

## **Educated but Unemployable? The Secondary School Curriculum and Work-Skills Acquisition in Cameroon**

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### **Abstract**

Set on the backdrop of the link between education and employment, and the frequent complaints by employers in Cameroon that students who pass through the secondary general curriculum do not often possess the skills required by industry, this paper sets out to investigate the extent to which students' acquisition of world-of-work skills is enhanced by the secondary general education curriculum in Cameroon. Using the survey design, with a sample population of 500 (300 students, 100 employers, 50 unemployed and 50 employed graduates of secondary general education) the study investigates the extent to which students' acquisition of employability skills is enhanced by the secondary general curriculum in Cameroon. It found out that there is no significant relationship between the students' acquisition of employability skills and the secondary general curriculum of Cameroon with implications that there is an urgent need to improve teaching and for a career education program to be set up within secondary general education sector to make the learners job ready.

**Key Words:** *curriculum, employability, skills, career education*

### **Introduction**

To many students in secondary schools, the future seems to be an exciting glorious adventure in which they will always succeed. Many of them have the idea that after they complete school, they would work in high positions in public or private establishments. While they think their attainment of the certificates is essential and certainly their greatest priority, it may no longer appear sufficient to secure employment and keep it (York, 2006).

This is because additionally, employers expect students to have well developed employability skills, so that they can make an immediate contribution to the work place when recruited (Sanders and Zuzel, 2010). In Cameroon, with the high unemployment rate of 11.1% for those within the 15-35 age group with at least a secondary school certificate (World Bank, 2012) and the complains of low output of those employed by employers (Mbebeb, 2014), it has become highly necessary not to treat the situation from face value.

In matters of youth unemployment there is often a prosaic argument that the number of qualified graduates more than triples the available job places (Giddens, 1996) but recently the focus has shifted to the employability of school leavers (Bregman, 2007). Bregman argues that in the youth unemployment debate, the linear or structural expansion of existing systems is not often an option, especially given the constraints on public resources. To him, most educational systems in sub-Saharan African countries are not able to provide a much greater proportion of their youth with an education that effectively prepares them for work especially at a time when labour markets increasingly demand advanced job performance skills and experiences.

Going by Bregmans' argument, curriculum design and implementation is highly implicated in the youth employment debate. This concurs perfectly with the definition of education as an interaction that fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all offices both public and private (Schofield, 1978). It is believed that if schools take serious the challenge to incorporate opportunities to develop such skills in conjunction with subject specific skills and knowledge, job applicants' potentials for success in the recruitment process and in keeping their jobs would greatly be enhanced. Sanders and Zuzel, (2010) report that in some advanced countries, this had long been understood and schools are fast adapting various strategies such as offering work related experiences, employability skills modules, ready-for-work events, involving employers in course design and delivery and embedding employability skills in subject/course designs, lesson planning and delivery. It is based on this understanding that the study found it relevant to examine the extent to which the secondary general curriculum imparts employability skills in secondary school leavers in Cameroon with a view of informing policy and making recommendations for curriculum reform.

### **Theoretical and conceptual Base**

The study is grounded in UNESCO's Education for sustainability Development (ESD) theory which holds that the purpose of education is to allow every human being to acquire the

knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2015). It advocates the following; an interdisciplinary and holistic education embedded in the whole curriculum (as or not as a separate subject); critical thinking and problem solving; participatory decision making; applicability of learning experiences to day to day personal and professional life as well as local relevance of education. These attributes are reflected in Mantz Yorke's definition of employability seen as a set of skills, undertakings and personal attributes that the school offers that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.

UNESCO's ESD norms especially the importance of applying learning to professional life are drawn from John Dewey's educational philosophy of progressivism, which holds that the purpose of education is to help children understand and fit into society after leaving school (Mac Ojong, 2008); and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism which insists that the transfer of learning from school to work settings should be a chronic concern of education and suggests the restructuring of the learning environment in ways that make transfer and application of knowledge more effective by encouraging active inquiry, problem solving, critical thinking, and cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson, 2003). These are the most valued employability generic skills that individual schools need to tailor their curricular to and which employers have come to highly value. According to Speight, Lakovic and Cooker, employability means to develop potential in all sorts of areas so that individuals acquire a special quality of mind and personality necessary to fit in the job market. Farmer, Buckmaster, and LeGrand (1992) have called this curriculum-world of work link, 'cognitive apprenticeship'.

Speight, Lakovic and Cooker have argued that employers highly agree that what students do within their curriculum must be linked to employability and that the development of students as reflective and critical thinkers is very necessary. They also highlighted the importance of cooperative learning and that it was part of a tutor's role to ensure that students start thinking about employability early and to inform students about employability and career opportunities and training. However, on their study of teachers as a set of stakeholders, they also highly agree that teachers understand the importance but found it a huge challenge of switching the focus of their teaching from getting certificates to producing employable learners. This is because the teachers themselves do not have a strong opinion regarding the connection between academic and employability learning. Such revelations only go to make studies such as this not only necessary but even more urgent.

## Research Methodology

A Likert scale questionnaire was used to gather data for this study. This instrument was administered to a purposefully sampled population of 500; 300 upper-sixth students, 100 unemployed graduates and 100 other stakeholders (50 employers of secondary general education graduates and 50 employees who attended secondary general education institutions). Data collected was analysed descriptively using simple percentages and the chi square was used to test the hypothesis. The major employability variables investigated in this study included decision making, communication, organizational and problem solving skills. These were adapted from the Employability Inventory of Sanders and Zuzel (2010) and the 2004 National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG) Frameworks of the US National Career Development association (NCDA).

Secondary General Education is used here to refer to the secondary level of education that focuses on General Education subjects; the curriculum comprising subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Literature, English and French as opposed to Secondary Technical, Vocational or Commercial Education which focuses on training to fit into particular trades (Tambo, 2003).

## Summary of Findings

The various categories of respondents; high school students, employers, unemployed as well as employed secondary school graduates were asked to determine the extent to which their secondary education would help or has helped them in looking for or getting a job and working effectively while the employers were required to assess the out-put of their employees who attended Secondary General Education schools. Generally, the findings revealed that, 54.5% of the respondents indicated that the acquisition of world-of-work skills is rarely enhanced by the secondary general curriculum while 45.5% indicated that that it does. Regarding the acquisition of the specific skills, the following percentage scores were obtained.

**Table 1: Percentage Representation of the extent to which the Secondary General curriculum in Camerouns meets employability needs in terms of Skills Sampled**

Employability skill/Extent	Decision making		Organizational Skills		Communication skills		Problem solving		Total	%	
No	18.2		13.8		16.2		15.8		64	16	
rare	37.8	55.4	43.2	57.0	36.0	52.2	37.1	52.9	154.1	38.5	54.5

Average	31.2		32.8		32.0		35.3		131.3	32.8	
great	12.8	44.6	10.2	43.0	15.8	47.8	11.8	47.1	50.6	12.7	45.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Percentage Representation of the extent to which the Secondary General curriculum in Camerouns meets employability needs in terms of Categories of Respondents**

Respondents /Extent	Upper 6th students		Employed graduates		Unemployed graduates		Employers		Total	%	
No	20.3		27.2		30.1		28.5		106.1	26.5	
rare	26.0	46.3	43.2	70.4	47.1	77.2	44.1	72.6	160.4	40.1	66.6
Average	26.5		10.1		15.5		11.2		63.3	15.8	
great	27.2	53.7	19.5	29.6	07.3	22.8	16.2	27.4	70.2	17.6	33.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>400</b>		

From Table 2 above, 66.6% of the respondents agree that there is no significant relation between the secondary general curriculum and the enhancement of employability skills. When the various groups of respondents are considered separately, only the high school students (upper 6<sup>th</sup>) agreed to a large extent (53%) that the secondary General curriculum enhances the acquisition of world of work skills. This may be seen in the fact that a majority of them have not had the opportunity of being in a job setting to experience its demands. Many may have responded sentimentally to justify the fact that their choice of high school series/subjects was not one of chance. Many of them are still optimistic about the future (Okon, 1979).

The above notwithstanding, this optimism falls sharply after leaving school as they begin to experience the real world. As seen in the study, 70.4% the high school graduates who get employed and face the reality of the job market demands strongly agree that there is no significant relationship between the secondary general curriculum and the enhancement of employability skills. Many of them confirmed that the tasks they are required to perform at their jobs demands a whole new set of skills that were strange to them and for which their education did not prepare them for. Most employed graduates who responded negatively

said that apart from the language and Mathematics skills acquired from high school education, they had to start learning most working values afresh. A majority indicated that they had to go for further training before mastering office processes.

This is also confirmed by those graduates who fail to find jobs (77.2%), who agreed that most employers often demand the mastery of skills which were hardly acquired in secondary general education. Unemployed graduates and those in high school who said the curriculum has or would rarely help them in the world of work stressed the fact that they are not being taught important things related to employment. They are not taught the various specializations in the country and how and where they can get jobs, how they can write applications, what to do in an interview and other skills they would need on the job.

Amongst those who employ such graduates, 72.6% agree that their workers who have secondary general certificates often fall below expectation in terms of performance of specific work skills. They argue that, newly recruited or employed secondary school graduates are often in need of basic skills such as answering telephone calls, writing official letters, attending to people and using office equipment. Higher responsibilities like leading working groups and representing their bosses in important functions, taking important administrative decisions, monitoring and evaluating work progress are completely absent in them.

Okon (1979) carried out a similar survey in Nigeria and the results demonstrated a semblance to those mentioned above. According to his survey, approximately 95% of the respondents; 85% of the principals and about 84% of the employers in his study identified that the curriculum contributes to the lack of information on job-seeking. The respondents who identified this problem indicated that their studies do not provide them with knowledge of various public and private concerns to which they could have applied for entry level jobs, the available job opportunities that were open to them, the employment procedures and how they could start looking for their first job positions.

### **Why is there no Relationship between the Secondary General Curriculum and the Acquisition of Employability Skills?**

The findings of the study have demonstrated that in Cameroon there is no significant relationship between students' acquisition of world-of-work skills and the secondary general curriculum. This is demonstrated by the absence of a significant relation between

decision making skills, organizational skills, communication skills and problem solving skills on one hand and curriculum design and implementation on the other hand. UNESCO had predicted this problem. In 2012, it reported that the educational systems that many African countries continue to use will be turning out a considerable number of secondary school graduates of whom a large number will not be able to find and hold jobs. The report emphasized that this is because graduates from African colleges will possess very few or no employability skills as teaching and learning is focused on passing end of course examinations such as the GCE rather than imparting skills in the learners. Dominant teaching strategies include rote learning and Repetition aimed at the reproduction of contents with very little opportunities for student reflexivity and engagement. It concluded that the great task confronting many African governments should be to equip its school going population with skills education that will fit them into productive structures. This is in line with the results brought from the field. The curriculum and world-of-work incongruence in Cameroon could be attributed to (1) the nature of the educational policy of Cameroon, (2) the nature of the secondary general curriculum (3) the nature of curriculum implementation (teaching and learning strategies).

*a) The Nature of the Educational Policy of Cameroon*

The main reason why people would not understand why Cameroonian school leavers have found it difficult to acquire employability skills from their education is that the state and policy makers have not realized that over the years the real indicators for employability are continually, not being recognised. There is a misplacement of emphasis. Effande (2003) holds that the state quickly points to the high enrolment in schools, the high quota of the state budget allocated to primary and secondary education and the number of schools opened each year as positive indicators to school effectiveness, but does not imagine whether those who pass out of these schools actually find a place and succeed in the job market. The actual indicators for employability such as the acquisition and mastery of job performance skills, administrative skills, communication and problem solving skills are ignored. With such misplaced emphasis it becomes difficult for policy to consider the issue of competency and draw up new strategies for policy evaluation to shift from structural and quantitative to qualitative norms. Adesina (1998) in a study of employability skills acquisition in schools concluded that:

It is today understood that success of an educational policy is not to be measured merely by the number of students produced or the number of schools created. It must also relate to the internal efficiency of the educational system itself as reflected by the quality of its leadership, instruction and products, the quality of the producers and the effective utilization of the products.

The inability to link the curriculum to employability skills acquisition seems to have emanated from the poor planning policies. The 1998 law on Education in Cameroon to a very large extent does not recognize the need for learners to acquire employability skills even when the problem of graduate unemployment was part of the reason for the convening of the Education Forum of 1995, whose recommendations led to the adoption of the law. There is a clear indication of total confusion on the part of government and educational policy planners on the purpose and national objectives on education. The 1995 Forum was to deliberate on new perspectives on education in Cameroon with objectives stated in terms of adopting an educational policy which will help Cameroon take up the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and solve the major problems plaguing the Cameroon society; graduate unemployment being one of them (MINEDUC, 1995, cited in Tambo, 2003a).

In his opening speech the then minister of the defunct Ministry of National Education emphasized that the forum was holding against a backdrop of poor implementation of educational legislation, poorly adapted and overloaded programs, the present economic crisis and youth unemployment all of which call for new educational orientations in which priority is given to science and technology (Effande, 2003).

With respect to the economic considerations, the forum aimed at;

- Setting up an educational policy that is geared towards professionalization, enabling students develop work place, technical and vocational skills.
- The formulation of policy that will ensure a balance between training and employment
- The integration into the school system, subjects that are oriented towards a free market economy and self-employment, notably the intensification of (the teaching of) agriculture, science and technology.
- The orientation of learning institutions towards closer ties with the business sectors and the involvement of business resource persons in the training of the youth (Tambo, 2003a:33).

In assessing the forum and the eventual 1998 policy outcome of the forum, it could be concluded that the issue of skills and competencies acquisition and the link with the world of work has not been considered particularly with secondary general education. Some major issues underlying the policy such as youth unemployment and career education were not handled. The aims and goals stated in the 1998 policy did not include career training and employment. With such a policy it should therefore be no surprise that high school



students' acquisition of world-of-work skills within such a general education curriculum will be a farfetched dream.

This issue is compounded by the misplaced priorities within the Secondary Educational Ministry. According to the 1995 Forum Report, 94% of the budget of education goes to expenditure on personnel, whereas 3% of this budget is used for maintenance, replacement of school furniture, purchase of teaching aids and books (Effande, 2003). Little consideration is given to curriculum evaluation and reform from where issues of the incongruence between school and employment could be identified and rectified.

#### *b) The Nature of the Secondary General Education Curriculum*

The researcher recorded a total of four hundred and sixty seven responses on this item. The reasons raised by the respondents as to how the curriculum has contributed in the lack or absence of work related skills could be divided in the following groups; heavily loaded curriculum, the nature of teaching, use of teaching resources, absence of internships and fieldtrips, no career education programs and lack of resource persons. These can be analysed as follows;

- Four hundred and thirteen (88.4%) of the responses pin-pointed the fact that the curriculum is too loaded with many subjects. It is organised in a way that students have to compulsorily study more than fifteen subjects at the junior secondary and over eight by the time they reach form five (fifth year) to take the GCE. In high school (sixth and seventh years) they are also expected to register an average of three subjects for the GCE advanced level. This cumbersome load already leaves the learner confused and apparently undecided about which career option to pursue. With all these subjects forced on the learners, they do not really know where their interest lies.
- Two hundred and ten (44.9%) of the responses noted the teacher-centred strategies which most teachers adopt makes them very dependent on the teacher and leaves them no opportunities to explore other avenues of knowledge, become independent learners, be enthusiastic researchers and develop leadership and group skills.
- Two hundred and three (43.4%) of the respondents remarked the absence of teaching resources like laboratories, libraries, internet services, computer laboratories from which students acquire some skills of manipulation, develop interest in particular professions and manipulate equipment are totally absent.

- One ninety seven (42.1%) noted the absence of internships and fieldtrips for high school students which should have given them the opportunities to familiarize themselves with industries of interests.
- One hundred and fourteen (24.4%) noted the lack of teacher knowledge of economic trends and available opportunities for youths in communities which should have been a determinant for the orientation of their instruction.

The greatest difficulties noted include the fact that the curriculum is too loaded, the absence of learner-centred teaching and the complete absence of career education in secondary schools in Cameroon. Smith and Ragan (2005) have discussed this issue. They hold that, school curricula are heavily loaded with irrelevant courses or subjects. There is a lot of teaching of deadwood. Deadwood is information that is not essential or especially supportive in attaining a learning goal. If our goal is therefore to ensure the acquisition of job related skills, then we should avoid giving content experts instruction to design, for as it is said deadwood is often included when content experts design instruction. The expert may include information that is nice to know or especially interesting but may not be essential to the learning task. This is a problem in Cameroon. Curriculum and syllabus should be closely linked to performance standards and measures of outcomes. Added to the heavily loaded and irrelevant curriculum, Ngundam and Tanyi in Ndongko and Tambo (2000) observe that theoretical curricula are preponderant while skills education constitutes just below 24.5% of post primary education in Cameroon.

Judging from the above it becomes important to do things right, unless we are doing the right things. Curriculum is the moral deliberation on what is right for students to be taught. Looking at the long list of subjects for students to take and master for a few years to graduate and be effectively employed, it will leave one doubting whether the present curriculum is doing “what is right”. Hirsch, Bloom, Ravitch, and Finn confirmed that a large proportion of high school students don’t know such basic facts as job requirements in the occupations of their best interest. It is therefore necessary and right to reduce the curriculum to a focus on predetermined, essential knowledge as the findings portrayed. Complementing the findings of this study, Sizer (1984) reasoned that schools are too concerned with teaching all subjects superficially. Instead, schools should teach fewer subjects, topics and skills more thoroughly- “teach less, better” rather than “teach more, quicker.”

Marzano (2003) identifies three level factors that lead to school effectiveness. These are school level factors, teacher level factors and student level factors. Marzano stresses that a

school must have a guaranteed and viable curriculum, challenging goals and effective feedback, parents and community involvement and a safe and orderly environment and collegiality and professionalism. These five values will determine the effectiveness of the school based on the school level factors.

Marzano explains that, a guaranteed and viable curriculum has the most impact on student achievement. This is a combination of factors which he calls *Opportunity to Learn* (OTL). This OTL became a central thought in curriculum assessment when it was realized that all students might not have had an equal opportunity to learn the items being used to assess their achievements in school (examinations) and performance in out of school activities (workplace and social interaction).

It is the opinion of respondents that the curriculum suffers from rigidity, that it ignores technological signals in the market place, disregarding changes in the kinds of goods and services that are in demand and to which the training process must respond to. Tambo in Ndongko and Tambo (2000) lists the concerns of curriculum policy in Cameroon; Harmonization, Ruralization, Bilingualism, Integration of Ethnic Languages, Science and Technology. This curriculum policy demonstrates a marked disregard for the employment concerns of the school products. Tambo further explains that the mentioned concerns have not been dealt with appropriately because of the fact that in Cameroon, curriculum authorities tended to limit curriculum development only to the writing of syllabuses of traditional school subjects and to requirements for examination systems. Such practices contradict the view of national leaders that there is a need for schools to go beyond the school building and be involved in community improvement.

Apart from the absence of the employment concern in curriculum policy, very little curriculum evaluation is carried out in Cameroon. Evaluation, if any, has always been carried out mainly through inspection and national examinations. The most important indicator for evaluating the curricula has always been the performance of students in national examinations. This has been the main reason why broader questions relating to the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum have not been addressed since independence. Despite the fact that education authorities have been bombarded with complains of fallen standards and graduate unemployment, no one has been able to give a convincing response to these complains.

### *C. The approach to Curriculum implementation*

On the nature of classroom instruction, a majority of the respondents blamed the poor mastery of employability skills on the exaggerating use of teacher-centred strategies of

teaching. In the same line, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), USA, in its report on high school students' knowledge of essential skills suggests that, students' inadequate knowledge may be because "the typical course relies heavily on textbooks, which expects students to regularly memorize important information and are tested frequently. Also class time is spent listening to the teacher's lecture. Ndille (2005) and Goodlad (1984) found that nearly 90% of teaching in Cameroon and American secondary schools respectively, across all subjects and grades is up-front teaching-lecturing, with students passively listening except for an occasional opportunity to answer questions. In a study conducted in Buea, Cameroon on Government Secondary Schools Teachers' use of cooperative learning, Ndille (2005) reports that 09% reported sometimes, 00% always, 28% never and 66% reported that they have hardly used cooperative learning. Such teaching is to be blame for inadequate comprehension and skills mastery. This is based on the argument that there should be less fact and memorization and more of active problem solving, inquiry and experiential learning, critical thinking and conceptual understanding.

The second problem with the traditional approach is that it may fail to identify critical prerequisite information and skills. These are things a person needs to know or be able to do before he is in a position to learn something else. The content-centred approach which Cameroon has adopted typically does not look at the content from the novice's perspective but from the expert's perspective. This is poor because experts may not be able to remember all that novices needed to learn or know to attain the learning goal.

### ***3. What are the implications of the study on the curriculum and the world-of-work link in Cameroon?***

A total of three hundred and fifteen responses were recorded and were distributed in three categories as follows

- 261 responses (82.8%) noted that a subject should be introduced in secondary school which will teach students issues related to employment, career goals and how to choose a field of study.
- 146 responses (45.9%) noted the need for the establishment of a subject/society centred curriculum in which learners will specialize in a few subjects as early as possible so that they begin to be acquainted with the career of their interest
- 130 responses (41.2%) pin-pointed the need for teachers to revise teaching methods. Teaching should be more of independent and learner-centred; giving

opportunities for high school students to explore as much as possible the career opportunities available in their career fields through internships and fieldtrips.

Judging from the percentages, the most proposed solution is the setting up of a career education program for secondary school children. However, the need for teachers to teach using conventional learner-centred strategies and the need to allow students study only what they think fits in their careers of interest cannot be underestimated. These findings are in part similar to what Okon observed over 30 years ago. In his 1979 survey, school principals were the highest in stating that the secondary education graduates' lack of adequate skills in mathematics, scientific, commercial and technical fields constitutes a major employment problem to them (40% of the principals, compared with 25% of the graduates and 34% of employers). However, contrary to what this study observes, only 20% of students in Okon's study and 40% of employers observed the fact that the inadequate secondary school curriculum constitutes major employment problems to graduates. 44% of the employers in his study mentioned the fact that the graduates lack of proper attitudes towards work, their unrealistic career aspirations and expectations, their lack of interest on jobs that have been given to them constitute a major barrier to their achieving smooth transitions from school to work. Looking at the present study, the percentages seem to have increased and this probably due to greater demands on learners, the curriculum and the ever widening nature of the economic world. It is suggested that learners' attitudes towards work, their unrealistic occupational aspirations and expectations are founded on their inadequate knowledge of themselves and the world of work.

The findings discussed above sum up the need for a variety of techniques or approaches that will help to link the world of school and work and thereby smoothen the transition for individuals moving from one to another. One of these is the development of a Career Education program for the Cameroon school system. Unless young people are consciously taught through the curriculum and unless they are taught how to make intelligent and informed decisions they are likely to make errors in assessing their skills, competencies and opportunities and in deciding among alternatives. Schools must provide young people through a brisk, understandable and lively look at themselves, education, work and life. The secondary school is a period of exploration for young people; a period in which they explore the society in which they live, the subculture into which they are about to move, the roles they may be called upon to play and the opportunities to play roles which are congenial to their personalities, interests and aptitudes.

### ***Implication One: Deciding the Approach to Career Education***

So far there are three approaches which have worked at relative rates. These are;

1. Teaching career skills inductively through the adoption of learner centred curriculum, strategies and methods of teaching. In this approach despite the fact that only the strategies change, learners develop a whole array of competencies by actively participating in lessons.
2. This second approach is suggested by Okon (1979) which incorporates education and practical training. This is based on the belief that a person's vocational choice is not a short term process but a continuous collection of experiences that influence this choice. Therefore the courses a person pursues over a period of time is actually choosing a way of life. According to this approach, secondary education should begin with a broad base or general studies of cognitive (subjects) studies and a general introduction to careers. In the subsequent grades, learners select a few careers of interest and the subjects that will help them enter such a career. In this case the learners graduate ready to perform the tasks of his occupation with efficiency.
3. The third approach and which this study recommends is that of teaching career education as a subject in schools. This approach has been tested in the USA and UK and has proven to be very successful. According to Shertzer (1973) learners live in a society which is characterized by rapid and profound changes. In such a society, individuals need much help to understand their personal characteristics, their strengths and weaknesses and the world around them. Therefore contrary to the second approach, there is a need for educational programs which expand rather than constrict the skills of the learners. At the secondary school level, a comprehensive career education program content should be established with the following guidelines:
  - Help learners come to personal understanding of the meaning and the value of education;
  - Understand him better and understand the behaviour of others.
  - Become aware of his personal characteristics- abilities, interests, aptitudes, values etc
  - Explore the range of structures of occupation in the local, state and national levels, the requirements for and the pathways towards entering occupations

- Become acquainted with the sources of educational and occupational information, develop the skills required to find and use such information
- Develop wholesome attitudes towards work, working and workers
- Engage in educational and vocational planning
- Recognize, plan for and adapt to changes in occupations and society

***Implication Two: For the State and Policy Planners.***

This would be in terms of resource allocation and training. Schools must be adequately planned so that it is possible to introduce a series of vocationally relevant exploratory experiences or exposures which have meaning for career development of students. Through such experiences and exposures, individuals would acquire through practice those skills needed in occupations and career decisions. Education policy makers must see the vital need to improve services to students. They must help in developing a variety of appropriate occupational information which will help individuals think through important personal issues. Planning of education must be carefully done to satisfy both academic as well as the vocational development needs of all students.

***Other implications***

- i.) work with parents, other adults and community agencies must be given a serious thought
- ii.) all subject matter should be related to the world of work
- iii.) career information centres must be established
- iv.) the organisation of career conferences must be regular
- v.) teachers should encourage learners to keep occupational files
- vi.) municipalities, delegations should help in establishing educational councils
- vii.) there is a vital need for schools to organize work experience programs
- viii.) follow-up studies must be guaranteed and
- ix.) Social and life skill teaching is vital.

**Conclusion**

The study was predicated on the high graduate employment in Cameroon. It hypothesized that the curriculum may be at the base of the problem and the hypothesis was confirmed, with implications to the development of a career education programme, to the revision of

teaching methods and the reconsideration of state investments in education and its evaluation which should/may signal such worries and bring forth interventions at the national level in Cameroon. Until we get to that point, we will continue to produce graduates who fall short of job expectations.

### Acknowledgement

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### Appendix 1: Sample Questionnaire

Dear respondent;

This questionnaire is to serve the purpose of research in the Faculty of Education at the University of Buea on the topic *The acquisition of world-work-skills within the secondary general curriculum; Implications for Designing a Career Education Program.*

Your honesty in responding to this questionnaire will go a long way to give credibility to the results. The findings will help in making recommendations for the designing of a career education program for secondary and high school learners in Cameroon.

**Please mark an (X) on the correct answer**

1. Sex
2. Class ixth science  Upper sis
3. Why did you choose this series? \_\_\_ Personal al \_\_\_ my parents  My friends chose this series  
\_\_\_ I am targeting a particular profession. Other reasons (specify)
4. Which profession will you like to enter when you leave high school? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What determined your choice of this profession \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Do you know the entry requirements into the said profession? \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark an (X) in the space which best describes the degree to which your high school studies have enabled you acquire each of these skills mentioned below.



The scales 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, indicate the level or degree to which the statement applies to you, with (4) indicating great acquisition. (3) Average, (2) rare and (1) showing no acquisition of the skill

	<b>Work related skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
5	I have taken part in an internship and job shadowing				
6	I can describe steps in solving problems				
7	I can use inductive reasoning to draw conclusions				
8	I can use facts, theories and relationships to explain a point of reason				
9	I can devise strategies for improving the performance of a system				
10	I am able to use office equipments like computers and photocopiers				
11	I know the strategies in leading working groups				
12	I am able to perform any function in my career field				
13	I have the ability to judge quality work				
14	I am able to carryout simple clerical functions				
15	I can develop and manage simple accounts				
16	I can organize and preside over meetings				
17	I am able to initiate projects and realize them				
18	I know strategies to monitor and evaluate work progress				
19	I know the steps in decision making and the techniques that will lead to success				
20	I know how to draw up daily work schedules				
21	I can identify areas of conflict and attend to them				
22	I can use English and French in both oral and written form				
23	I can use communication tools like radios, newspapers, internet etc				
24	Ability to draft letters, agendas and memos				

25. In your opinion, do you think that you have acquired skills from your high school studies that can enable you perform effectively in your preferred job when you leave high school? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

26. If no, how have your high school studies contributed to your inability to acquire (some) of the work related skills? \_\_\_\_\_

27. How can high school studies be organized to enable students acquire job related skills before they graduate \_\_\_\_\_

END: Thank you for your kind attention and patience!

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