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MBOSCUDA: Census report 2004/2005

INTRODUCTION

The population of the Mbororo people of the North West Province in 2002 was estimated to be 80,000 people (Hickey 2002). If the Cameroon population growth rate of 2.2% is used to calculate the population increase three years after, it is estimated to be about 85,280 Mbororo people in the province in the year 2005 out of the total population of 2,041,030 in the North West Province as provided by the North West Provincial Service of Statistics and National Accounts for the year 2005.

During the creation of MBOSCUA about thirteen years ago (1992) one of the key objectives was to mobilize, sensitize and support the enrollment/scholarization of Mbororo youths. At that time, it was clearly recognized that some of the key problems affecting Mbororo'en (Singular: Mbororo) were directly linked to their not acquiring the western education and good Islamic knowledge. There was no base line information available or taken at that time about the actual scholarization rate of the Mbororo people of the North West Province. However, in the past thirteen years MBOSCUA and its partners have invested much time and resources in the area of education. That is why MBOSCUA branch of the North West Province deemed it absolutely necessary to carry out the census to determine the actual number of Mbororo'en schooling from the nursery school right up to the university level who are of the North West Province origin. Also some data was collected on the actual enrolment of the non-Mbororo'en in each learning institution in the province during the 2004/ 2005 academic year and the bulk of the information was provided by the supervisory services of the institutions in the province. The literate Mbororo'en of the North West origin who have at least finished the primary school were also enlisted in order to have an idea of the literacy situation of the Mbororo'en in the Province. The First School-Leaving Certificate (F.S.L.C) was used as baseline for literate people because it is the first certificate recognized by the State. Moreover, engaging any other process to actually determine who can read and write in the Mbororo society will be too cumbersome and costly to carry out.

The census exercise was carried out in eleven months (November 2004 to September 2005) by a volunteer consultant with the assistance of MBOSCUA staff especially the paralegal officers who effectively coordinated the census in their various divisions. The management of MBOSCUA North West Province sponsored and supervised all the activities related to carrying out the census in all the learning institutions in the North West Province and universities out of the Province.

METHODOLOGY

The approach and method engaged to carry out any piece of work also determines the accuracy and the value of the result obtained. The following steps were applied to carry out the census in

determining the actual scholarization/enrollment rate and literacy situation of the Mbororo'en of the North West Province.

- 1) Contact was made and authorizations sought from all supervisory authorities incharge of educational institutions in the North West Province.
- 2) An inventory of all educational institutions (from nursery to university) in the Province was made in order to get the actual number and detail identity of each institution.
- 3) An inventory was also made of universities in other Provinces where Mbororo youths from the North West Province are studying. One thousand nine hundred and thirty seven (1937) educational institutions (from nursery to university) in and out of the Province were identified and visited.
- 4) Detailed information or data collection sheets were established that were used to record information about each institution and pupil or student. The paralegal officers and others concerned with collection of the information were schooled on how to approach the institutions and collect the required information. In order to ease the work, each officer was given a list of the educational institutions in his Division and a copy of an authorization letter from the Provincial Delegate of National Education for the North West Province that supervises the bulk of the institutions. The university students in the institutions did the census in universities out of the Province.
- 5) Each school was visited and an information sheet filled even if there was no Mbororo pupil or student found in the institution. This ensured that all schools have been visited and even schools not found in the master lists provided by the supervisory government and private services were noted and visited. The data collected included the name of the division, subdivision, school and type, the pupil/student's names, age, sex and class. A question was also asked if the pupil/student is studying or has finished Arabic studies. Some questions were asked to have an idea of accessibility of the pupil/student to the learning institutions but the majority of people who filled the data sheets ignored them.
- 6) Each data sheet and each name were verified to ensure that each school or institution has been visited and that the names on the lists are those of Mbororo'en. If there was doubt, cross checking was done by visiting the institution or discussing with the paralegal officer responsible to verify the authenticity of the information recorded.
- 7) Each Mbororo community visited also provided the names of Mbororo'en who have at least finished the primary school.
- 8) Most of the work was carried out by Mbororo youths in each locality who knows the community and territory and could easily identify who is a Mbororo.

- 9) The total enrollment figures in all institutions for the non-Mbororo'en in the province were also obtained from the supervisory services and some times from the institutions themselves.

RESULTS OF CENSUS

Results from the census reveal that the total enrollment of Mbororo'en in all identified educational institutions is 12,751 out of the 85,280 Mbororo'en in the North West Province. That of the non-Mbororo'en in the province amounted to 442,345 giving a total of 455,096 for the entire province with a total population of 2,041,030 people. Also, the recorded number of Mbororo'en in and out of the North West Province with at least the First School-Leaving Certificate numbered 889 persons.

The following table shows detail information on the enrolment by sex per institution and per subdivision. Also contained in the table are the total enrolment by sex per institution, total enrolment per institution and the percentage enrolment per institution. Finally the total enrolment figure and the over all enrolment percentage is also indicated.

Table 1: Enrollment of pupils and students in all subdivisions of the North West Province.

Div.	Sub Div	Arabic School		Nursery School		Primary School		Sec/High School		Coop. College		Tech. College		Agric. School		Teacher Training		Comm. D e v.		Univers- sity		Vet. School		Nursing School		Total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mezam	Tubah	97	68	11	22	204	72	35	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	0	0	0	540
	Bafut	16	9	0	0	47	36	16	7	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	138
	Bali	81	51	0	0	132	113	14	6	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	403
	Nyonga																									
	Bamenda	87	80	3	9	170	128	35	42	0	0	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	570
	Santa	103	88	0	1	259	169	4	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	633
Ngoketu- njia	Ndop	63	27	0	1	113	75	14	1	0	0	5	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	302	
	Babessi	88	42	0	0	94	45	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	274	
	Bali	15	12	0	0	165	122	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	315	
	Kumbat																									
Bui	Oku	7	8	0	0	25	33	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	
	Mbvem	66	56	9	0	116	82	9	9	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	361	
	Noni	58	49	0	8	150	109	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	374	
	Kumbo	113	80	2	1	250	194	36	13	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	692	
	Jakiri	122	73	0	1	218	127	16	4	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	575	
Donga/ Mantung	Nkambe	224	115	0	0	434	223	50	14	0	0	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1089	
	Ako	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	
	Ndu	127	65	0	0	200	109	30	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	536	
	Mesaje	119	92	0	0	228	168	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	620	
	Nwa	141	124	0	0	298	232	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	811	

Boyo		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Total
	Belo	41	3	0	0	56	46	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	160

Fig. 1: Enrollment by Educational Level

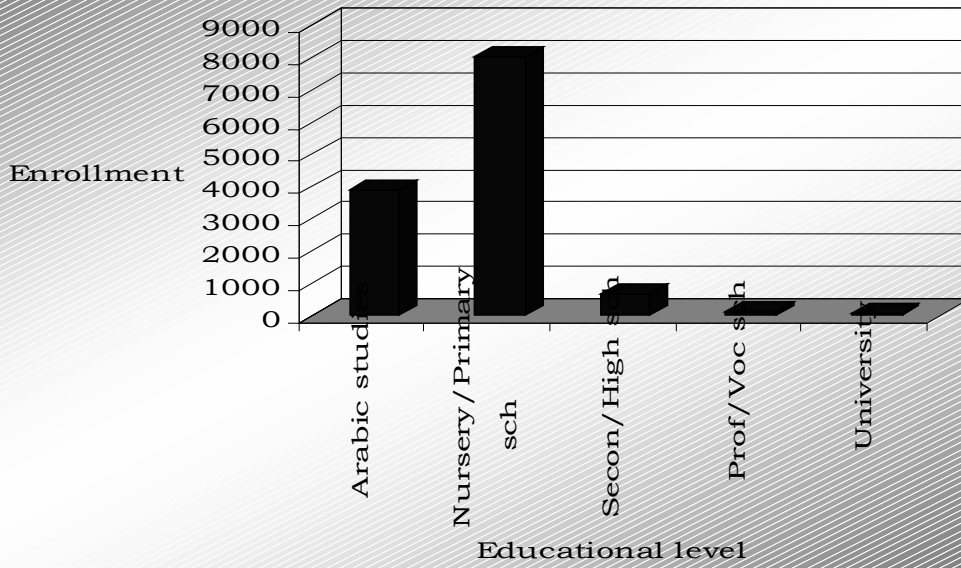
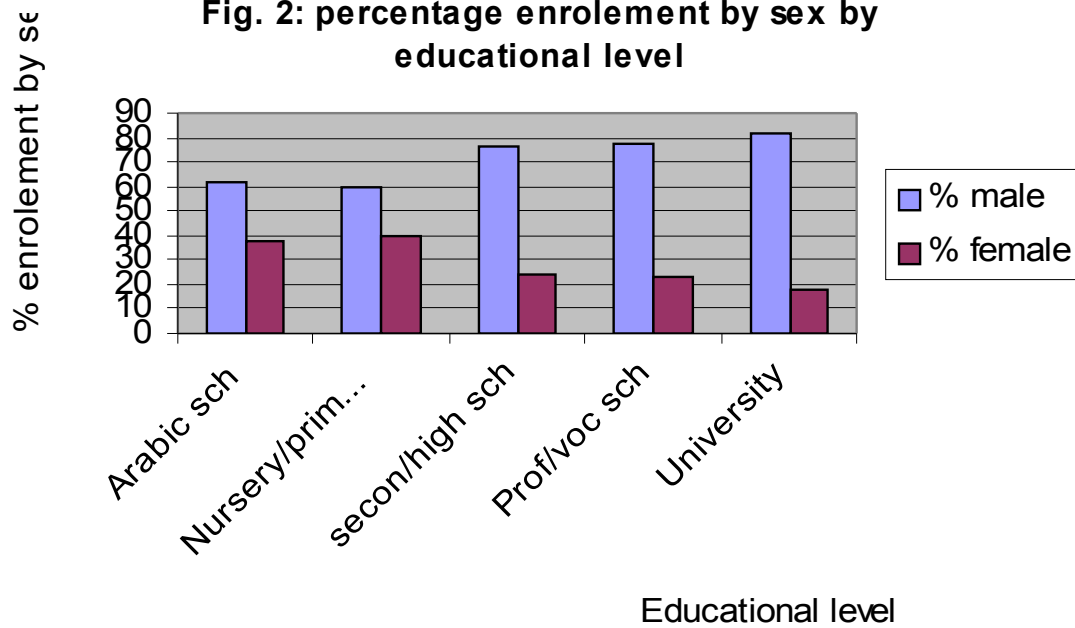


Fig. 2: percentage enrolment by sex by educational level



DISCUSSIONS

The recorded total number of Mbororo pupils and students of the North West Province enrolled in learning institutions is 12,751, that is 7,921 males and 4,830 females giving an enrollment rate of 15% of an estimated population of 85,280 Mbororo in the Province (tables1&3). The results shows that the girl child (38% enrollment rate) is not given the same opportunity as the male child in the Mbororo society as education is concerned including in Arabic studies (fig. 2). Table 1 and figure 1 reveal that the first three schools with the highest rates of enrollment are primary schools with 7,976 pupils making a percentage of 9.35% followed by Arabic studies with 3,916 students and pupils giving 4.60% and the third is secondary/high schools with 657 students giving 0.77%. Also the technical schools have an enrollment of 84 students giving 0.10% while the veterinary and nursing schools have just 4 students each giving 0.01% respectively. There was no Mbororo student enrolled in the lone cooperative college, the two agricultural institutions and the only community Development College in the Province (table1). The twelve teacher training colleges had just one student giving 0.001%. The enrollment in the nursery schools came up to 70 pupils giving 0.08% and the universities in and out of the province had just 39 students representing just 0.05%. Table 2 shows the actual subject or field of specialization in the universities by the Mbororo male and female youths from the North West Province. It is also interesting to note the very low level of the female enrollment at the different educational levels (figure 2) as well as their subjects of specialization (table 2) as compared to their male counterparts. This amongst other reasons is due to the fact that scholarization rate for female children at the lower educational level, which determines the entry into professional/university education is very low. Another reason for the very low scholarisation rate of the females is their high level of marginalization especially due to cultural and religious barriers as far as the education of children is concerned.

Subject/Field of specialization	Male(s)	Female(s)
Social welfare studies	0	1
Law	8	4
Sociology	2	1
Economics	3	0
Geography	4	0
Management studies	4	0
Human medicine	2	0
Political science	3	0
Environmental studies (Forestry)	1	0
History	1	1
Philosophy	1	0
Languages (English and French)	1	1
Journalism	1	0
TOTAL	31	8

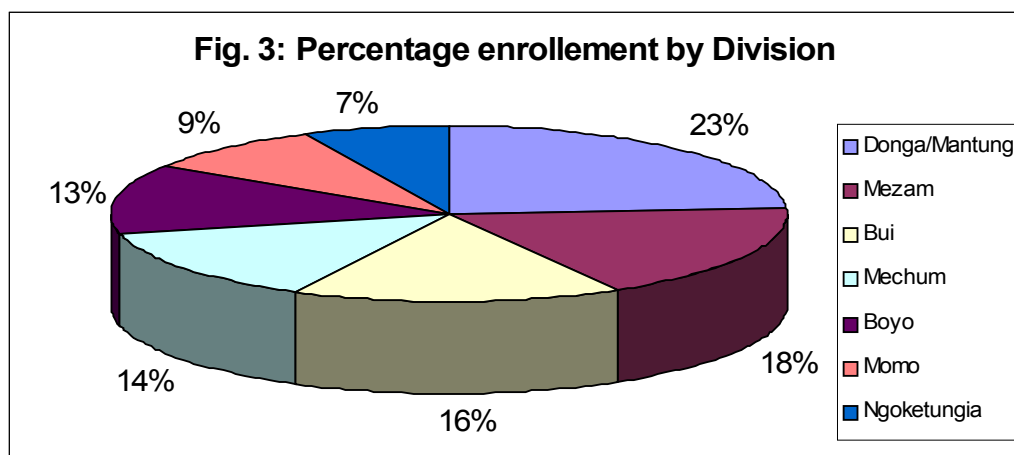
Table 2: - Actual subjects or fields of specialization in universities by Mbororo students.

NB: One Northwest Mbororo youth studying in Nigeria and two in South Africa were counted.

Even though Mbororo people are settled in all the seven divisions of the North West Province, the enrollment rate in some divisions and subdivisions is relatively low when compared with others. However, the divisions with the highest enrollment also seem to be those where MBOSCUDA activities have been highly concentrated for long. Table 3 and figure 3 show the enrollment and the rates in each of the seven divisions of the North West Province starting with the highest in all institutions listed in table 1.

DIVISION	FEMALE ENROLLMENT	MALE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	PERCENTAGE ENROLLMENT/DIVISION %
Donga/Mantung	1154	1896	3,050	23.9
Mezam	939	1346	2,285	17.9
Bui	851	1226	2,077	16.3
Menchum	505	1228	1,733	13.6
Boyo	582	1044	1,626	12.8
Momo	472	616	1,088	8.5
Ngoketungia	327	565	892	7.0
TOTAL	4834	7921	12,751	100

Table 3: - Total enrollment and rate per division.



The marginalization and low education rate of the Mbororo society in general and that of the North West Province in particular especially at a higher level are caused by many factors. Some of these factors amongst others are unavailability and inaccessibility of learning institutions, cultural/religious barriers, financial and economic limitations as well as the Mbororo population size. However, the role of MBOSCUDA could not be rolled out in bringing the scholarization rate to what it is today as revealed by the census results. Infact, the organization since its creation, has mobilized and sensitized the Mbororo community on the importance of education, built schools, provided didactic materials to schools in their communities and also granted scholarship to many Mbororo youths in the different educational institutions. MBOSCUDA is doing this to enhance good western and Islamic education by the majority of the Mbororo people. The census results clearly demonstrate that Mbororo educational level will leave them in a very weak, vulnerable and marginalized position politically, intellectually and otherwise for a long time if urgent steps are not taken to address the situation (see fig. 1). The present low intellectual situation and position greatly slows their development and rate of integration with the mainstream Cameroon society.

Apart from the total number of Mbororo'en currently enrolled in the different educational institutions, the study also reveals that there are about 889 Mbororo'en who are no more schooling but who have at least the F.S.L.C. and are presently found in different domains of life. This figure could also indicate that the enrollment rate of the Mbororo'en some years back was far less than what we have today.

From the results above, it can also notice that the total enrollment of the Mbororo'en in the North West province constitutes just about 3% of the total enrollment in the province. This percentage seems to be very small but could be justified by the fact that these people make up just about 4% of the total population of the province. This therefore explains why the non-Mbororos who make up more than 90% of the total population of the province, account for up to 97% of the total enrollment in the same province.

CONCLUSIONS

The result of the census exercise for Mbororo pupils/students scholarisation of Northwest origin has clearly shown the position of the Mbororo people and their community vis- a- vis

education as compared to the mainstream society in the North West Province. The enrollment/educational situation of the Mbororo people as indicated by the census is a contributing factor to their present vulnerable and marginalized state and is a cause for concern. Therefore, in order to remedy this situation and improve on the literacy situation of the Mbororo society, the Cameroon State, the Mbororo people, MBOSCUDA and other interested parties have to put in more efforts and resources to encourage the Mbororo people to increase the enrollment rate into the educational institutions especially at the secondary, technical, professional and the university levels in a more sustainable manner. If this is done, it will subsequently increase the percentage enrollment of the Mbororo' en in the N.W.P. thus, reducing the wide gap between the Mbororo' en and the non-Mbororos in the province. The girl child education is equally a cause for concern. Indeed, these census results will give policy makers, MBOSCUDA and other stakeholders in the educational process for development, the opportunity to draw up and review the educational and other development policies and strategies to foster education for the marginalized and vulnerable communities.

It is also a good opportunity for the association to share concrete and valuable information with its partners especially those that have demonstrated interest and supported in the area of education, which have also contributed to bringing the enrollment rate to its present level as demonstrated by these census results. It is also important that MBOCUDA notes and meticulously investigate the reasons why the enrollment rate is comparatively very low and come out with strategies to address the situation in a realistic and sustainable way.