into account. A development project or investment in school infrastructure, textbook equipment and teaching programmes linked to income-generating activities should predispose learners to drop out of the labour market at the end of the school cycle. For example, in secondary education, the State, its international and national partners, and the parents themselves will find ways to make it easier for internally displaced children to access the highest level of education and to do so within the statutory time limits, thereby ensuring the social integration of these children in school, whatever the difficulties encountered. As this informant points out: *"There is an important link between education and development. Everything we've just said doesn't do enough to encourage good schooling, which is probably why this locality is lagging behind. If you're not educated, you can't understand the challenges of tomorrow"*. (Interview conducted with an Informant on 02/02/2022 in Zamai).

Along the same lines as this informant, particular emphasis is placed on building the capacity of communities, teachers and officials. As the popular saying goes, "a hungry belly has no ears", it is imperative, in the opinion of those interviewed, *"to support parents in the fight against malnutrition so that education can serve development"*. (Interview conducted with an informant on 02.02.2022 in Zamai). Very often, the search for "bread" takes precedence over children's education, as in the case of children who drop out of school to take up sand mining, which is considered a drug in this region: "It's a drug". In other words, anyone who indulges in this activity should never think about school. In order to gain a better understanding of the ways and means of education in relation to development, it seemed appropriate to place particular emphasis on the relationship between the factors triggering forced population displacement and the schooling of internally displaced children, and on the educational pathways for appropriate schooling without pitfalls, culminating in the employment of children trained at the end of a school cycle.

This is one of the reasons why school leaders are called upon to develop and improve their skills through ongoing training. Particularly as their use of new technologies is becoming increasingly limited. In the age of digitalisation, headteachers do not make sufficient use of the IT tools that enable them to optimise the administrative side of their job Dumaresq (2017). And even for those who do, some school infrastructures are geographically located in areas where, as the popular saying goes, *"electrification of the area is not for tomorrow"*. What's more, some managers are recruited on the wrong basis (sponsorship, relationships, networks, etc.). As a result, in the hinterland, in a school with perhaps 10 teachers and administrative staff, very often only one is state-appointed. All the rest claim to be the parents' teachers. In this context, recruitment does not take account of diplomas, or there is no logic that makes it possible to combine diplomas with expertise, know-how and interpersonal skills. This raises questions about the training of internally displaced children with a view to their social integration into an environment where, although there is a desire for improvement, there is no innovation in the way administration works internally. It is for this reason that several countries have granted schools greater decision-making autonomy. However, even if schools are willing to comply with standards and imperatives in order to be accountable and to require schools to adopt new teaching and learning methods based on research, decentralisation is not a fact at operational level. However, the lack of experience and seniority of the leaders does not predispose learners at the end of the school cycle to have access to employment. On this subject, Pont B. & al (2008) point out: *"A Effective school leadership is essential to improving the efficiency and equity of school education. As countries seek to adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, expectations of schools and their leaders are changing"*. (Pont, B. & al., 2008).

We are evolving in a system where the diploma alone is no longer the key to recruitment. When it comes to education in a crisis situation, it is vital to develop skills in the field of the job in question, with a view to integrating young school leavers into the labour market. Indicators of the social integration of young people at the end of their training can be summarised as follows: unemployment rate, job placement rate or activity rate. It is important to note that free schooling does not mean that parents have to relinquish responsibility for schooling. Parents should be in charge of their children's training for working life. Each region has its own identity, Moving from one region to another through forced displacement provides a certain experience of life that should, in principle, promote social integration. But it is not easy to develop a facility for living in conditions that are as difficult as any other. What's more, this aspect of integration can limit an individual's appreciation of the professional structure of an environment other than his or her own, and even enable a young person inclined towards integration to break away from his or her

comfort zone to explore other horizons and actually face up to so-called new problems. It is true that parents and communities at all levels are called upon to become more involved in their children's education. However, it has to be said that these grassroots parents are not better equipped to provide their offspring with the appropriate guidance to prepare them for a possible job at the end of their training. Most of them are illiterate, unable even to help their children do exercises or revise lessons at home in normal, non-conflict situations. And now that they are resilient enough to find ways of surviving in an unfamiliar environment, if they have to raise a real problem in terms of the quality of education to be given to internally displaced children. Most of these parents, when asked what job or what they expect for the future of their children at school, give almost the same answers: *"We've said that the child goes to school to find work afterwards and help his parents. So I send my son to school so that he becomes like the child of my neighbour, or of an uncle who went to school in Yaoundé and graduated with a doctorate"*. This involves psychological factors.

What is regrettable about this article is that there is a whole literature and debate on the measures to be taken to integrate displaced school-age children into the Cameroonian education system. The statistics show the number of children who drop out of school, and the lack of commitment on the part of the parties involved to offer quality formal education to this vulnerable group. But the same studies that give these statistics do not do the same for the social situation or social integration of these children who have finally completed their schooling. For example, internally displaced children who, despite the instability of their parents and the loss of close relatives, persevere and still manage, despite their advanced age, to find employment in government buildings.

In the Far North region of Cameroon, in July 2021, the number of internally displaced persons was estimated at 357,631 and the number of returnees at 135,257, 56% of whom were women (IOM, 2021). More recent population statistics are currently being prepared. The vast majority of forced displacements are caused by insecurity and attacks by non-state armed groups. Nowhere in these statistics given by the IOM is there any mention of what happens to internally displaced children who, during the time they have spent in the host towns or villages, have entered the education system to the point of completing a cycle, if they are expected to find employment once they return to their towns or villages of origin.

Career Guidance for Internally Displaced Children

From a psychological point of view, the family environment, the school environment, friends and the media are the only factors that contribute to the integration of an internally displaced child at the end of the education cycle. According to Vultur (2003), it is commonly accepted that education begins in the family,

just like management. According to the author, this environment is the primary agent of socialisation. So, before flexing his genius in any environment, the young person should first demonstrate socialisation within his family. These days, the media are a highly influential means of education, in both good and bad ways. Through the media, you can learn in an e-learning programme, which is beneficial. But, through these same media, we can fall victim to depravity of morals. It's true that in the context of our study, we could say things differently insofar as forced displacements as a result of armed conflict, natural disasters and many other factors dislocate families, who live in environments that are no longer their own. As a result, internally displaced children who attend school are vulnerable and, for the most part, cannot be relied upon to provide their offspring with a formal education that will enable them to enter the job market.

According to Vultur (2003), friends are a factor that has a real influence on the integration of young people, as they influence their educational and even professional aspirations. Even though they have completed a school education, students at the end of their training tend to do what they see their friends doing as a profession, to the detriment of the guidance they received during their school education. For those who have reached secondary school level, the choice of stream at secondary school is made not out of conviction, but rather under the influence of friends or the sometimes erroneous influence or guidance of parents and close relatives. You don't want to find yourself alone in a series with no friends. You even find yourself working in a profession because your friends have ventured into it. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), friends are very often consulted before anyone else when making important decisions. In fact, if you hang out with friends who have started self-employment, it's highly likely that all the advice will be geared towards self-employment.

Along the same lines, Sullivan (1989) states that the social situation of friends can have an effect on a young person's integration process. The school environment, for its part, has an influence on the development of positive or negative attitudes and aspirations towards study or work. The quality of interaction between the young person and the teachers can have an effect in terms of the adoption of the values and attitudes that the teachers or management convey about work. (Vultur 2003).

The United Nations agency OCHA states that: "Every year, thousands of people are displaced by armed conflict, natural disasters, environmental hazards and large-scale development projects. In armed conflicts, people are often forced to flee either because of a deteriorating situation or because parties to the conflict force them to leave their homes. Sometimes civilians have to leave because of dangers arising from the

conduct of hostilities, such as shelling and bombing (OCHA, 2021).

A number of internally displaced children who have attended school are unable to integrate quickly into society because they have not completed a course of education leading to a diploma, or because of their parents' financial difficulties, insecurity or instability.

Diplomas linked to quality of training

As far as diplomas are concerned, the training received at school has a major influence on the quality of young people's social integration. For Vultur (2003), the absence of a diploma or training is an obstacle. Stable and rapid integration cannot be sought without training or qualifications. That's why the schools' administrative departments need to be reassured that young people are receiving quality training. Very few know how to write a simple application for a job or work placement. And yet, whatever the level of education, every parent expects their child to be able to face society when they leave school. At university, for example, for those who opt for this option, enrolment and all the academic procedures are carried out by the young person themselves. The search for a job, work placement or training course is done by the young person leaving secondary school.

Impact of Boko Haram's atrocities on the labour market integration of internally displaced children attending school

In one of the languages, "Kouzam", terrorism literally means "killers, plunderers" or "Hawane". Some people, especially the younger ones, refer to the BH as "Zarguina" or "road cutters". Through these expressions, the people interviewed perceive the Boko Haram conflict as a phenomenon that has nothing but harmful consequences for the education of children forced to leave insecure areas for host areas. All the explanations revolve around the devastating effects, in themselves the seeds of the destruction of people, of criminal acts in the sense of the destruction of a people. Some informants focus instead on the acts perpetrated by this armed group. Given that Boko Haram holds many abducted children and uses them to blow themselves up, for them "Boko Haram means 'school is a curse'". The Terrorism refers to "bad people", commonly known as "Boko-haram". These people kill all those who are on the side of the state. The members of Boko-haram sow terror, kill and return to Nigeria, and there are said to be children among them whom they have caught by force. They also catch women". (Interview with an informant on 29/01/2021 in Zamai).

The most edified define 'Boko Haram' as "a group of people based in Cameroon and Nigeria who kill people, steal property and burn houses" (Interview conducted with an informant on 14/07/2021 in Zamai). Without going into a monograph on the Islamist sect Boko Haram, we felt it necessary to hear the views of children on this major factor in forced displacement. The

children in the community are not familiar with the terms used to describe the followers of this terrorist organisation. They refer directly to the harmful acts that are creating problems in the educational community, particularly with regard to the schooling of internally displaced children. I don't know the meaning of Boko Haram, but I only know that they are bandits. When you see them from a distance, there would be young people among them, a child belonging to BH can no longer go to school well and children who know the disasters of war can't go to school well and their future is uncertain. (Interview conducted with an informant on 01/02/2021 in Zamai).

Young people of school age have an idea of this terrorist activity, saying that the Boko Haram "are killers, bandits, villains who destroy people's property and they are always masked". The Kanuri speak of *criwou*, "terrorism" meaning "terror, vandalism". They are "armed people who come and take away our possessions, our livestock, our children, and who burn down houses (...) Children from their ranks cannot go to school". (Interview conducted with an Informant on 29/01/2021 in Zamai).

Reintegration of displaced school-age children recruited by Boko Haram

Children who are recruited by the Islamic sect Boko Haram drop out of ordinary or mainstream schools at a very early age because they receive another form of education linked to terrorism. There are reports of very young girls and boys being transformed into "kamicazes" and sent to blow themselves up in markets and gathering places. As another informant points out: "Unfortunately, a child who has been part of this organisation will no longer be able to attend school. They don't have a good education and their future is less reassuring. It's absolutely 'difficult' for a child from this group of 'thieves and bandits' to go to ordinary school". (Interview conducted with an informant on 08/05/2021 in Zamai).

They are taught to demonstrate how "conventional education is illicit". In any case, terrorism, which literally means "war", remains a "nebulous organisation" that recruits school-age children. "For me, their future is lost" (Interview conducted with an informant on 09/05/2021 in Zamai). In Kanouri too, the concept of "terrorism" means "school is an abomination, children should not go to school". (Interview conducted with an informant on 29/01/2021, Zamai). In a similar vein, another informant said: "Boko Haram believes that school is an abomination, which is why they burn down all the schools to prevent children from attending, rather than Koranic schools. They keep a lot of children with them because they tie them up and send them out to explode in the community from time to time. They can attend but they mustn't tell the other pupils so as to avoid rejection" (Interview conducted with an informant on 29/01/2021 in Zamai).

Integration of internally displaced children: a danger to society

Even those who are taken into care as part of the integration of internally displaced children remain a permanent danger not only to their parents but also to their peers, teachers and communities. As one informant put it: "These children are already spoilt unless the state takes care of them. The parents can't, they're dangerous. How are the other children who no longer have parents going to go to school? Their future won't be good unless they're looked after" (Interview with an Informant on 01/02/2021 in Zamai). Another category of children are those whose parents do not have the financial means to send them to school. "*These children drop out of school because their parents don't have the money. Their future will not be any better. It's not very likely. The other children need to be looked after by the government, otherwise they'll become thugs in the neighbourhoods. Their future is unclear because they are traumatised. They've lost everything. How are they going to manage on their own?*" (Interview conducted with an Informant on 14/07/2021 in Zamai).

And for many, "Boko Haram" means "bandit" or "people who cause trouble for others". People who have been robbed say they know or can recognise the followers of the Islamist sect. And even if we manage to reintegrate the children who have been recruited, not only do they suffer trauma as a result of the conflicts, but because they share the same classrooms with the other children, they suffer even more trauma. "*We don't know the members of this organisation. According to rumours, the children who have been abducted are also members of this organisation. The children who have been members of this organisation can't go to school for fear of frustrating the other children*". (Interview conducted with an informant on 14/07/2021 in Zamai). In short, for some informants, these children are considered to be the destroyers of a country, of a region, and they are the ones who carry weapons to "kill" others for no reason at all.

DISCUSSION

Antonio Guterres, said on 20 June 2017 on World Refugee Day that "at least 65.6 million people, or 1 in every 113 members of the human family, have been forcibly displaced within their own countries or across borders". The UN Secretary-General says that behind the ever-increasing numbers of people displaced by conflict "lie individual stories of tragedy, separation and loss; of deadly journeys undertaken in search of safety; of Herculean struggles to rebuild lives in difficult conditions". And he recognises that "*the human cost is exorbitant in situations of conflict and millions of jobs lost, millions of children brutally taken out of school and lives haunted by trauma and intolerance*". (Antonio Guterres, 2017).

For the purposes of this article, continuing education is mainly reserved for males. Young girls are prepared to be sent off to marriage. Paradoxically, "boys

don't like school". People don't understand the value of education. The local social worker has a closer look at the issue. "When you see how people live here, education is not really a priority. You only have to look at the school drop-out rate, which I think is quite high. Because we have a lot of children in primary school, but as we move on, there are fewer and fewer children. (Interview conducted with Informateur 23 on 01.02. 2021 in Zamai).

The successive displacements experienced by families mean that young people attending school need to develop adaptations and intercultural skills to enable them to move from one education system to another (L'Oeil du Sahel, 2014). The pupils enrolled develop particularly chaotic school careers with several periods of interruption. One teacher [from the SIL class at the Minawao camp in Mokolo, interviewed on 19 September 2016] had this to say: "*When the Boko Haram events happened in our village, it forced our parents to flee to Maroua. This led to some disorganisation in our school attendance. We dropped out of school, we arrived and were enrolled in the Maroua secondary school, but we couldn't keep up because the others were more advanced than us and we ended up dropping out*". (European Scientific Journal October 2018).

According to the Departmental Delegate of the Ministry of Secondary Education in Mayo-Tsanaga, the rate of school drop-out, which is very low in the first year of primary school (15.9%), increases more or less steadily until it reaches a maximum of 72.6% in the second or first year of secondary school. A group of teachers told us during a focus group in the Minawao camp that: "The movements provoked by Boko Haram in our region have caused our children in the camp to fall considerably behind at school. There are more pupils in lower classes than their age group. We are obliged to look after them like this at the risk of them dropping out of school in favour of other, more dangerous activities. This situation has been going on since 2014. Mahamat Alhadji (2018: 152)

This author goes on to say that this is one of the reasons why the length of schooling for children in the camps, although irregular for boys and girls, differs in terms of the acquisition of knowledge, which remains very superficial for girls. "They don't have enough skills once they leave school" (Interview with a teacher of the Cours moyen 2 class in the Minawao camp).

It is important to remember that the Mafa are in the majority in the locality. In the context of this article, the Boko Haram armed conflict is the main factor. According to OCHA, Cameroon's war against Boko Haram in the Far North is having consequences such as: "*displacement of populations, worsening malnutrition, destruction of community infrastructure, famine, dismemberment of families, loss of people and property, restriction and suspension of commercial circuits,*

closure of basic social services, children and young girls especially dropping out of school, rape and various abuses, widespread psychosis, pressure on living resources (land, water, ...)". (OCHA, 2021).

The people of Cameroon's Far North region are unanimous about the consequences of the conflict for children's education and, by extension, for development. In other words, almost all the people interviewed expressed their views on the Boko Haram conflict, to the point where the Mafa, the dominant ethnic group in the study area, developed concepts and expressions in the Mafa language to give their opinion on this scourge, which is destabilising development in both crisis and host areas.

CONCLUSION

Internally displaced persons are a worrying resource in terms of development. Like all citizens, they are capable of participating in the country's development. If they are not educated, or do not go to school, it will be difficult to forecast their contribution to the economy in general. However, questions are constantly being asked about the contribution of formal education to the development of a country, especially in regions that are prey to numerous terrorist attacks in times of crisis when populations are forced to move. As the saying goes, "when you know the origin of the evil, you can cure it". It is with this in mind that programmes must be developed to help internally displaced children find employment.

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- Antonio Guterres: « Il faut garantir à l'Afrique une présence plus juste au Conseil de sécurité » Terrorisme, opérations de maintien de la paix, déplacement des populations... Le secrétaire général des Nations unies, en poste depuis un an, est conscient de la difficulté de sa mission, mais convaincu que l'ONU a encore un rôle important à jouer dans ces domaines. Entretien.
- Antonio Guterres, secrétaire général des nations unies, le 22 juin dans le camp de réfugiés sud-soudanais de Imvepi, en Ouganda. Vincent Duhem © Nations unies. Publié le 21 décembre 2017.
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Cite This Article: Noma Eloundou Damien & Edongo Ntende Pierre François (2024). Integration of Internally Displaced Children in the Labour Market During a Period of Crisis Related to Cultural Depravity in the Mayo Tsanaga Division - Far North Region of Cameroon. *East African Scholars J Edu Humanit Lit*, 7(3), 107-118.