Curriculum Adaptation for Internally Displaced Learners: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Education in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Armed conflict and forced displacement have disrupted educational opportunities for many children and young people in Cameroon, particularly those affected by the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. When internally displaced learners enter schools in host communities, they may encounter interrupted schooling, differences in language of instruction, gaps in prior learning, financial difficulties, loss of school records, and unfamiliar educational environments. These challenges raise questions about the capacity of existing curricula to accommodate learners whose educational experiences differ from those of their peers. This article examines curriculum adaptation as a strategy for promoting inclusive and equitable education for internally displaced learners in Cameroon. It focuses on four dimensions: curriculum content, instructional pacing, language of instruction, and assessment. Drawing on curriculum development theory, literature on inclusive education, and institutional guidance on education in emergencies, the article adopts a qualitative conceptual design based on documentary analysis. The literature suggests that rigid curriculum sequencing, limited recognition of prior learning, language barriers, and assessment practices that do not account for interrupted schooling can create additional obstacles to educational participation. In response, the article proposes a crisis-responsive curriculum adaptation framework combining diagnostic assessment, prioritization of essential competencies, flexible learning pathways, multilingual support, continuous assessment, teacher professional development, and stakeholder participation. It recommends that education authorities, school leaders, teachers, families, and humanitarian organizations coordinate context-sensitive adaptations that preserve national learning standards while responding to diverse learner needs. The article concludes that curriculum adaptation should be understood as a planned and monitored educational strategy for improving learning continuity, inclusion, and equity in crisis-affected contexts.

Keywords: curriculum adaptation; internally displaced learners; inclusive education; educational equity; education in emergencies; Cameroon; curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and an important means of individual development, social participation, and national recovery. During armed conflict and forced displacement, education becomes especially important because it can provide continuity, routine, protection, and a sense of future possibility. Yet conflict can interrupt schooling, separate learners from teachers and classmates, destroy or limit access to learning materials, and expose children to unfamiliar educational environments. For displaced learners, being enrolled in a school is therefore not always equivalent to having meaningful access to learning.

Cameroon has experienced a prolonged crisis in its North-West and South-West regions, alongside other humanitarian challenges, including insecurity and displacement in the Far North. Families displaced from their homes may move to urban and peri-urban communities where they seek safety, housing, and access to public services. Some children enter schools in receiving communities such as Yaoundé, where they may encounter

new language expectations, different school routines, and curriculum content that assumes learning experiences they have not had an opportunity to complete.

Curriculum development ordinarily involves identifying educational needs, defining objectives, selecting and organizing content, planning learning experiences, and determining how learning will be evaluated. In stable circumstances, curriculum planners may assume a relatively predictable school calendar and progression through grade-level content. Displacement challenges these assumptions. Learners may have missed weeks, terms, or years of instruction, and their previous learning opportunities may differ considerably from those of classmates.

A curriculum that is delivered at a uniform pace and assessed through uniform procedures can unintentionally disadvantage learners who have experienced interrupted schooling. Curriculum adaptation offers a way to preserve essential learning objectives while adjusting the route through which learners reach them. Adaptation may involve diagnostic assessment, bridging lessons, flexible pacing, language scaffolding, accessible materials, differentiated instruction, and appropriate assessment methods.

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2024) emphasizes the importance of relevant curricula, inclusive teaching, appropriate assessment, and continuity of learning in crisis contexts. In Cameroon, context-specific work on displaced Anglophone students in Yaoundé has also drawn attention to language and cultural transitions in receiving educational environments (Blomquist, 2024). These concerns suggest that curriculum adaptation should be considered not simply a classroom technique but a coordinated component of educational inclusion. The sociopolitical crisis in the North-West and South-West regions and insecurity in the Far North have caused some children and families to leave their homes and communities. Many internally displaced children have had their education interrupted, lost school materials, changed schools, missed examinations, or entered new learning environments with different teaching practices and language expectations. When these children enrol in schools in host communities, they may experience difficulties following the prescribed curriculum because of interrupted learning, trauma, differences in previous instruction, overcrowded classrooms, or limited access to educational resources.

For this reason, curriculum adaptation for internally displaced learners is an important strategy for promoting inclusive and equitable education in Cameroon. The central argument of this material is that the national curriculum should maintain its educational standards while allowing appropriate flexibility in teaching methods, learning materials, assessment, language support, pacing, and psychosocial assistance. Such adaptation can help internally displaced learners participate meaningfully in education without being stigmatised or unnecessarily separated from their peers. Cameroon's Education and Training Sector Strategy 2023–2030 explicitly addresses educational needs arising from displacement and crisis. It identifies measures such as temporary learning spaces, accelerated learning, distance education, teacher support, psychosocial assistance, and community participation

Background to the Study

Displacement produces diverse educational experiences. Some learners may continue studying during displacement through informal classes, community initiatives, or temporary programmes. Others may have little or no access to formal instruction for extended periods. Some arrive with school reports and certificates, while others have lost documents or cannot obtain them. Their learning needs should not be presumed from displacement status alone; they should be identified through respectful assessment and dialogue. Internally displaced learners may face interrupted schooling, loss of learning materials, separation from familiar teachers, financial hardship, emotional distress and difficulties adjusting to new communities. These circumstances should inform classroom practice without defining learners by their displacement. A receiving school in Yaoundé could establish a voluntary peer-support programme for newly enrolled learners. Each participating learner could be paired with a classmate who explains school routines, helps locate learning materials and supports participation in group activities. During a Civic Education lesson, the class could examine a fictional case in which a newly arrived learner is excluded from a group project because classmates believe that the learner will soon leave.

Learners would discuss fairness, inclusion, the right to education and the responsibilities of host communities. The activity would promote social cohesion without asking displaced learners to describe traumatic experiences or publicly identify themselves. Receiving schools face the task of integrating new learners while continuing to serve existing students. Teachers may need to respond to a wider range of prior learning, language proficiency, and social circumstances than their usual lesson plans anticipate. If teachers have limited training or resources, even well-intentioned adaptations can be difficult to implement. Curriculum policy must therefore address both what learners need and the capacity of schools to provide it.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem addressed in this article is the potential mismatch between conventional curriculum implementation and the educational circumstances of internally displaced learners. A curriculum may be formally accessible to all enrolled students but remain difficult to access in practice when it assumes continuous attendance, uniform prior learning, familiarity with the language of instruction, and complete academic records. Such a mismatch can contribute to disengagement, weak performance, repetition, or delayed progression.

Language differences can compound these challenges. A learner may understand a subject concept but struggle to demonstrate that knowledge in a new instructional language. Likewise, a learner who has missed foundational lessons may be expected to complete grade-level tasks without receiving the necessary bridging support. These circumstances raise questions about the fairness of placement and assessment procedures and the responsiveness of curriculum planning.

The problem is therefore not that displaced learners are inherently less capable. Rather, educational systems may need more flexible mechanisms to recognize prior learning, identify gaps, and provide equitable opportunities to achieve shared learning goals.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this article is to examine curriculum adaptation strategies that can support inclusive and equitable education for internally displaced learners in Cameroon.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine curriculum-related challenges that may affect internally displaced learners in receiving communities.
2. Analyse how curriculum content, instructional pacing, language support, and assessment can be adapted.
3. Explore how curriculum adaptation can promote inclusion and educational equity for displaced and host-community learners.
4. Propose a crisis-responsive curriculum adaptation framework for receiving schools in Cameroon.
5. Recommend practical measures for policy, school leadership, teacher development, and future research.

Research Questions

1. What curriculum-related challenges may affect internally displaced learners in receiving communities in Cameroon?
2. How can curriculum content and instructional pacing respond to interrupted schooling and learning gaps?
3. What role can language-sensitive teaching and differentiated assessment play in improving educational participation?
4. What strategies can promote inclusive and equitable curriculum adaptation for displaced learners and their host-community peers?

Significance of the Study

The article may be useful to curriculum developers, education policymakers, school leaders, classroom teachers, teacher educators, and humanitarian organizations. It brings curriculum design into discussions that are sometimes dominated by school access and infrastructure. It also offers a framework for connecting learner

assessment, instructional adaptation, and curriculum evaluation. For researchers, it identifies questions that can be tested through school-based studies rather than assuming that proposed adaptations are already effective.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Internally displaced persons are people who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes, particularly because of armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, or disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. United Nations (1998), Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Internally displaced learners remain within their own country but may lose access to their original schools, teachers, learning materials, social A child who leaves the North-West region because of insecurity and enrols in a school in Yaoundé remains an internally displaced learner if the child has not crossed an international border. The school should consider the child's educational history and learning needs rather than treating the child as a new learner with no prior educational experience. Internally displaced learners (IDLs) are children and young people who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict, violence, insecurity, or other crises but remain within the borders of their own country. In Cameroon, some learners have been displaced by the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions and by insecurity in the Far North. They may move to communities where schools are already operating, creating additional challenges for learners, teachers, families, and school administrators.

Displaced learners may experience interrupted schooling, loss of school materials, language barriers, psychological distress, differences in the curriculum, and difficulties enrolling in a new school. Some may have missed months or years of learning.

Inclusive and equitable education means ensuring that all learners, regardless of their displacement status, language, gender, disability, or economic circumstances, have meaningful opportunities to access education, participate in learning, and achieve their potential.

Internally displaced learners may face interrupted schooling, loss of learning materials, separation from familiar teachers, financial hardship, emotional distress and difficulties adjusting to new communities. These circumstances should inform classroom practice without defining learners by their displacement. A receiving school in Yaoundé could establish a voluntary peer-support programme for newly enrolled learners. Each participating learner could be paired with a classmate who explains school routines, helps locate learning materials and supports participation in group activities. During a Civic Education lesson, the class could examine a fictional case in which a newly arrived learner is excluded from a group project because classmates believe that the learner will soon leave.

Learners would discuss fairness, inclusion, the right to education and the responsibilities of host communities. The activity would promote social cohesion without asking displaced learners to describe traumatic experiences or publicly identify themselves.

Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation is the process of modifying the delivery, organisation, presentation, pacing, learning resources, or assessment of a curriculum to respond to learners' needs while maintaining appropriate educational objectives. Stainback and William Stainback (1996), whose work on inclusion in education supports the principle that educational arrangements should accommodate learner diversity. For a formal curriculum-development foundation, Tyler (1949) provides a useful framework for aligning objectives, learning experiences, and evaluation. Curriculum adaptation does not necessarily mean replacing the national curriculum. It means making appropriate adjustments so learners with different educational experiences can access and benefit from it. Adjusting the pace of instruction, Providing remedial or bridging lessons, Using visual, practical, and oral teaching methods, Providing accessible and locally relevant learning materials, Allowing appropriate flexibility in assessment, Including peace education, child protection, and psychosocial learning activities where relevant. Teachers can adapt lessons to address the learning gaps of displaced children from the North-West, South-West, or Far North while continuing to teach the competencies required by the relevant national curriculum

Why Curriculum Adaptation Is Necessary for Internally Displaced Learners in Cameroon

Curriculum adaptation is necessary because displacement can disrupt the relationship between learners, their previous schools, the curriculum, and the new educational environment.

Interrupted schooling, Displaced learners may spend weeks or months outside school. When they resume learning, they may have missed essential concepts in mathematics, reading, writing, science, or other subjects. Practical response: Conduct a diagnostic assessment, identify missing competencies, and provide bridging lessons alongside the regular curriculum.

Differences in curriculum coverage: A child transferring from one school to another may find that the new school has covered topics in a different order or at a different pace. Teachers should compare the learner's previous learning records with the current curriculum and identify the most important learning gaps.

Language difficulties: Learners may have studied in a different language environment or may struggle to follow lessons after moving to a new community. Practical response: Use vocabulary support, bilingual explanations where appropriate, visual materials, peer support, and structured language development.

Psychological and emotional difficulties: Some children have experienced frightening events, separation from family members, loss of property, or uncertainty about their future.

Practical response: Establish predictable classroom routines, provide supportive relationships, avoid punitive responses to difficulties that may be related to distress, and refer children for professional support when needed.

Poverty and lack of learning materials: Displacement may leave families without textbooks, uniforms, writing materials, or money for transport. Practical response: Use shared materials, provide accessible school resources, organize targeted assistance, and avoid making essential learning dependent on a child's ability to purchase supplies.

Differences in age and grade placement: Some displaced learners may be older than their classmates because their schooling was interrupted. Others may have limited foundational skills despite being of the appropriate age for a higher grade. Practical response: Use age-sensitive placement procedures, assess competencies rather than relying exclusively on age, and provide support without humiliating or stigmatizing learners. A Cameroon-specific study by Juliana Ngwese Ebude (2023), conducted in government secondary schools in Yaoundé, examined school management practices and the academic performance of internally displaced learners. It reported relationships between educational policy implementation, admission procedures, curriculum implementation, social integration, and learners' academic performance. This provides a relevant local research starting point, although its findings should not automatically be generalised to every region or school.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is an approach that seeks to remove barriers to education so that all learners can access, participate in, and benefit from meaningful learning opportunities. Mel Ainscow (2020), in his work on promoting inclusion and equity in education, emphasises identifying and removing barriers to participation and learning. UNESCO (2017), in A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, presents inclusion and equity as principles for transforming education systems so that every learner matters equally. Inclusive education is not simply placing different children in th same classroom. It requires adapting school practices, teaching methods, learning environments, and support services so that learners can participate meaningfully. A host-community school should welcome internally displaced learners, assess their educational needs, provide catch-up support, prevent discrimination, and enable them to participate in classroom activities alongside other pupils. Inclusive education requires schools to identify and remove barriers that prevent learners from participating and succeeding. Such barriers may relate to disability, gender, poverty, language, displacement,

overcrowded classrooms or discrimination. Cameroon's National Policy on Inclusive Education provides a relevant policy foundation for improving accessibility and reducing exclusion.

Practical Example: One Lesson, Several Pathways

During a Science lesson on water purification, the teacher could:

- Present key concepts orally and in writing.
- Use diagrams and locally available materials for demonstrations.
- Provide large-print worksheets when needed.
- Arrange group roles so learners with different abilities can participate.
- Allow learners to explain their understanding through a written response, oral explanation or labelled diagram where appropriate.
- Ensure that learners with mobility difficulties can access the learning area.

The scientific objective remains the same, but the means of participation are adapted.

Universal Design for Learning is a framework for designing learning environments that accommodate learner variability through multiple means of engagement, representation, and action or expression. David H. Rose and Anne Meyer (2002), Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning. UDL encourages teachers to plan accessible lessons from the beginning rather than waiting until a learner experiences difficulties. A teacher can introduce a lesson through spoken explanations, drawings, practical demonstrations, and written examples, then allow pupils to demonstrate understanding through oral answers, written exercises, or practical activities when appropriate. This can benefit displaced learners, children with disabilities, learners with language difficulties, and pupils who have missed lessons.

Educational Equity

Equitable education is the provision of fair educational opportunities, resources, and support according to learners' needs and circumstances. UNESCO (2017), in A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education, treats equity as a central principle of a fair education system. Equity recognises that learners face different barriers. Giving every learner exactly the same support may not be sufficient when some children have experienced prolonged school interruptions, poverty, disability, or displacement. A school receiving many displaced children may need additional teachers, textbooks, counselling services, remedial lessons, or financial assistance. Equity requires allocating support in response to the actual needs of the school and its learners. Educational equity recognises that learners may require different levels or types of support to access comparable educational opportunities. Equality might mean distributing the same number of exercise books to every learner. Equity might require additional books for learners who have lost their materials during displacement, alongside support for learners whose families cannot afford supplies. A school could ask its class representatives to review anonymised information on attendance, access to textbooks, participation in extracurricular activities and completion of assignments. Educational equity recognises that learners may require different levels or types of support to access comparable educational opportunities. Equality might mean distributing the same number of exercise books to every learner. Equity might require additional books for learners who have lost their materials during displacement, alongside support for learners whose families cannot afford supplies. A school could ask its class representatives to review anonymised information on attendance, access to textbooks, participation in extracurricular activities and completion of assignments. Learners would identify possible barriers and recommend fair solutions, such as a shared textbook bank, additional remedial sessions or more accessible classroom arrangements.

Teachers should avoid publicly labelling individual children as poor, displaced or academically weak. The aim is to improve institutional arrangements rather than expose personal circumstances. Learners would identify

possible barriers and recommend fair solutions, such as a shared textbook bank, additional remedial sessions or more accessible classroom arrangements. Teachers should avoid publicly labelling individual children as poor, displaced or academically weak. The aim is to improve institutional arrangements rather than expose personal circumstances. Educational equity and social justice concern the fair distribution of educational opportunities, resources, participation, and outcomes, particularly for groups experiencing disadvantage. John Rawls (1971), in A Theory of Justice, develops principles of justice concerned with fair institutions and the position of disadvantaged members of society. Applied to education, this perspective supports giving attention to children whose circumstances prevent them from benefiting from opportunities available to others. Schools and education authorities should identify barriers experienced by displaced learners and allocate additional support where needed rather than assuming that identical treatment will produce fair outcomes.

Education in Emergencies

Education in emergencies refers to learning opportunities provided during crises that threaten the safety, continuity, access, or quality of education. Institutional source and year: Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2010), Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery. Education in emergencies protects children's right to learn while addressing immediate risks and helping education systems recover. Appropriate approaches may include temporary learning spaces, accelerated learning, alternative delivery methods, school rehabilitation, teacher support, and reintegration into formal education.

The Cameroon Education and Training Sector Strategy 2023–2030 identifies several comparable measures for crisis-affected education. Education in emergencies seeks to maintain safe, accessible and continuous learning during conflict, displacement, disasters and other crises. In Cameroon, this requires attention to learning continuity, child protection, psychosocial support, disability inclusion and the particular risks facing girls and boys in affected communities. If insecurity, flooding or another emergency interrupts ordinary school attendance, a school could prepare a simple continuity plan that includes:

- Printed learning packs aligned with existing subject syllabuses.
- Short radio lessons or other accessible learning formats where available.
- A weekly schedule for collecting and returning assignments when safe.
- Teacher check-ins using approved, safe communication channels.
- Referral arrangements for learners needing specialised protection or psychosocial support.
- A procedure for resuming face-to-face learning when conditions permit.

No teacher should require children to travel through unsafe areas to collect assignments. Safety takes precedence over attendance targets.

Curriculum Contextualization

Curriculum contextualization is the process of connecting curriculum content and learning activities to learners' social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and environmental experiences. John Dewey (1938), in Experience and Education, emphasises the importance of experience in education and the relationship between learning experiences and further development.

Learners often understand abstract concepts more easily when teachers connect them to familiar situations. Contextualization should broaden learning rather than restrict children to their immediate experiences. Teachers can use examples from farming, local markets, community health, environmental protection, and everyday life in Cameroon to teach mathematics, science, language, and social studies. Displaced learners should also be able to draw on their experiences without being required to disclose painful personal histories.

Curriculum Development and Responsiveness to Learner Needs

Curriculum development is a systematic process through which educational needs are identified, objectives are established, content is selected and organized, learning experiences are planned, and outcomes are evaluated. Effective development requires attention to learners, social priorities, available resources, and the setting in which learning occurs. In crisis-affected contexts, this process must also consider interrupted attendance, displacement-related transitions, language differences, and unequal opportunities to access instruction.

Tyler (1949) organized curriculum planning around four questions: what educational purposes should be pursued, what experiences can achieve those purposes, how those experiences should be organized, and how achievement can be evaluated. These questions remain useful for curriculum adaptation. If learners have missed instruction, planners need to identify which objectives are essential, what learning experiences will help learners achieve them, how those experiences should be sequenced, and what evidence will demonstrate progress.

Taba (1962) emphasized diagnosing learners' needs as an important starting point for curriculum development. Applied to displacement, this suggests that adaptations should follow an assessment of existing knowledge and learning needs, rather than assumptions based on a learner's origin or displacement status. Diagnostic information can help teachers distinguish between content already mastered and content requiring additional instruction.

Educational Continuity for Displaced Learners

Educational continuity means that learners can continue progressing despite emergencies, changes in location, or interruptions to schooling. It depends on access to schools, qualified teachers, appropriate learning materials, recognized records, and pathways into and through formal education. A learner may be physically present in a classroom but remain excluded from meaningful learning if the curriculum is inaccessible or if missing prior instruction is not addressed.

The INEE Minimum Standards for Education (2024) emphasize equitable access, relevant curricula, inclusive teaching and learning processes, and appropriate assessment. These principles support arrangements such as bridging lessons, remedial instruction, accelerated learning where appropriate, and recognition of prior learning. UNICEF's humanitarian reporting on Cameroon has described remedial learning support and accelerated learning initiatives for children whose schooling has been disrupted. Such initiatives illustrate the relevance of structured learning recovery, although their existence alone does not establish their effectiveness in every receiving school.

Curriculum adaptation should provide a bridge into recognized educational pathways. Supplementary programmes are most useful when their objectives, duration, assessment, and progression routes are clear. Without such links, learners may remain in separate programmes or struggle to transfer their learning into the regular school system.

Language of Instruction and Curriculum Accessibility

Language affects access to explanations, textbooks, assessment questions, classroom discussion, and peer interaction. In Cameroon, educational transitions between English- and French-medium environments can create particular challenges for some displaced learners. A student may have a sound understanding of mathematics or science but find it difficult to express that understanding in a new language of instruction.

Blomquist (2024), in a study focused on displaced Anglophone students in Yaoundé, discusses language barriers and cultural differences as part of the challenge of adapting to a different educational environment. This context-specific work suggests that curriculum transition should be examined not only in terms of content but also in terms of language and classroom participation.

INEE (2024) emphasizes the relevance of language and context in education during emergencies. Practical strategies may include pre-teaching subject vocabulary, visual supports, bilingual glossaries where appropriate, structured peer learning, scaffolded instructions, and supplementary language learning. These supports should be consistent with official language-of-instruction requirements and should help learners participate progressively in the approved curriculum.

Instructional Pacing and Differentiated Learning

Curriculum pacing refers to the rate at which content is taught and learning objectives are addressed. Uniform pacing can be difficult when learners have had unequal opportunities to learn. Displaced students may have missed specific topics, while others may have continued learning through informal or temporary programmes. Their needs are therefore likely to vary.

Tomlinson (2014) describes differentiated instruction as a way of responding to variation in learner readiness, interests, and learning profiles. In a displacement context, differentiation may involve additional practice, alternative explanations, flexible grouping, varied tasks, or more time for particular competencies. The aim is not to create a separate low-expectation curriculum, but to make the intended curriculum accessible.

Flexible pacing must be purposeful. Teachers should identify essential competencies, prerequisite knowledge, and realistic milestones. Without planning and monitoring, flexibility can lead to unfinished content or repeated delays. Curriculum leaders should therefore support teachers with scope-and-sequence guidance that distinguishes essential learning from content that can be revisited or integrated later.

Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning

Assessment informs placement, teaching decisions, feedback, and progression. Diagnostic assessment identifies what a learner knows at the beginning of instruction; formative assessment monitors progress and guides teaching; summative assessment evaluates achievement at a defined point. A balanced assessment system uses these forms for complementary purposes.

For displaced learners, reliance on a single examination or incomplete school records may provide an inadequate picture of competence. A learner may have missed an examination because of displacement rather than lack of ability. Conversely, a learner may have gaps in prerequisite knowledge that need to be addressed before progressing. Transparent placement procedures and multiple forms of evidence can help schools make more defensible decisions.

INEE (2024) emphasizes assessment and monitoring as part of an effective education response. Teachers may use portfolios, short quizzes, oral questioning, practical demonstrations, classroom tasks, and regular feedback alongside formal examinations. Any adjustment should preserve fairness, protect the credibility of certification, and comply with national regulations.

Inclusive Education and Educational Equity

Inclusive education seeks to identify and remove barriers that prevent learners from participating fully in education. Equity recognizes that learners may need different forms of support to have meaningful opportunities to learn. Treating everyone identically does not necessarily produce fair outcomes when learners have experienced very different opportunities.

In curriculum terms, inclusion requires both common learning goals and flexible routes toward them. Displaced learners should not be automatically segregated or assumed to have low ability. At the same time, host-community learners should not be overlooked when receiving schools experience increased demand or resource constraints. Shared resources, improved teaching strategies, and better formative assessment can benefit all learners.

Teacher Capacity and Institutional Conditions

Curriculum adaptation depends on teachers' knowledge, workload, access to resources, and school-level support. Teachers may need to identify learning gaps, prepare differentiated activities, support language development, and monitor progress while teaching large classes. Without professional development and planning time, adaptation may remain inconsistent or depend on individual goodwill.

A sustainable approach should therefore combine curriculum guidance with teacher training, accessible materials, collaboration among teachers, and referral arrangements for learners who need additional academic or psychosocial support. School leaders also have a role in creating conditions for joint planning and regular review.

Theoretical Framework

Tyler's Curriculum Rationale

Tyler's (1949) rationale provides a structured way to examine curriculum decisions through objectives, learning experiences, organization, and evaluation. For displaced learners, objectives should remain meaningful and aligned with national expectations, but learning experiences and their organization may need to change. Evaluation should establish whether learners have acquired the intended competencies and what additional support is required.

Inclusive Education Perspective

Inclusive Education, Mel Ainscow (2020)

Ainscow's work emphasises identifying and removing barriers that prevent learners from participating and achieving in education. Relevance to displaced learners: The responsibility for inclusion does not rest solely on the child. School organisation, teaching methods, resources, attitudes, and assessment practices may also need to change. The inclusive education perspective shifts attention from presumed learner deficits to the barriers created by educational arrangements. When a student struggles, the school should consider whether language demands, rigid pacing, inaccessible materials, or assessment procedures contribute to the difficulty. This does not deny individual learning needs; it encourages the school to examine and reduce avoidable barriers. Inclusive education requires schools to identify and remove barriers that prevent learners from participating and succeeding. Such barriers may relate to disability, gender, poverty, language, displacement, overcrowded classrooms or discrimination. Cameroon's National Policy on Inclusive Education provides a relevant policy foundation for improving accessibility and reducing exclusion.

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- Allow learners to explain their understanding through a written response, oral explanation or labelled diagram where appropriate.
- Ensure that learners with mobility difficulties can access the learning area.

The scientific objective remains the same, but the means of participation are adapted.

Application in Cameroon: School administrators should review admission procedures, classroom practices, teacher support, and disciplinary measures to identify barriers faced by displaced children

Differentiated Instruction Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999)

Tomlinson explains that teachers can respond to differences in readiness, interests, and learning profiles by varying content, learning processes, products, and the classroom environment. Relevance to displaced learners: Children in the same class may have different levels of foundational literacy, numeracy, language proficiency, and familiarity with the curriculum.. Differentiated instruction supports the provision of varied learning experiences in response to differences in readiness and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). In receiving schools, it can help teachers maintain shared objectives while adjusting scaffolding, practice, grouping, and time. Together, the three perspectives frame adaptation as a planned, inclusive, and evidence-informed process. Curriculum differentiation is the process of varying teaching content, learning activities, support, or assessment to respond to learners' different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999), The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners. Differentiation allows learners to work towards meaningful learning objectives through different forms of support. It does not require the teacher to create an entirely separate curriculum for every child. During a reading lesson, learners who have missed school may receive additional phonics exercises and guided reading, while learners who have mastered the same material work on comprehension and written expression. Application in Cameroon: A teacher can maintain a common learning objective while giving some pupils guided exercises, others independent tasks, and more advanced learners extension activitiesalso the theories that justify its use for internally displaced learners.

Constructivist Learning Theory — Jean Piaget (1952)

Piaget's theory of cognitive development explains that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and through the development and reorganisation of their existing understanding. Children who have experienced interrupted schooling may have different levels of prior knowledge even when they are in the same grade. Teachers should assess learners' existing understanding, introduce new concepts progressively, and provide concrete learning activities before moving to abstract concepts. For example, a teacher teaching fractions can use locally available objects, paper shapes, or food items to help learners understand the concept before introducing formal mathematical notation.

Sociocultural Learning Theory — Lev Vygotsky (1978)

In Mind in Society, Vygotsky explains the importance of social interaction, cultural tools, language, and guidance in learning. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development concerns what a learner can accomplish with appropriate assistance compared with what the learner can do independently. **Relevance to displaced learners**: Learners may need temporary scaffolding, language assistance, peer support, or teacher guidance to catch up with classroom learning. Application in Cameroon: Teachers can pair learners for cooperative activities, provide worked examples, model unfamiliar tasks, and gradually reduce support as learners become more independent.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This article adopts a qualitative conceptual design based on documentary analysis and a narrative review of relevant literature. The design is appropriate for synthesizing curriculum theory, education-in-emergencies guidance, and context-specific literature to develop a framework for future investigation. The article does not report original interviews, observations, questionnaires, or student achievement data.

Sources of Information

The principal sources include foundational curriculum literature, publications on differentiated instruction, the INEE Minimum Standards for Education (2024), UNICEF information on education and humanitarian needs in Cameroon, and Blomquist's (2024) study concerning displaced Anglophone students in Yaoundé. These

sources were selected for their relevance to curriculum design, inclusion, language, learning recovery, and crisis-affected education.

Analytical Procedure

The materials were organized around four central curriculum dimensions: content, pacing, language of instruction, and assessment. Additional themes included teacher capacity, prior-learning recognition, inclusion, and coordination. The analysis identified recurring principles and used them to construct a proposed framework. This is a narrative conceptual synthesis, not a systematic review: it does not claim exhaustive database coverage or formal appraisal of every available study.

Proposed Empirical Research Design

A subsequent field study could use a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design in selected receiving schools in Yaoundé, with possible comparison sites in other host communities. The target population could include displaced learners, host-community learners, teachers, school leaders, curriculum specialists, and relevant education officials.

Purposive sampling could select schools known to serve displaced learners, followed by maximum-variation sampling to include differences in school type, educational level, language background, and displacement experience. Data could be collected through semi-structured interviews, age-appropriate focus groups, curriculum document analysis, lesson-plan review, and approved diagnostic or formative assessments.

Interview and focus-group data could be analyzed thematically. Curriculum documents could be coded for evidence of adaptations in content, pacing, language support, and assessment. Quantitative learning data, if collected, could be summarized descriptively and compared cautiously across groups. Any comparisons would need to account for differences in prior learning, school resources, and educational interruption.

Ethical Considerations

Research involving displaced children requires informed consent from appropriate guardians and assent from children where applicable, confidentiality, secure handling of records, and procedures to minimize distress. Participation should not affect school placement or access to services. Researchers should avoid unnecessary questions about traumatic experiences and should ensure that participation is voluntary. Language accessibility, disability-related accommodations, security risks, and power differences between researchers and participants should be considered, The credibility of a documentary analysis depends on transparent use of sources and careful separation of published evidence from interpretation. Comparing academic literature with institutional standards can help identify areas of convergence. However, this design cannot determine how widespread particular practices are in Cameroon or establish that the proposed adaptations improve outcomes. The framework therefore remains a conceptual proposal requiring empirical evaluation.

FINDINGS

The following are analytical themes derived from the literature and institutional guidance. They are not statistical findings or results from original fieldwork.

Theme One: Diagnostic Assessment Is Necessary to Identify Learning Needs

Displacement can interrupt schooling, expose learners to different curricula, and create unequal opportunities to acquire foundational competencies. Consequently, learners enrolled in the same grade may have substantially different levels of knowledge. Grade placement alone may therefore provide insufficient evidence of a learner's readiness to engage with the curriculum. Tyler (1949) emphasizes the importance of evaluating learning experiences against educational objectives, while Taba (1962) places the diagnosis of learners' needs at the beginning of curriculum development. Applied to displaced learners, these perspectives suggest that

teachers should establish what learners already know, what they have missed, and which competencies require reinforcement before deciding how to adapt instruction.

Consider a hypothetical secondary school in Yaoundé that admits 30 displaced learners into Form Two. Although all learners are placed in the same grade, their previous educational experiences differ. Some attended school consistently before displacement, while others experienced several months of interrupted schooling.

During the first week, the mathematics teacher administers a short diagnostic assessment covering fractions, decimals, percentages, and simple algebra. The assessment is ungraded and is used solely to identify learning needs.

Diagnostic finding	Number of learners	Percentage	Appropriate response
Demonstrate secure understanding of the assessed competencies	9	30%	Proceed with grade-level tasks and extension activities
Have partial understanding and need revision	12	40%	Provide structured revision and guided practice
Have substantial foundational gaps	9	30%	Provide targeted bridging lessons and additional support
Total	30	100%	

The teacher can use the results to organize flexible learning groups. Learners requiring revision receive additional exercises on prerequisite concepts, while those who demonstrate mastery proceed to more challenging activities. Groups are reviewed regularly so that temporary support does not become permanent tracking.

Statistical Evidence and Significance

The UNHCR reported in its Refugee Education Report 2023 that approximately half of refugee children were enrolled in primary education, while only 37% were enrolled in secondary education. These figures demonstrate the substantial barriers refugees face in accessing and progressing through education. They do not directly measure learning gaps among displaced learners in Cameroon, but they establish why schools need reliable procedures for identifying and responding to individual learning needs. UNHCR Refugee Education Report.

What Schools Should Do

- Administer short, curriculum-aligned diagnostic assessments when learners enter or return to school.
- Assess foundational literacy, numeracy, and relevant subject knowledge.
- Use oral questioning, written tasks, and practical activities where appropriate.
- Develop individual or group learning-support plans based on evidence.
- Repeat selected assessments after four to six weeks to determine whether the support is working.

Analytical implication: Diagnostic assessment should be understood as a tool for curriculum decision-making rather than a mechanism for labelling displaced learners as academically weak. It enables teachers to make evidence-based decisions about content, pacing, instructional methods, and additional support.

Theme Two: Flexible Pacing Can Help Learners Regain Access to the Curriculum

Flexible pacing is important because displaced learners may have experienced interruptions in schooling, differences in curriculum content, or limited access to qualified teachers and learning materials. When teachers

follow a rigid timetable without considering these differences, learners who have missed prerequisite instruction may struggle to understand new concepts. Conversely, learners who have retained the required competencies may become disengaged if they are repeatedly taught material they already understand.

Tomlinson (2014) argues for responding to differences in learners' readiness, interests, and learning profiles through differentiated instruction. Similarly, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) emphasizes the importance of responsive, context-sensitive education in emergency settings. These perspectives support adapting the time, sequence, and delivery of learning while maintaining the essential objectives of the curriculum.

Practical Example

Suppose a secondary school in Yaoundé admits 40 learners from displacement-affected communities. The mathematics teacher discovers that 16 learners have difficulty with fractions and percentages, while the remaining 24 can already perform these operations confidently.

Instead of teaching the entire class at the same pace, the teacher creates a three-week bridging programme.

- Week one: Learners requiring support revise fractions and decimal operations through worked examples and guided exercises.
- Week two: The teacher introduces percentages and applies them to practical situations, such as calculating discounts and interpreting examination results.
- Week three: All learners complete a common competency assessment to determine readiness for the next unit.

Learners who master the concepts early undertake extension tasks involving ratios and simple financial calculations. Those who continue to struggle receive additional practice without being excluded from the mainstream class.

The teacher also establishes clear milestones. For example, by the end of week three, at least 80% of the class should demonstrate the specified foundational competencies. This target is an illustrative planning goal, not an established universal benchmark.

Statistical Evidence and Significance

Cameroon-specific evidence demonstrates the importance of restoring learning opportunities after disruption. According to UNICEF Cameroon, its Accelerated Education Curriculum programme enabled 7,665 children to re-enter formal education in 2024 in the Far North and North regions. UNICEF also reported that its Radio Education Programme reached 29,283 children, offering an alternative means of learning where attendance at school was difficult. These figures illustrate the scale of the need for flexible approaches, although they do not independently prove that flexible pacing improves examination results.

UNICEF Cameroon

What Schools Should Do

1. Identify essential competencies and prerequisite knowledge for each subject.
2. Schedule short bridging lessons before or alongside grade-level instruction.
3. Provide additional instructional time for difficult concepts rather than extending every unit indiscriminately.
4. Use weekly learning targets and short assessments to monitor progress.

5. Review individual progress every three to four weeks and adjust the support provided.

6. Ensure that flexible pacing does not prevent learners from completing the prescribed curriculum or meeting formal examination requirements.

Analytical implication: Flexible pacing should not be interpreted as reducing academic standards. Rather, it provides learners with different amounts of instructional time and different pathways to achieve the same essential learning objectives. The effectiveness of this approach depends on regular monitoring, clear milestones, and timely instructional adjustments.

Theme Three: Language Support Is Part of Curriculum Access

Language is a significant factor in curriculum access because learners must understand classroom instructions, subject-specific vocabulary, textbooks, and assessment questions before they can demonstrate their knowledge. Displaced Anglophone learners attending schools in Yaoundé may encounter French-dominant environments, unfamiliar cultural references, or differences between the language used in their previous schools and the language of instruction in their receiving schools. Blomquist (2024), as cited in the supplied literature, highlights language and cultural transitions as educational concerns among displaced Anglophone students in Yaoundé. This suggests that apparent academic weakness may sometimes reflect language barriers rather than a lack of subject knowledge. For instance, a learner may understand the scientific process of evaporation but struggle to explain it in French. If the teacher assesses only the learner's ability to produce a fluent French explanation, the assessment may underestimate the learner's scientific understanding.

Consider a Form One science class containing displaced Anglophone learners who are still developing their French-language proficiency. The teacher is teaching the water cycle. Instead of immediately requiring learners to write a lengthy French explanation, the teacher uses a sequence of scaffolded activities:

Step 1: Visual introduction; The teacher displays a labelled water-cycle diagram and uses arrows to explain evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.

Step 2: Vocabulary preparation: Learners review a short glossary containing key terms in French and English where appropriate, including their meanings and pronunciation.

Step 3: Supported explanation: Learners explain the process orally, discuss it with a peer, and then write a short response using sentence starters such as “L'eau s'évapore lorsque…” The teacher can assess scientific understanding separately from French-language accuracy. Language development remains an objective, but limited fluency does not automatically invalidate the learner's subject knowledge. UNHCR's Education Report 2024, covering the 2022–2023 academic year, reported average gross enrolment rates for refugee learners of 65% at primary level, 42% at secondary level, and 7% at tertiary level across the countries included in its reporting. These statistics illustrate the increasing difficulty of sustaining educational progression at higher levels. They do not isolate language as the cause, but they reinforce the need for receiving schools to address barriers that affect participation and progression. For the Yaoundé context, schools should collect their own data on language proficiency, classroom participation, and assessment performance rather than assume that all displaced Anglophone learners experience identical difficulties.

What Schools Should Do

- Identify learners' preferred languages and current proficiency in the school's language of instruction.
- Pre-teach unfamiliar academic vocabulary before introducing complex subject matter.
- Use diagrams, demonstrations, objects, maps, and worked examples.
- Permit bilingual glossaries or strategic peer explanation where compatible with school policy.
- Provide sentence starters, guided questions, and structured opportunities for oral participation.

- Track language development separately from subject-specific achievement where appropriate.
- Gradually remove scaffolding as learners gain confidence and competence.

Analytical implication: Language support is not an optional addition to curriculum delivery; it is one of the conditions that enables learners to access the curriculum. Properly designed scaffolding allows displaced learners to participate in mainstream lessons while developing the language skills needed for independent learning.

Theme Four: Multiple Assessment Methods Can Improve the Picture of Learning

Assessment is essential for determining whether learners have acquired the knowledge and skills prescribed by the curriculum. However, reliance on a single examination may provide an incomplete account of the learning of displaced students, particularly when they have experienced interrupted schooling, language transitions, missing academic records, or limited preparation opportunities. Diagnostic assessment establishes learners' starting points. Formative assessment monitors learning during instruction, while summative assessment evaluates achievement at the end of a unit, term, or course. Combining these approaches provides teachers with more comprehensive evidence of learning. This approach is consistent with Tyler's (1949) emphasis on evaluating the extent to which educational objectives have been achieved. It also supports the principle that curriculum decisions should be based on evidence of learning rather than assumptions about a learner's previous educational history.

Practical Example

A teacher in a receiving secondary school is assessing displaced learners' understanding of environmental conservation. Rather than relying exclusively on a written examination, the teacher collects evidence through four complementary methods.

Assessment method	Practical activity	Evidence obtained
Diagnostic	Short questions before the lesson	Prior knowledge and misconceptions
Formative	Oral questioning and exit tickets	Understanding during instruction
Performance-based	Group activity designing a waste-management plan	Application of knowledge
Summative	End-of-unit written test	Individual mastery of prescribed content

Suppose a learner performs poorly on the written test but produces a scientifically sound waste-management plan and answers oral questions correctly. The teacher investigates whether reading comprehension, language proficiency, or examination technique contributed to the low written score. The additional evidence informs subsequent instruction. However, if an official examination is required for certification, classroom activities cannot automatically replace it. UNHCR's 2023 global education reporting found that 51% of school-aged refugee children were not enrolled in education in 2022, based on the data reported in its 2023 reporting cycle. The report also identifies challenges in collecting consistent enrolment data as refugee learners enter national education systems. Although these figures measure access rather than assessment quality, they demonstrate the broader educational disruption that can complicate the interpretation of learners' academic histories. , UNICEF's reporting on its 2025 humanitarian response provides a more direct illustration of the value of monitoring learning. UNICEF reported that remediation in 98 schools was associated with 94% of low-performing learners improving their performance by more than 50%. This is a reported programme result and should be interpreted in the context of that intervention; it should not be generalized to every school or taken as proof that assessment alone produced the improvement.

What Schools Should Do

1. Use diagnostic tests to establish initial learning levels.

2. Incorporate short formative assessments into regular lessons.
3. Use practical tasks, oral explanations, projects, and portfolios where they fit the learning objectives.
4. Establish transparent procedures for reviewing incomplete or missing academic records.
5. Maintain the validity of official examinations and certification requirements.
6. Record progress over time rather than making decisions from a single test score.
7. Provide learners with feedback explaining what they have achieved and what they need to improve.

Analytical implication: Multiple assessment methods improve the evidence available for instructional decisions, but they must be aligned with learning objectives. The purpose is not to exempt displaced learners from academic standards; it is to distinguish actual subject mastery from difficulties arising from language, interrupted instruction, or the format of an assessment.

Theme Five: Teacher Support Affects the Implementation of Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation depends not only on the needs of displaced learners but also on teachers' professional knowledge, workload, available resources, and institutional support. Teachers may recognize that learners have different educational backgrounds but lack the training or time needed to design appropriate activities for each group. In classrooms containing both displaced and host-community learners, teachers may have to address differences in prior knowledge, language proficiency, attendance, and learning pace while completing the prescribed curriculum. Without appropriate support, curriculum adaptation may remain an educational policy objective rather than a consistent classroom practice.

The INEE Minimum Standards for Education emphasize the importance of supporting teachers, ensuring appropriate teaching and learning processes, and establishing effective education systems in emergency contexts. Tomlinson (2014) likewise emphasizes the importance of instructional approaches that respond to differences in learners' readiness and learning needs. Imagine a government secondary school in Yaoundé with 60 learners in a Form Two classroom, including displaced Anglophone learners who have experienced interruptions in their education. The mathematics teacher has limited instructional time and cannot prepare separate lessons for every learner. The school administration introduces a teacher-support arrangement with the following components.

Targeted professional development: Teachers attend practical workshops on diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, language scaffolding, and formative feedback.

Shared teaching resources: Teachers develop reusable worksheets, revision exercises, bilingual glossaries, and short assessments that can be adapted across classes.

Collaborative planning time: Subject teachers meet for 30 minutes each week to review learning evidence, identify common difficulties, and plan appropriate interventions.

Instructional monitoring: The head of department reviews assessment results, observes selected lessons, and helps teachers adjust their strategies. For example, if several teachers discover that displaced learners have difficulty solving algebraic equations because of gaps in foundational arithmetic, they can jointly develop a short bridging module. This reduces duplication of effort and ensures that learners receive more consistent support across subjects and classes.

Cameroon-specific evidence illustrates the scale of educational disruption and the corresponding demand for teacher support. UNICEF reported in September 2026 that, according to regional education authorities, 223,749 children were completely out of school and 2,463 schools were non-operational in the North-West and South-West regions. These figures relate to the conflict-affected regions, not specifically to displaced learners in Yaoundé, but they demonstrate the broader pressures affecting educational continuity in Cameroon.

UNICEF's 2025 humanitarian reporting also documented training for 644 teachers and temporary-learning-space facilitators as part of its education response in Cameroon. The same report described remediation support in 98 schools. These programme figures show that teacher capacity-building and remedial instruction are recognized components of educational responses to disruption. They do not, by themselves, establish the independent effect of teacher training on student achievement.

What Schools Should Do

- Provide in-service training in inclusive pedagogy and assessment.
- Organize regular subject-department meetings to discuss learners' progress.
- Develop a shared bank of low-cost teaching and assessment materials.
- Provide teachers with protected time for planning and reviewing results.
- Strengthen head teachers' capacity to monitor inclusion and instructional quality.
- Seek support from teacher-training institutions, education authorities, and relevant humanitarian education partners.
- Monitor teacher workload and class size when introducing additional responsibilities.

Teacher support is a necessary condition for sustainable curriculum adaptation. Even well-designed policies are unlikely to produce consistent results if teachers lack the skills, materials, time, and leadership support required to implement them. Investment in teacher capacity can also benefit host-community learners by strengthening the overall quality of classroom instruction.

Theme Six: Adaptation Should Promote Inclusion Rather Than Segregation

Curriculum adaptation should enable displaced learners to participate meaningfully in mainstream education while receiving support for their specific learning needs. Although separate remedial sessions can be useful, permanent separation may restrict access to the full curriculum, reduce opportunities for peer learning, and create negative perceptions about displaced learners' abilities. Inclusive education requires schools to recognize differences in learners' backgrounds without treating those differences as grounds for exclusion. Displaced learners should have access to the same educational opportunities as their peers, with appropriate adjustments to instructional methods, learning materials, and additional support. This principle is consistent with the broader commitment to equitable and inclusive education under Sustainable Development Goal 4 and with the INEE emphasis on safe, equitable, quality education during emergencies. A secondary school in Yaoundé admits 20 displaced learners into existing classes. Initial assessments indicate that eight learners need additional support in French-language comprehension and mathematics, while the others are ready to follow the grade-level curriculum.

The school considers two possible approaches.

Approach A: Permanent separation: All 20 learners are placed in a separate class for the entire school year, regardless of their individual competencies or progress. They follow a reduced curriculum and have limited opportunities to participate in mainstream lessons and school activities.

Potential consequence: unequal curriculum access, reduced interaction with peers, and a risk of delayed progression.

Approach B: Inclusive, targeted support: All learners attend mainstream classes. The eight learners who need additional support receive three supplementary sessions per week, focusing on identified competencies. Their progress is reviewed monthly, and the additional support is adjusted as their needs change. continued participation in the mainstream curriculum, targeted remediation, and stronger peer interaction.

Approach B is generally preferable when the school can provide the necessary support safely and effectively. However, temporary separate instruction may be appropriate for specific needs, provided that it has clear learning objectives, regular reviews, and a route back to full participation in mainstream activities. For example, a displaced learner struggling with French academic vocabulary could attend a short language-support session while continuing to study science, mathematics, and other subjects with classmates. As proficiency improves, the teacher can gradually reduce the additional scaffolding.

UNHCR's Education Report 2024 reported that 42% of refugee learners were enrolled in secondary education in the countries covered for the 2022–2023 academic year, compared with 65% at primary level. This gap highlights the challenges refugee learners face in progressing through the education system. While enrolment statistics do not directly measure segregation, they reinforce the importance of policies that preserve access to recognized educational pathways. Cameroon provides a further example of the potential value of supporting learners within and alongside formal education systems. UNICEF reported that its Accelerated Education Curriculum programme enabled 7,665 children to re-enter formal education in 2024. This demonstrates the practical importance of creating pathways back into recognized schooling rather than allowing temporary educational disruption to become permanent exclusion.

What Schools Should Do

1. Enrol displaced learners in age- and competency-appropriate mainstream classes in accordance with applicable admission and placement procedures.
2. Provide targeted remedial support based on assessed needs rather than displacement status alone.
3. Ensure that supplementary lessons do not systematically exclude learners from essential subjects.
4. Review additional support regularly and establish clear progression criteria.
5. Promote mixed-group activities, peer learning, sports, clubs, and other shared school experiences.
6. Monitor participation, attendance, progression, and achievement among displaced and host-community learners.
7. Address discrimination, bullying, and stigmatizing language through school policies and staff training.

Analytical implication: Inclusion does not mean providing identical instruction to every learner. It means ensuring that learners have equitable opportunities to achieve recognized educational outcomes. Curriculum adaptation should therefore provide additional support where necessary while preventing that support from becoming a permanent barrier to mainstream education

DISCUSSION

The analysis suggests that curriculum adaptation should be understood as a systematic process of aligning educational objectives, learning experiences, and assessment with learners' circumstances. It is not simply a reduction of content or a lowering of expectations. Rather, it involves identifying the essential learning outcomes and designing appropriate routes through which learners can achieve them.

A first implication concerns the relationship between standards and flexibility. National learning standards help ensure that displaced learners can progress toward recognized qualifications. Yet a common standard does not require identical pacing or identical support for every student. Schools can retain common objectives while varying the amount of scaffolding, the order in which some topics are revisited, and the time allocated to foundational learning.

A second implication concerns language. The transition between linguistic environments can affect access to curriculum content, especially where assessment relies heavily on written responses in the language of

instruction. Curriculum adaptation should therefore integrate language support into subject teaching while respecting official policies and the rights of learners.

A third implication concerns assessment. Diagnostic assessment can help schools avoid assumptions based on displacement status or incomplete records. Formative assessment can then guide ongoing adjustments. This requires teachers to use assessment as a tool for learning and curriculum improvement, not only as a mechanism for ranking students.

A fourth implication concerns governance and coordination. School-level adaptations should be consistent with national curriculum requirements and coordinated with education authorities. Humanitarian organizations can contribute learning materials, teacher support, and remedial programmes, but pathways back into formal education should remain clear.

Finally, the success of curriculum adaptation should be evaluated through learner outcomes and experiences, not simply through the existence of adapted materials or supplementary classes. Useful indicators include participation, attendance, foundational learning, grade progression, retention, and learners' perceptions of belonging and fairness.

Proposed Crisis-Responsive Curriculum Adaptation Framework

The following six-stage framework offers a practical way for receiving schools in Cameroon to respond to the educational needs of internally displaced learners. It is a conceptual model that should be piloted, monitored, and evaluated before being adopted as a formal intervention.

Diagram of the Six-Stage Framework



Stage 1: Assess educational needs: The receiving school identifies each displaced learner's educational background, current learning level, personal circumstances, and barriers to participation.

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The purpose is to understand the learner before deciding what support is needed. Displacement does not mean that a learner lacks ability; it may simply mean that their education has been interrupted.

Key Activities

- Register newly arrived learners and establish their previous school level.
- Identify interrupted schooling, missing records, and learning gaps.
- Assess reading, writing, numeracy, and language proficiency.
- Identify barriers such as poverty, disability, trauma, lack of uniforms, or inadequate learning materials.
- Consult learners and caregivers respectfully, protecting their privacy.



Concrete Example: A Displaced Learner in Yaoundé

A 12-year-old learner arrives at a receiving school after leaving the North-West Region. The learner attended school previously but missed eight months of lessons and has no school report. The teacher conducts an informal reading exercise, a basic mathematics activity, and a conversation about the learner's previous schooling. The assessment reveals that the learner can perform multiplication but struggles with reading comprehension and written English. **Expected outcome**: A learner profile identifying educational strengths, learning gaps, support needs, and appropriate entry-level learning activities. Why this stage matters: Without assessment, the school might place the learner in an unsuitable class or assume that the learner is academically weak simply because of missing records.

Stage 2: Identify essential competencies : Teachers identify the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities that displaced learners need to acquire to participate successfully in their current class and continue learning. Essential competencies should align with the relevant Cameroonian curriculum while accounting for the learner's actual level of achievement.

Key Activities:

- Identify priority competencies in literacy, numeracy, communication, and other subjects.
- Compare the learner's current abilities with expected class-level learning outcomes.
- Prioritise foundational skills where learning gaps are substantial.
- Establish clear, achievable learning objectives.

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Concrete Example: Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy

Following the assessment in Stage 1, the teacher identifies three immediate objectives for the learner:

- Read a short passage and identify its main idea.
- Write a coherent paragraph of five sentences.
- Solve multiplication and division problems accurately.

These objectives become the learner's initial learning priorities while the teacher continues teaching the broader class curriculum. Expected outcome: A short list of measurable learning objectives that guides lesson planning and progress monitoring. Why this stage matters: Identifying essential competencies prevents teachers from expecting displaced learners to catch up with every missed lesson simultaneously. It helps them focus on the skills that support future learning.

Stage 3: Plan differentiated support : Teachers develop appropriate teaching strategies and support measures according to learners' different abilities, experiences, languages, and learning needs. Differentiation does not mean creating an entirely separate curriculum for displaced learners. It means providing different routes to achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

Key Activities:

- Prepare additional exercises and catch-up lessons.
- Use visual aids, demonstrations, peer learning, and simplified instructions where appropriate.
- Provide language support for learners experiencing language difficulties.
- Arrange flexible grouping and additional learning time.
- Coordinate with school leaders, families, and relevant education or child-protection services when necessary.



Concrete Example: A Differentiated Learning Plan

A receiving school identifies three learners with different needs:

- Learner A needs extra reading practice.
- Learner B understands mathematics but needs help with English instructions.
- Learner C has a visual impairment and requires accessible learning materials.

The teacher arranges short reading sessions for Learner A, uses pictures and demonstrations for Learner B, and provides suitable large-print materials or other necessary accommodations for Learner C.

Expected outcome: A realistic support plan specifying each learner's goals, teaching strategies, resources, responsibilities, and review dates.

Why this stage matters: Equal treatment does not always produce equitable outcomes. Some learners need additional time, materials, or accommodations to have a fair opportunity to succeed.

Stage 4: Implement inclusive learning: The school puts the support plan into practice through classroom teaching, positive relationships, accessible learning activities, and participation for all learners. Inclusive learning requires more than enrolling displaced children. Learners must also feel safe, respected, accepted, and able to participate.

Key activities:

- Use cooperative learning and mixed-ability groups.
- Establish clear rules against bullying, discrimination, and stigmatisation.
- Use familiar examples from learners' communities and experiences.
- Encourage participation without forcing children to discuss traumatic experiences.

- Provide psychosocial support through appropriate school-based and referral services.
- Ensure that displaced learners participate in classroom activities, clubs, and other school opportunities.



Concrete Example: An Inclusive Mathematics Lesson

In a receiving school in the Centre Region, a teacher groups displaced and host-community learners together to solve a problem involving market prices and change. Learners explain their methods to one another, use counters when needed, and take turns presenting answers. The teacher ensures that no learner is mocked for a different accent, language, or learning speed. Expected outcome: A welcoming classroom in which displaced and non-displaced learners learn together, interact respectfully, and participate meaningfully. Why this stage matters: Inclusive teaching reduces isolation and discrimination, strengthens relationships between displaced learners and host communities, and supports a sense of belonging.

Stage 5: Monitor learning and provide feedback: Teachers regularly check whether learners are making progress toward the identified competencies and use the evidence to improve teaching. Monitoring should focus on learning growth rather than comparing displaced learners unfairly with classmates who have experienced uninterrupted schooling.

Key Activities:

- Conduct short quizzes, oral questions, reading exercises, and classroom observations.
- Maintain individual learning records.
- Provide specific, constructive feedback.
- Ask learners what they find difficult.
- Adjust teaching strategies when progress is slow.
- Share appropriate progress information with caregivers while respecting confidentiality.

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Concrete Example: Tracking Reading Progress

A learner initially reads 30 words correctly per minute from a suitable practice passage. After four weeks of targeted reading support, the learner reads 42 words correctly per minute and answers more comprehension questions accurately. The teacher acknowledges the improvement, identifies remaining difficulties with unfamiliar words, and plans further practice.

Expected outcome: Evidence of progress, timely identification of persistent difficulties, and actionable feedback for learners and teachers.

Why this stage matters: Regular monitoring helps teachers distinguish between a strategy that is working and one that needs adjustment. It also prevents learners from progressing through school without acquiring essential foundational skills.

Stage 6: Review and improve: Teachers and school leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the support provided and decide what should be maintained, changed, or strengthened.

This stage examines both learning outcomes and the conditions that make inclusive education possible.

Key activities:

- Review assessment records and individual progress.
- Evaluate attendance, participation, retention, and learners' sense of belonging.
- Consult displaced learners, host-community learners, caregivers, and teachers.
- Identify obstacles such as overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching materials, language barriers, and inadequate teacher preparation.
- Revise learning plans and allocate available resources more effectively.
- Document lessons learned for future implementation.

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Concrete Example: Improving a School Support Programme

After eight weeks, a receiving school finds that learners attending catch-up sessions have improved in mathematics, but some continue to struggle with reading because the sessions take place at the same time as other essential lessons. Teachers consult learners, change the timetable, introduce short daily reading activities, and review progress again after another period. ***Expected outcome:*** An improved and context-sensitive support programme, together with evidence that can inform a larger pilot study.

Why this stage matters: A support strategy should not be considered successful simply because it has been implemented. Its effectiveness must be examined, and necessary changes must be made.

Applying the Framework to the Cameroonian Context

For the framework to work in Cameroon, it should respond to the circumstances of both displaced learners and receiving schools.

Language and curriculum differences: Cameroon has English-speaking and French-speaking education subsystems, alongside many local languages. A learner moving between regions may need support with the language of instruction or curriculum differences. Schools should assess these needs individually and provide appropriate language scaffolding without treating multilingualism as a deficit.

Overcrowded classrooms and limited resources: Receiving schools may have limited space, textbooks, and teachers. Schools can explore peer learning, reusable learning materials, flexible grouping, and additional learning sessions where staffing and resources permit.

Psychosocial well-being and protection: Some learners may experience fear, grief, separation from family members, or distress linked to displacement. Teachers should create predictable, supportive classroom routines, recognise signs of distress, and follow appropriate child-protection and referral procedures.

Poverty and barriers to attendance: Transport costs, food insecurity, lack of uniforms, and the need to contribute to household income may interrupt attendance. Schools and education partners should identify barriers and connect families with available support, without making assistance conditional on a learner disclosing traumatic experiences.

How Can the Conceptual Framework Be Piloted and Evaluated?

Because the six-stage framework is a proposed conceptual model, it should be tested in a small number of receiving schools before wider adoption.

A possible pilot could involve selected schools in a host community in the Centre Region receiving learners displaced from the North-West or South-West. The pilot should be adapted to the needs and resources of the participating schools.

How Curriculum Adaptation Can Be Implemented at Different Levels in Cameroon

At classroom level: Teachers should identify learning gaps, use flexible teaching methods, provide remedial support, monitor progress, and encourage positive relationships among learners.

At school level: Head teachers and principals should develop procedures for welcoming displaced learners, reviewing educational records, coordinating teacher support, identifying resource shortages, and preventing discrimination.

School development plans should include the needs of displaced learners as well as those of disadvantaged children in host communities.

At the level of education authorities: The relevant ministries and regional and divisional education authorities can provide curriculum guidance, training, learning materials, assessment tools, and additional support for schools receiving large numbers of displaced learners.

They should also promote consistency between temporary or accelerated learning programmes and recognised national educational pathways.

At national policy level: The government can incorporate curriculum flexibility, crisis-sensitive teaching, and reintegration pathways into teacher education, curriculum guidance, school monitoring, and education-sector planning.

Cameroon's Education and Training Sector Strategy 2023–2030 already identifies crisis-responsive education, accelerated learning, distance learning, psychosocial support, and community involvement as relevant areas for action. These priorities provide a policy basis for developing practical curriculum adaptation guidance.

An Implementation Plan for a School Receiving Internally Displaced Learners

The following example outlines a possible six-month pilot programme.

Period	Main activity	Responsible actors	Evidence of progress
Month 1	Identify learners and assess educational needs.	School leaders and teachers	Confidential learner profiles and baseline assessments.
Month 2	Identify curriculum gaps and prepare adaptation plans.	Teachers and pedagogical supervisors	Subject-specific catch-up plans.
Months 2–3	Train teachers and organise learning resources.	Education authorities and school leaders	Training records and available materials.
Months 3–4	Deliver adapted lessons and additional support.	Teachers and school support personnel	Lesson records, attendance, and formative assessments.
Month 5	Review learner progress and gather family feedback.	Teachers, families, and school leaders	Progress reports and feedback records.
Month 6	Evaluate the pilot and revise support measures.	School leaders and relevant education authorities	Evaluation report and improvement plan.

The plan should be adapted to the school's resources, learners' needs, the security situation, and the relevant education authorities' requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Curriculum Developers and Education Authorities

- **Develop crisis-responsive curriculum guidance.** Provide clear guidance on adapting content, sequencing, pacing, language support, and assessment for learners affected by displacement.
- **Identify essential competencies.** Make prerequisite knowledge and core learning outcomes clear so teachers can plan structured catch-up support.
- **Establish prior-learning recognition procedures.** Create transparent approaches to placement and recognition when school records are incomplete, consistent with national regulations.
- **Coordinate adaptations with national standards.** Review supplementary materials and programmes so that they support recognized progression and do not create disconnected parallel systems.

For Schools and Teachers

- **Use diagnostic assessment.** Identify learners' competencies and needs before deciding on placement or additional support.
- **Adopt flexible but purposeful pacing.** Use bridging lessons, revision, differentiated tasks, and clear learning milestones.
- **Strengthen language-sensitive teaching.** Use vocabulary previews, visual materials, scaffolded explanations, peer learning, and supplementary language support where appropriate.
- **Use varied assessment methods.** Combine continuous assessment, practical tasks, oral explanations, portfolios, and formal examinations in ways consistent with official requirements.

For Teacher Professional Development

- **Train teachers in curriculum adaptation.** Include diagnostic assessment, inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction, language scaffolding, formative assessment, and learning recovery.
- **Create collaborative planning opportunities.** Enable teachers to share resources, review learner progress, and coordinate interventions for students who need additional support.

For Government, Humanitarian Organizations, and Communities

- **Improve access to learning materials.** Provide textbooks, supplementary resources, accessible materials, and teaching aids to receiving schools.
- **Support displaced and host-community learners.** Strengthen receiving schools so that support reduces disadvantage without creating perceptions of exclusion or unfairness.
- **Involve learners and families.** Consult students, parents, and host communities about language needs, previous schooling, and barriers to participation.
- **Monitor educational outcomes.** Track attendance, participation, foundational literacy and numeracy, learning progress, progression, retention, and learner perceptions of inclusion.
- **Protect dignity and wellbeing.** Maintain confidentiality, prevent discrimination, and establish appropriate referral arrangements for learners requiring additional psychosocial support.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

At policy level, the proposed framework highlights the need to connect curriculum standards with flexible learning recovery. At school level, it underscores the importance of diagnostic assessment, differentiated teaching, and regular review. For teacher education, it suggests that curriculum adaptation should be part of both initial preparation and in-service training.

Future research should document how receiving schools in Yaoundé and other communities currently respond to displaced learners. Comparative studies could examine schools with structured bridging programmes and schools that rely primarily on regular classroom instruction. Such studies should avoid assuming that

differences in outcomes are caused by adaptation alone; they should account for prior learning, school resources, household circumstances, and the duration of educational interruption.

Longitudinal studies could investigate whether particular adaptations are associated with changes in foundational learning, attendance, retention, grade progression, and learners' sense of inclusion. Learner perspectives are especially important because they can reveal whether curriculum content feels accessible, whether assessment is perceived as fair, and whether additional support helps students participate without stigma.

Research should also examine the feasibility and cost of different adaptations. For example, language support may require additional materials or teacher training, while flexible pacing may require adjustments to timetables and assessment schedules. Evidence about implementation costs and practical constraints would help education authorities determine which approaches can be scaled sustainably.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum adaptation is an important strategy for promoting inclusive and equitable education for internally displaced learners in Cameroon. Conflict and displacement can interrupt schooling, create learning gaps, complicate transitions between instructional languages, and limit opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. These challenges raise questions about whether conventional curriculum implementation adequately reflects the diverse educational experiences of displaced students. Curriculum adaptation for internally displaced learners is an important approach to promoting inclusive and equitable education in Cameroon. It responds to the educational consequences of displacement by helping learners overcome interrupted schooling, differences in curriculum coverage, language barriers, inadequate learning materials, and other difficulties that may prevent them from succeeding. In Cameroon, curriculum adaptation can be implemented through diagnostic assessment, bridging lessons, differentiated teaching, flexible pacing, psychosocial support, accessible materials, and appropriate assessment procedures. These measures should be integrated with the national curriculum and supported by teachers, school administrators, education authorities, parents, and relevant partners. The literature reviewed in this article supports an approach that combines diagnostic assessment, identification of essential competencies, flexible instructional pacing, language-sensitive teaching, differentiated learning experiences, and continuous assessment. These measures require support from teacher professional development, accessible materials, school leadership, family participation, and coordination with education authorities.

The proposed crisis-responsive curriculum adaptation framework offers a conceptual basis for strengthening educational continuity in receiving schools. Its effectiveness in Cameroon remains to be established through empirical research. Future studies should document existing practices, identify implementation barriers, and assess the relationship between curriculum adaptations and learner outcomes.

Equitable education does not require abandoning common educational standards. It requires appropriate pathways through which learners with different educational experiences can achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Embedding flexibility, inclusion, and evidence-informed decision-making into curriculum development can strengthen the capacity of Cameroon’s education system to respond to displacement while supporting both displaced learners and their host communities.

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