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## The Impact of the Anglophone Crisis on Education and Health in the North West and South West Regions, Cameroon

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**Abstract:** Armed conflicts are a major contributor to global disease burden owing to their deleterious effects on health and healthcare delivery. The Anglophone crisis in Cameroon is one of the ongoing conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa and has led to all forms of violence including threats, assaults, murders and massive displacement of teachers, students, pupils, and healthcare workers (HCWs). The importance of education and health for economic development and individual wellbeing cannot be overemphasised, both from historical perspective and considering its role as an engine of long-term growth. Hence, based on the vital role education and health sectors play in the lives of citizens, this study has an objective to investigate the impact of the Anglophone crisis on education and health sectors in the North West and South West regions. The study found out that, the Anglophone crisis has a negative impact on education where schools and educational facilities are destroyed, looted or occupied, students' educational enrolment dropped, vandalism on students and teachers. According to the regional delegation of Secondary Education in the North West region, in 2018-2019, 287 students were attacked by unknown gun men and 97 teachers were attacked and 27 died, 428 Schools were vandalized and occupied by separatist. The ability of children to obtain education in a safe and nurturing environment is being disrupted. Results also revealed that, the Anglophone crisis has adversely affected the health infrastructure as well as the organization of immunization in the two regions. The damage caused by the Anglophone conflict to the health system is vast which led to the burnt down of 12 health centers in the South West region and also affected the organization of the immunization in the North and South West Regions. In the North West and South West, the proportion of fixed-post immunization sessions dropped by 27%, falling from 8947 sessions in 2016 to 6523 sessions in 2019. While In the SW, the proportion of fixed-post session dropped by 46%, decreasing from 8952 sessions in 2016 to 4808 sessions in 2019. insecurity and shortage of health personnel were major barriers to healthcare delivery which contributed to underutilization of healthcare services. Participants observed an increase in complications due to malaria, malnutrition and a rise in maternal and infant mortality.

### Introduction

Conflict has become a problem of great national and international concerns because of its socio-economic consequences. Armed conflicts cause major damage and bring with them devastating consequences for a country, including casualties, displacement of populations, and the destruction of public infrastructures. In the long term, it appears to be very difficult to re-establish peace after a period of conflict. A World Bank report (2003) showed that the economic and social costs of wars are high and that they persist for years after the end of the conflict.

The origin of the Anglophone crisis dates back to 1961 where both English (Southern) and French speaking parts of Cameroon agreed on a federated state with equal partnership and preservation of their respective sociocultural heritages (Ekah, 2022). In late 2016, a peaceful protest by English speaking teachers and lawyers for the preservation of the English education curriculum and law courts led to hostile retaliation from the armed forces and later escalated into a full blown war between secessionists and the government (Ekah, 2022) Reports suggest that the armed conflict has led to the displacement of over 1.3 million people of whom about 70,000 are refugees in neighboring Nigeria, with over 3000 fatalities (France 24, 2022). The United Nations estimated over 2.2 million people living in these regions need humanitarian aid and over 600,000 children are deprived of effective schooling (Crisis Group, 2022). Massive displacements of persons have major effects on all sectors including education, economy, and healthcare.

The impact on the health sector has been further exacerbated by attacks on healthcare professionals and patients together with destruction of health facilities (ReliefWeb, 2022). Such occurrences may lead to a breakdown of healthcare systems in these regions especially in remote areas. Access to healthcare in many remote villages and some urban towns is limited. Access to healthcare in many remote villages and some urban towns is limited. Hence the available facilities are put under additional strain due to high demand and limited resources (ReliefWeb, 2022).

Furthermore, conflict affects educational benefits including social, economic and cultural growth (Jones and Naylor, 2014). Undoubtedly conflicts have severely negative effects on variety of life outcome for those involved. It destroys important infrastructure and educational materials. Attacks on buildings dedicated to education are not just attacks on buildings; they are an attack on the right to education as these attacks can lead to children dropping out of school, reduced school enrollment, lower rates of transition to higher education, and poorer educational outcomes. Sub-Sahara Africa has historically been the region of the globe most impacted by armed conflict and is one of the major regions that have a significant impact on education globally (Agbor and Etta, 2022).

Schools have been regularly attacked by armed groups and tragically this has led to the loss of lives and the horrific traumatization of many children and teachers. School boycott/disruption strategy has severe impact of children's ability to attend school and learn. Monday ghost towns and lockdown campaigns in 2017, schools have remained shutdown in most parts of the Anglophone regions (Akame et al, 2021). Non-state armed groups have been burning schools, attacking school children, teachers, parents and education officials. Several school children, students and teachers have been killed, abducted and tortured for disrespecting their school boycott injunctions. As a result many school children have been deprived of education in most parts of the Anglophone regions. In addition to the threat or direct acts of violence leading to school disruptions, other factors such as social media misinformation, false alarms and panic have led to the further disruption of school activities. This study therefore seeks to examine the impact of the Anglophone crisis on the education sector of the North West and South West Regions.

### **Literature Review**

Conflict may constrain the supply of education through physical damage to education infrastructure – the result of direct attacks on schools – or through the occupation of school facilities by military or rebel groups (GCPEA, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; O'Malley, 2011). For example, in Rwanda schools were closed and school buildings were destroyed during the peak of the genocide (Akresh & De Walque, 2008). General school maintenance, or repairs after an attack or occupation, may not be possible where roads are damaged and supplies are unavailable. School upkeep may be further undermined as community support fades, when conflict undermines community trust or forces community members to leave (Justino, 2016).

The effect of conflict on education is also deeply interrelated with other areas, like the economy and public health. War leads to deteriorating health and nutrition among children, which in turn impacts their ability to attend school regularly and learn effectively (Justino, 2014). For example, Alderman, Hoddinott, and Kinsey (2006) investigate school outcomes for children in rural Zimbabwe, and find that drought and civil war diminish early childhood nutrition, which in turn results in later school start ages and lower attainment among young adults. Conflict also reshapes the economic well-being of households, with consequences for whether families can afford to educate their children during times of war where household incomes suffer because work is unavailable or there are fewer family members working. Indeed, roles and responsibilities within the family may shift during conflict with youth leaving school for jobs, particularly when normal household income declines or is threatened during wartime. This may be the case particularly if the value of education diminishes in the labor market, leaving little incentive to pursue school over work.

**Research Methodology**

The study focuses on primary and secondary sources in the collection of data. Primary sources consist of questionnaires. The main instruments used by the researcher were the questionnaire and interviews. The researcher interviewed regional delegates, Sub-directors, chief of service in the secondary and basic education of the North West and South West Regions. For the health sector, the researcher was able to interview the coordinator for the expanded program on immunization/controller No.1 for health activities for the South West region. The secondary data sources, the study relied on books, articles, journals and internet document search. The study made use of a purposive and a random sampling technique.

**Findings: Impact on Education**

**Table 1. Impact on Basic Education in Terms of Enrolment and Staffing in the North West region**

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
	Total No of Boys/Girls				
Impact on School Enrolment	199,410	210,094	213,474	64,224	24,604
Staffing situation	9,451	10,284	11,022	11,503	4,069
FSLC	199,410	210,094	213,474	64,224	24,604
Common Entrance	199410	210094	213474	64224	24604

**Source: Regional Delegation of Basic Education, North West Region**

Findings showed that the total number of boys and girls enrolled for the 2014/2015 academic year was 199,410 and in 2015/2016 the total number increased to 210,094 to 213,474 in 2016/2014. In 2018 to 2019 there was a drop in the enrollment of boys/girls from 64,224 to 24604 respectively due to the ongoing conflict. Furthermore, there was a gradual and steady increase in staffing from 2014 to 2017. However the total number of teachers dropped from 2018 to 2019.

The enrollment of boys and girls for the FSLC and GCE exams also witnessed a steady increase from 2014 to 2017 and started dropping as from 2018 to 2019.

This drastic drop in enrollment and staffing is as a result of the ongoing conflict, many students were not enrolled and some teachers never showed up for fear of the unknown.

**Number of schools partially or completely burnt down**

**Table 2: Number of schools partially or completely burnt down**

Division	Total No of schools burnt down
Boyo	4
Bui	26
Donga/Mantung	33
Menchum	2
Mezam	9
Momo	18
Ngoketunjia	6
Offices	10

**Source: Ministry of Basic Education, North West Region**

Findings showed that all the divisions had recorded incident of school burning, the least being in the Menchum division and the highest in Donga/Mantung division.

**Vandalism on Students and Personnel in the North West Region**

**Table 3: Vandalism on students and personnel in the North West Region**

Year	No of Students attacked	No of students who died	No of teachers attacked	No of teachers who died	Schools vandalized or occupied by separatist
2018-2019	287	-	97	27	428
2019-2020	24	2	65	39	37
Total	311	2	162	66	465

**Source: Ministry of Secondary Education, North West Region**

In 2018-2019, 287 students were attacked by unknown gun men and 97 teachers were attacked and 27 died, 428 Schools were vandalized and occupied by separatist. In 2019-2020, 24 students were attacked and two died, 65 teachers were attacked and 39 died. 37 schools were vandalized or occupied by separatist. From 2018 to 2020, a total of 311 students were attacked, 2 died, 162 teachers were attacked and 66 died. 465 schools were vandalized or occupied by separatist.

All these are of great harm especially to the students’ psychological well-being when disposed to violence, which creates difficulty in performing well in education. Good mental health is a well-known factor in improved higher academic performance.

**Impact on School functioning (Secondary) in the North West Region**

**Table 4.: Impact on School functioning (Secondary) in the North West Region**

Year	No of schools	No of schools functioning	No of schools not functioning	Percentage of schools not functioning
2016-2017	543	543	0	0.0
2017-2018	550	192	358	65.1%
2018-2019	555	58	497	89.5%
2019-2020	556	72	484	87.1%
2020-2021	558	128 as of date	430	77.1%

**(Source: Regional Delegation of Education, North West Region 2021).**

Statistics show that in 2016/2017, all the schools were functioning (before the conflict) but, as of

2017-2018, 65.1% of the schools (358) were not functioning, followed by 89.5% (497) not functioning in 2018-2019, 87.1 (497) in 2019-2020 and 77.1% (430) in 2021. However, the percentage/number of schools not functioning started decreasing in 2018.

**Statistics of Functioning Schools for the 2020-2021 Academic Year in the South West Region**

**Table 5: Statistics of Functioning Schools for the 2020-2021 Academic Year in the South West Region**

Division	Expected	Number of schools functioning		
		2019/2020	2020/2021	Additional this year
Fako	136	73	82	9
Lebialem	38	0	17	8
Kupe Muanenguba	37	9	5	5
Manyu	71	0	34	18
Meme	94	16	27	6
Ndian	43	18	24	6
Total	419	137	189	52

**Source: Regional Delegation of Education SW region, 2021**

Initially, the total number of schools expected to function in the six regions in the South West region was 419, but only 137 schools functioned in 2019/2020, then later increased in 2020/2021 to 189 schools and further increased to 52 schools functioning this year. This decrease in the number of schools functioning is as a result of the Anglophone conflict, which has led to many students boycott school as a result of insecurity. Also, many school structures have been burnt down by unknown gunmen.

**Personnel and students vandalized/kidnapped in the South West region (source: Regional Delegation of secondary education, SW)**

In 2016/2017, virtually in all schools in the South West region, teachers and administrative personnel were threatened and prevented from going to school. While in schools like GSS big Nganjo, GHS Bafia-muyuka, GTTC Limbe, BGS Molyko and GHS Malende etc administrative and teaching staffs were physically aggressed, and chased out of the community, while others paraded by the population on the streets under very humiliating circumstances, some hospitalized due to bomb blast, students beaten up and their uniforms destroyed, and boarding students beaten up and chased away from their doms in to the forest and their belongings destroyed, attempts made at burning teachers who sort refuge in a room.

In 2018, 18 administrative staffs were kidnapped by unidentified men in Fako Division. Some of these personnel reported threat from these unidentified men, others received warning. Some staffs were shot, for instance, in GSS Egbekaw a personnel was shot on his left thigh in his office by unidentified gunmen; the leg has been amputated.

**Vandalism on Structures in the South West Region**

Vandalism on structures was enormous during the year 2017/2019 which was the peak of the Anglophone conflict. Many valuables were destroyed by unidentified gunmen. These hindered many schools from going operational, thereby resulting to school boycott by students for fear of being harm. For instance, in 2016/2017 academic year, GBHS Mutengene administration block burnt down, 23/09/2017 GHS Malende-Muyuka Classrooms and contents destroyed, 2016/2017 GBHS Bonadikombo administrative block library burnt down, 2016/2017 GHS IDENAU administrative block and principal office burnt down and many others as seen on table 6.

**Table 6: Vandalism on Structures in the South West Region**

S/N	DATE	SCHOOL	NATURE OF ARSON
1	2016/2017 Academic	GTTC BUEA	02 plank classroom burnt down
2	2016/2017 academic year	GBHS MUTENGENE	Administration block burnt down
3	2016/2017 academic year	GBHS BONADIKOMBO	Administrative block library burnt down
4	2016/2017 academic year	GHS BATOKE	Administrative block and infirmary burnt down
5	2016/2017 academic year	GHS IDENAU	Administrative block and principals office burnt down
6	22/09/2017	GSS MUEBA NINONG	Benches burnt
7		OLGCC MUYUKA	Classrooms, dormitories, kitchen, auditorium, gates destroyed by vandals
8	10/12/2017	GBHS KOSALA KUMBA	Attempted to burn administrative block but few sheets of zinc got burnt
9	03/09/2018	GHS BWIYUKU	Threat unknown gunmen on administrative and teaching staff and destruction of classrooms by gunmen
10	16/9/2018	ST JOSEPH COLLEGE SASSE	Unknown gunmen attacked the school and carried out destruction on school property
11	1/11/2018	GBHS TIKO	Unknown gunmen hunt the school bus; generator and part of the administrative block
12	7/11/2018	GHS BOKAVA	Unknown gunmen attacked some form five students and their teacher during a computer science lesson, school bags and the national flag, they also took the teacher's phones
13	10/11/2018	GHS BOKOVA	Unknown gunmen burnt a block of five classrooms; about 250 desks and the SDM office
14	24/01/2019	GASS OKOROBA MANYU	The administrative block was broken and items destroyed and stolen.
15	3/5/2019	GHS BATOKE	Desks were pile up and burnt in two big classrooms by unknown persons in an attempt burnt the classrooms and maybe deter the running of GCE 2019 examination in the school.
16	7/5/2019	GTC LYSOKA	Personnel reported about the invasion, destruction and looting of property in the school by unknown person.
17	10/5/2019	BFHS TOMBEL	Personnel reported destruction of the cookery room of the school and the theft of some items that cost 12.000frs
18	28/8/2019	GTHS BOMBE BAKUNDU	Computers lab. and workshops broken into. 01 laptop, 01 swing machine, 02 typewriters and many other items stolen.
19	22/11/20	GHS NGOH ESSOH-ATTAH	Personnel reported that unidentified person broke into his office and took away many valuables.

20	21/10/2020	KULU MEMORIAL COLLEGE LIMBE	Unidentified persons burnt the principal's office and two classroom
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**Source: Regional Delegation of Secondary Education SW region, 2021**

**Beginning of Year Enrolment Statistics**

**Table 7: indicates that in the year 2018/2019 Boyo, Menchum and Ngoketunjia divisions have significantly lower educational attainment than any of the other divisions**

Division	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
	Total No of Boys/girls				
Boyo	17078	18897	18973	3332	00
Bui	35176	35265	35303	12027	1289
Donga/Mantung	18819	21164	21959	5651	2652
Menchum	10261	16030	16080	2138	00
Mezam	78621	81873	77368	29400	20487
Momo	16770	16145	18761	3332	176
Ngoketunjia	22685	20720	25030	8344	00
Regional Total	199,410	210,094	213,474	64,224	24,604

**Table 8: End of year enrolment statistics**

Division	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
	Total No of Boys/girls				
Boyo	12078	18481	18773	1412	00
Bui	34077	34083	35303	9053	321
Donga/mantung	18429	20679	21959	4444	195
Menchum	14809	15594	16080	2042	00
Mezam	71878	75792	77368	20870	161
Momo	17570	18494	18761	1412	171
Ngoketunjia	21152	23366	25030	5899	00
Regional Total	189,993	206489	220852	45132	653

**Table 9: Staffing situation**

Division	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
	Total No of Boys/girls				
Boyo	1031	1014	1082	1126	112
Bui	1635	1836	1892	1929	182
Donga/mantung	489	780	830	821	851
Menchum	459	629	788	837	874
Mezam	3412	3671	3894	3935	405
Momo	1035	1079	1157	1361	864
Ngoketunjia	1390	1275	1379	1494	781
Regional Total	<b>9,451</b>	<b>10,284</b>	<b>11,022</b>	<b>11,503</b>	<b>4,069</b>

## Impact on Health

### The Impact of the Anglophone Crisis on the Health Sector in the North and South West Regions

Vaccination is one of the easiest and most affordable method of mitigating childhood morbidity, disability and mortality, and because of this provision of immunization services to all children is regarded as a priority of basic health services. However, a country's public health system including immunization programs can be easily devastated by armed conflict.

### Impact on the Organization of Immunization system and Mortality/Malaria

Civil strife has long been recognized as a significant barrier in the fight against vaccine preventable diseases in several parts of the world. However, little is known about the impact of the ongoing civil strife on the immunization system in the Northwest (NW) and Southwest (SW) regions of Cameroon, which erupted in late 2016.

Both regions are divided into Health Districts (HD), which in turn are divided into health areas. Each health area has a leading health facility, which is generally public, but can be private in some health areas. The leading facility coordinates the distribution of vaccines and supplies and reports coverage rates for all facilities, both public and private, within the health area.

Prior to the crises, the SW had 18 functional health districts, and 308 health facilities, of which 255 (83%) were offering immunisation services. The North West region, on the other hand, had 19 functional districts, and 400 health facilities, of which 351 (88%) were offering immunisation. These facilities obtain vaccines and other immunisation supplies from the districts on a monthly basis via a pull mechanism and deliver them to the target population.

In the two regions, the security situation has deteriorated in almost all districts, which in turn has disrupted basic healthcare delivery in those areas. A total of 26 facilities were destroyed and 11 healthcare workers killed in both regions. Reported immunisation coverage rates for key antigens including, Bacillus Calmette Guerin (BCG), DPT-3(protects against tetanus) and MR, witnessed a dramatic decline between 2016 and 2019, ranging from 22% points decline for BCG in the NW and to 42% points decline for DPT-3 in the SW. Similarly, the proportion of districts with DPT-3 coverage of at least 80% dropped from 75% in 2016 to 11% in 2019 in the NW. In the SW this proportion dropped from 16% in 2016 to 0 % in 2019.

### Functional Status of Vaccinating Health Facilities

The number of facilities offering immunisation in both regions declined dramatically between 2016 and 2019, falling by 30 and 53% in the NW and SW respectively. In total, 26 facilities have been destroyed and all of these occurred in the SW region. Furthermore, 128 facilities in the SW and 106 in the NW have been permanently shut down because of the rising level of insecurity.

To date, four healthcare workers in NW and seven in the SW have been brutally assassinated, which has caused other healthcare staff to flee from their duty posts to safer locations in neighboring communities or regions. Facility shutdown and decimation and fleeing of health personnel have also affected other critical indicators such as vaccine distribution and transmission of standard EPI reports. Indeed, by the end of November 2019, just about 10% of facilities in the NW and 7% in the SW regions transmitted their monthly reports. Similar declines were observed with immunization service delivery. In the NW, the proportion of fixed-post immunization sessions dropped by 27%, falling from 8947 sessions in 2016 to 6523 sessions in 2019. Similarly, the proportion of outreach sessions declined by 75%, falling from 8362 sessions in 2016 to 2092 sessions in 2019. In the SW, the proportion of fixed-post session dropped by 46%, decreasing from 8952 sessions in 2016 to 4808

sessions in 2019. Likewise, the proportion of outreach sessions declined by 65%, dropping from 3657 sessions in 2016 to 1292 sessions in 2019.

**Table 10: Mortality/Malaria**

Year	Less than 5years		Above 5years		Pregnant Women	
	Death all causes	Death Due to Malaria	Death all causes	Death Due to Malaria	Death all causes	Death Due to Malaria
2011	223	61	708	65	24	2
2012	261	56	1,011	48	41	5
2013	387	112	1,048	86	55	4
2014	381	101	953	69	23	2
2015	333	71	1,245	39	42	3
2016	364	67	1,395	39	31	0
2017	371	73	1,485	70	35	0
2018	568	54	1,441	166	34	16
2019	415	53	1,451	54	47	3
2020 (Jan-Juin)	161	26	694	29	14	2

Source: Regional Delegation of Public Health, 2020

From the table above, majority of infant death due to malaria and all other causes of illnesses were recorded highest in 2017/2018. This is because the intensity of the Anglophone conflict began during these years, and access to health facilities was very impossible due to the burning down of health facilities (see Table 11 below) by unidentified gunmen. Parents and children found it difficult going to hospitals for treatment which led to the increase of health deterioration. Also, the absence of health clinics led to the increase of diseases resulting to death.

**Table 11: List of health centers which got burnt as a result of the Anglophone conflict in the South West Region**

Districts	Hospitals/IHCs
Akwaya	District hospital akwaya
Mbonge	Sub divisional hospital mbonge
Muyuka	➤ District Hospital Muyuka, ➤ Ikate integrated health center, ➤ Muyenge integrated health center.
Ekondotiti	Dikome balue Integrated health center
Mamfe	kendem integrated health center
Kumba	➤ Big bekondo integrated health center, ➤ Bakumba integrated health center (Mbonge subdivision), ➤ District Hospital kumba (VIP Ward, theatre wardm female ward, power house)
Buea	Integrated health center Tole,
Wabane:	CMA Wabane

Source: Regional Delegation of Public Health, South West Region

The table showed that the conflict has adversely affected the health infrastructure in the Anglophone regions. As a result of this many people could not have access to health centers, which led to increase in the number mortality rate.

In conclusion, the crisis has led to a significant drop in school enrolment. However, current measures

being taken by the government has started yielding results. Investing in efforts that will resolve the crisis is therefore a welcoming relief to all education stakeholders.

the public health systems including immunization programs have been devastated, People living with disabilities in the North West and south west regions of Cameroon have been caught up in the conflict. Some of these persons have been displaced from their homes, victimized or striped off their basic income sources, the bombing and burning of schools have imperils the lives and wellbeing of students, teachers, and education administrators. It has destroyed important infrastructures and education materials. Hence, hindering the ability of children to obtain education in a safe and nurturing environment as well as causing trauma, and anxiety.

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