



The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon: Education in Emergencies in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon

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Abstract

The protracted Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has generated a complex education emergency in the North West and South West Regions, where insecurity, school closures, attacks on education, displacement, teacher shortages, learning loss and psychosocial distress continue to affect children's right to education. The study identified major educational needs generated by the conflict; assessed the nature and responsiveness of education in emergency (EiE) interventions; and analysed challenges affecting their accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. A qualitative documentary research design was adopted, drawing on peer-reviewed studies, humanitarian situation reports, policy documents and programme evidence from credible academic and institutional sources. The documents were analysed thematically, with interpretation informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, social-ecological Resilience Theory and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (Bowen, 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; OECD, 2019; Ungar, 2011). Findings indicate substantial needs for safe educational access, continuity of learning, remedial and accelerated education, teachers, learning infrastructure and materials, psychosocial support, gender-responsive services, disability inclusion and legal identity. EiE responses include Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS), community and neighbourhood learning, radio education, remedial programmes, MHPSS, inclusive education, menstrual-health support, teacher development and emerging digital-learning interventions, although programme coverage remains considerably below the scale of need (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2025a, 2026a). The study proposes an Integrated Education in Emergencies and Educational Resilience Framework organised around the pathway Emergency Access → Continuity of Learning → Learning Recovery → Formal-School Reintegration → Educational Resilience → Sustainable Formal Education, with the ultimate outcomes of Access + Safety + Learning + Wellbeing + Resilience (UNICEF, 2026a; Ungar, 2011).

Keywords:

Anglophone crisis, Cameroon, Education in Emergencies, educational resilience, Temporary Learning Spaces, learning recovery, North West Region, South West Region.

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that equips children with knowledge, social skills, psychological well-being and opportunities to participate meaningfully in society. Armed conflict threatens this role by damaging schools, displacing communities, creating insecurity, reducing the teaching workforce, worsening economic hardship and exposing educational institutions to deliberate attacks. Education in Emergencies has consequently developed as a field concerned with ensuring safe, equitable and relevant learning opportunities for populations affected by conflict, disaster and displacement while simultaneously supporting protection, wellbeing and recovery (Burde et al., 2017; INEE, 2024; Sinclair, 2002). EiE therefore extends beyond simply reopening classrooms because children affected by prolonged crises may require alternative learning spaces, flexible delivery systems, remedial education, psychosocial support and protection mechanisms before sustainable formal schooling becomes possible. Education can also provide routine, social interaction and hope during periods in which children's wider environments have become unpredictable and unsafe (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Winthrop & Kirk, 2008). Understanding education during crisis therefore requires attention to access, learning, protection, wellbeing, inclusion and institutional resilience simultaneously (INEE, 2024).

Cameroon's Anglophone crisis provides a particularly important context for examining these relationships because education occupies a complex position within both the origins and consequences of the conflict. Cameroon inherited distinct English- and French-speaking legal, administrative and educational traditions from British and French colonial rule, and the constitutional arrangements following reunification in 1961 were intended to accommodate these differences within a federal structure. The replacement of federalism with a unitary system in 1972 became an important component of subsequent Anglophone grievances concerning political centralisation, identity and institutional autonomy (Beseng et al., 2023; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). Education became particularly significant because Anglophone actors perceived elements of the English-speaking educational tradition as central to their historical and cultural identity (Ndille, 2018). More recent analysis of curricula and textbooks similarly demonstrates that language ideology, bilingualism and national identity remain contested within Cameroon's educational discourse (Fabo & Russell, 2025). Education therefore constituted part of the historical context from which the crisis emerged before subsequently becoming one of the sectors most seriously disrupted by violence.

The immediate crisis intensified in 2016 when lawyers and teachers organised protests concerning perceived erosion of Anglophone legal and educational institutions, including deployment practices and language-related concerns. State responses to the protests and the subsequent radicalisation of political demands contributed to the transition from professional mobilisation to a broader political conflict and, by 2017, armed confrontation involving state security forces and separatist armed groups (Beseng et al., 2023; Pommerolle & De Marie Heungoup, 2017). It is analytically important to distinguish the original teachers' strike from the prolonged school boycotts and coercive restrictions that developed during the armed conflict, because these represent different phases of educational contestation. As violence intensified, schools, learners and teachers faced growing threats, attacks, abductions and displacement, reducing access to education in many affected communities (Agbor et al., 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2021). Education thus shifted from a source of political grievance to a major humanitarian and protection concern.

The prolonged disruption shows that conventional school reopening measures are inadequate. In 2024, 41% of schools in the North West and South West Regions were non-operational, while about 75% of school-aged children attended school, often in difficult and overcrowded conditions (UNICEF, 2025a). The apparent coexistence of high school non-functionality and substantial attendance reflects concentration of learners in functioning schools and alternative educational arrangements rather than a contradiction. By the first quarter of 2025, 2,460 primary and secondary schools remained closed because of insecurity, leaving approximately 223,000 children without educational access, while humanitarian actors continued to provide formal and non-formal opportunities to some affected learners (UNICEF, 2025b). Such evidence demonstrates both continuing disruption and significant efforts by families, communities, teachers and humanitarian actors to preserve education. It also raises questions concerning whether available interventions sufficiently address the magnitude and complexity of educational need.

Against this background, the present study examines EiE in the North West and South West Regions through an integrated analysis of educational needs, interventions and implementation challenges. Rather than treating emergency education as a collection of isolated humanitarian projects, the study conceptualises it as a pathway connecting immediate educational protection with continuity, learning recovery, reintegration and longer-term educational resilience. This approach reflects contemporary EiE standards that connect preparedness, response and recovery while emphasising safe access, teaching quality, community participation, inclusion and institutional coordination (INEE, 2024). It also recognises that humanitarian educational programmes cannot permanently substitute for a functioning formal education system. The study therefore contributes an integrated framework for understanding how emergency interventions can progressively support sustainable educational recovery within a protracted conflict environment.

2. Background to the Study

2.1 Historical Background of the Anglophone Crisis

The current Anglophone crisis is rooted in Cameroon's colonial history and subsequent political developments. The current Anglophone crisis is rooted in Cameroon's colonial history and subsequent political developments. Following the defeat of Germany during the First World War, the former German colony of Kamerun was divided between France and Britain, producing territories that subsequently developed under different administrative, legal, linguistic and educational traditions. British Southern Cameroons developed educational institutions influenced by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, whereas French Cameroun developed within a Francophone administrative and educational system. Reunification in 1961 brought these different systems together within the Federal Republic of Cameroon, with West Cameroon retaining significant institutional distinctiveness (Beseng et al., 2023; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). The federal arrangement was replaced by a unitary state in 1972, and subsequent centralisation contributed to perceptions among many Anglophones that the institutions inherited from British Southern Cameroons were progressively being weakened. These historical developments underpin what became widely described as the Anglophone problem (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997).

Education assumed particular importance because schooling became closely associated with Anglophone identity and institutional autonomy. Ndille (2018) demonstrates that the

transformation of the history curriculum within the Anglophone subsystem has involved continuing efforts to protect educational identity while responding to national curriculum requirements. Such concerns were not restricted to curriculum content but extended to language, examinations, teacher preparation, school administration and broader perceptions of the distinctiveness of the English-speaking educational tradition. Fabo and Russell's (2025) analysis of one policy document, 13 curricula and 27 textbooks further demonstrates that language ideologies and representations of national unity remain uneven across Anglophone and Francophone educational materials. Education was therefore not merely a service delivered within the Anglophone regions but an institution through which identity, language and belonging were negotiated. This helps explain why educational grievances became prominent during the protests that preceded armed conflict.

2.2 Teachers' and Lawyers' Protests and Escalation of the Crisis

The 2016 protests represented a critical transition between longstanding grievances and contemporary armed conflict. Lawyers protested against practices perceived as undermining the Common Law tradition, while teachers raised concerns about the deployment of French-speaking teachers and the perceived erosion of the Anglophone educational subsystem. These initially professional grievances became connected to broader demands concerning governance, federalism and Anglophone political identity following confrontation between protesters and state authorities (Beseng et al., 2023; Pommerolle & De Marie Heungoup, 2017). The subsequent escalation demonstrates how sector-specific institutional grievances can become embedded within wider political conflicts when actors perceive them as manifestations of deeper structural inequalities. By 2017, armed separatist mobilisation and military responses had transformed the political crisis into sustained armed confrontation (Beseng et al., 2023). Education subsequently became both a symbolic and practical arena within that confrontation.

The educational consequences of this transformation have been extensive. Human Rights Watch (2021) documented attacks on learners, teachers and schools by separatist armed groups, while broader investigations have also documented abuses against civilians by state security forces within the conflict environment. Agbor et al. (2022), using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design involving 19 qualitative participants followed by 652 teachers, found that armed conflict significantly disrupted attendance, content delivery, safety, discipline and assessment in operational schools. Yenika (2024), drawing on 220 returned questionnaires from 300 distributed in the North West Region, similarly reported declining enrolment and increased dropout associated with the crisis. These findings demonstrate that educational disruption involves both outright exclusion where schools cease operating and deterioration of educational quality where schools remain open. The resulting situation requires interventions that respond simultaneously to access, safety, learning and recovery.

3. Conceptualising Education in Emergencies

Education in Emergencies involves providing learning opportunities to people affected by armed conflict, displacement, natural disasters and other crises. It recognises learners' continued right to quality education during preparedness, response and recovery, with emphasis on safe, inclusive and relevant learning that responds to changing circumstances (INEE, 2024). Education in Emergencies may involve formal schooling, Temporary Learning Spaces, community-based learning, accelerated programmes, radio instruction and digital education, depending on the context. Effective responses require planning during and beyond emergencies

(Sinclair, 2002), as interventions can improve access, learning and protection outcomes (Burde et al., 2017). Education in Emergencies therefore extends beyond temporary classrooms to support educational protection, continuity and recovery.

3.1 Continuity of Learning

Continuity of learning concerns maintaining children's connection to structured educational opportunities when conventional schooling is interrupted. In the Anglophone regions, insecurity has affected attendance, teaching, assessment and school functionality, making continuity dependent on flexible modalities capable of operating under changing conditions (Agbor et al., 2022; Yenika, 2024). Temporary Learning Spaces, community learning and radio-supported instruction allow education to continue where conventional schools are inaccessible, while accelerated and remedial programmes can address competencies missed during interruption (UNICEF, 2025c, 2026a). Continuity should therefore not be measured simply by whether children remain enrolled but by whether they continue receiving meaningful opportunities to acquire and recover learning. The appropriate pathway is consequently emergency access → continuity → competency recovery → reintegration → progression.

3.2 Education as Protection

Education during conflict can provide important protective benefits when learning environments themselves are safe. Structured educational settings may offer adult supervision, predictable routines, peer relationships, access to information and links to child-protection and referral systems, thereby reducing some vulnerabilities associated with prolonged exclusion (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). Burde et al. (2017) similarly show that education in conflict settings can contribute to protection alongside academic outcomes. In Cameroon, however, this protective function depends on preventing attacks, intimidation and unsafe travel because schools themselves have sometimes become sites of insecurity (Human Rights Watch, 2021; UNICEF, 2025a). Education should therefore be integrated with safeguarding, psychosocial support, community risk assessment and referral mechanisms. Protection is not an automatic consequence of school attendance; it depends on the safety and quality of the educational environment.

3.3 Psychosocial Stability

Armed conflict affects learning not only through physical interruption but also through its psychological consequences. Children exposed to violence, displacement, fear and prolonged uncertainty may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties that affect concentration, relationships, motivation and classroom participation. A 2026 study involving 85 children aged 6–17 years in Bafanji, North West Region, identified trauma-related arousal, negative thoughts and feelings, emotional symptoms, conduct difficulties, hyperactivity and peer problems among participants (Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). EiE programmes therefore increasingly integrate structured play, supportive routines, life skills, peer interaction, psychological first aid and referral mechanisms into learning environments (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2026b). Psychosocial stability should consequently be treated as a condition supporting effective learning rather than as an optional activity delivered separately from education.

3.4 Social Development, Hope and Future Orientation

Education also supports social development by restoring opportunities for cooperation, peer interaction, communication and participation in organised community life. Winthrop and Kirk

(2008) argue that education in conflict settings can contribute to children's social and emotional development when schools provide supportive environments, while Burde et al. (2017) demonstrate that the value of education during emergencies extends beyond academic outcomes. In the Anglophone context, prolonged exclusion can disconnect children from peers, teachers and recognised pathways into adulthood, whereas re-engagement through TLS and community learning can restore routine and future orientation (UNICEF, 2026a). However, education should not automatically be equated with peacebuilding because educational systems can also reproduce contested identities and inequalities if curriculum, language and governance remain insensitive to conflict dynamics (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Fabo & Russell, 2025). Hope and social development therefore depend upon both access to education and the inclusiveness of the education provided.

4. Statement of the Problem

The Anglophone crisis has persisted for years, transforming educational disruption from a short-term emergency into a protracted structural challenge. Despite continued efforts by government institutions, communities, humanitarian organisations and education partners, large numbers of schools have remained non-operational and many children continue to experience interrupted or inadequate education. In 2024, 41% of schools in the North West and South West Regions were non-operational, with 43 attacks on education recorded: 36 in the North West and seven in the South West (UNICEF, 2025a). By early 2025, insecurity had kept 2,460 primary and secondary schools closed, affecting about 223,000 children (UNICEF, 2025b). These figures show that access to education remains fragile despite sustained humanitarian efforts.

Meanwhile, several Education in Emergencies interventions have been introduced, including Temporary Learning Spaces, community-based learning, radio instruction, remedial programmes, mental health and psychosocial support, inclusive education and learning materials. In 2025, 5,627 learners participated in a remedial programme, while Temporary Learning Spaces and radio instruction continued to support children whose schooling had been interrupted for years (UNICEF, 2025c, 2026a). Disability-inclusive programming has also screened more than 3,000 children in schools and TLS, provided assistive devices to more than 100 children and trained more than 82 teachers and facilitators in inclusive practices (UNICEF, 2026c). These interventions demonstrate considerable innovation, but programme outputs do not automatically establish whether the overall educational needs of the affected population are being met. There remains a need to synthesise evidence concerning what children require, what interventions are being provided and what prevents those interventions from achieving sustainable educational recovery.

A further problem is that available evidence is fragmented across academic studies, humanitarian reports and programme documentation. Peer-reviewed research has documented conflict-related effects on teaching, enrolment, dropout and psychosocial wellbeing, while humanitarian agencies provide more current information concerning programme implementation and school functionality (Agbor et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2025a; Yenika, 2024; Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). However, relatively limited research has integrated these sources into a coherent framework linking emergency access with learning recovery and long-term resilience. Without such integration, there is a risk that EiE becomes evaluated primarily by numbers reached rather than by whether interventions progressively restore safe, equitable and sustainable educational trajectories. The present study addresses this gap through a

documentary analysis structured around educational needs, EiE responses and implementation challenges.

5. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The study examined Education in Emergencies within Cameroon's Anglophone crisis, focusing on its prolonged effects on educational access, quality, protection and institutional functioning in the North West and South West Regions.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the major educational needs generated by the Anglophone crisis among school-age children and educational communities;
2. Assess the nature and extent of EiE interventions provided to conflict-affected learners and the extent to which these interventions address identified educational needs; and
3. Analyse the major challenges affecting the accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of EiE interventions in the two regions.

These objectives reflect the analytical sequence needs → interventions/responsiveness → implementation challenges, which is consistent with an integrated approach to emergency educational planning (INEE, 2024).

6. Research Questions

The study was guided by three questions derived directly from the objectives and the EiE literature (INEE, 2024):

1. What major educational needs have been generated by the Anglophone crisis among school-age children and educational communities in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon?
2. What EiE interventions are provided to conflict-affected learners, and to what extent do these interventions address identified educational needs?
3. What major challenges affect the accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of EiE interventions in the two regions?

Together, these questions permit analysis of both humanitarian provision and the conditions required for longer-term educational recovery (Burde et al., 2017; Sinclair, 2002).

7. Significance of the Study

The study is significant for education policymakers because it shifts attention from school reopening alone toward a broader conception of educational recovery involving safety, learning, wellbeing, inclusion and resilience. By distinguishing educational needs from programme provision and implementation constraints, the study provides a framework for determining where existing interventions correspond with documented needs and where important gaps remain (INEE, 2024). The analysis is particularly relevant to education authorities responsible for school rehabilitation, teacher deployment, remedial learning and reintegration because prolonged interruption requires policies different from those used under normal educational conditions. It also highlights the importance of linking emergency programming with formal-system strengthening rather than creating permanent parallel arrangements (UNICEF, 2026a). The study therefore supports planning across humanitarian and conventional education sectors.

For humanitarian and development organisations, the study synthesises programme evidence within a framework that differentiates reach from demonstrated effectiveness. Institutional

reports provide essential information about beneficiaries, locations and activities, but independent evaluations are required to establish sustained effects on learning, retention and wellbeing (Bowen, 2009). The study consequently identifies priority areas for programme monitoring and research while emphasising integration among education, protection, MHPSS, WASH, disability inclusion and social protection. For researchers, it identifies gaps concerning comparative learning outcomes, long-term learning loss, teacher experiences and educational resilience. For communities and affected learners, its significance lies in conceptualising emergency education not as an inferior substitute but as a bridge toward safe and recognised formal education (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2026a).

8. Theoretical Framework

8.1 Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory provides a useful framework for understanding why educational disruption in the Anglophone crisis cannot be reduced to events occurring inside classrooms. Children's development is influenced by interconnected environments ranging from immediate relationships with family, peers and teachers to wider institutional, cultural and political systems. At the microsystem level, violence and displacement affect learners' interactions with teachers and peers; at the mesosystem level, relationships among families, schools and communities may be disrupted; and at wider exosystem and macrosystem levels, humanitarian access, education policy, political conflict and language-related institutional arrangements shape educational opportunities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Fabo & Russell, 2025). This perspective supports interventions that operate simultaneously across children, households, schools, communities and education institutions. EiE therefore becomes an ecological response to multidimensional disruption rather than a classroom intervention alone.

8.2 Resilience Theory

The study also draws on Ungar's (2011) social-ecological understanding of resilience, which challenges interpretations that locate resilience exclusively within individual personality or coping capacity. Resilience depends partly on whether individuals can navigate toward and negotiate access to culturally and contextually meaningful psychological, social and material resources. Applied to education, children cannot reasonably be expected to demonstrate educational resilience if schools are inaccessible, teachers are absent, households cannot meet education costs or learning environments remain unsafe (Ungar, 2011). Educational resilience therefore requires institutional capacity to maintain learning during disruption, recover lost competencies and adapt delivery systems when conditions change. This approach also avoids placing responsibility for surviving conflict entirely on children and teachers. Resilience becomes a property of relationships and systems as much as of individuals.

8.3 Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus provides the third theoretical perspective because the Anglophone crisis combines continuing humanitarian needs with longer-term development challenges and unresolved conflict. The OECD (2019) recommends greater coherence among humanitarian, development and peace actions in contexts where repeated crises undermine sustainable progress. Applied to education, humanitarian action may provide TLS, learning materials, radio education and MHPSS; development action may rehabilitate

schools, strengthen teacher systems and improve education governance; and peace-oriented action may contribute to conditions in which educational institutions can function safely and inclusively. These dimensions should not be understood as rigidly sequential because humanitarian needs may persist while development interventions are implemented. The HDP perspective therefore supports the transition from emergency educational provision toward resilient formal education without assuming that humanitarian programmes alone can resolve the political causes of conflict (OECD, 2019).

9. Empirical Literature Review

9.1 Education and the Origins of the Crisis

Empirical and analytical scholarship consistently identifies education as one of the institutional domains through which Anglophone grievances became expressed. Konings and Nyamnjoh (1997) situated the Anglophone problem within historical concerns over identity, marginalisation and centralisation, while Ndille (2018) demonstrated continuing efforts to preserve distinct educational identity within the Anglophone subsystem. Pommerolle and De Marie Heungoup (2017) connected the 2016 protests to broader postcolonial tensions, and Beseng et al. (2023) subsequently traced the movement from the Anglophone problem to armed conflict. More recent work by Fabo and Russell (2025) shows that language ideology and competing narratives of national identity remain embedded in educational policy and textbook discourse. Together, these studies establish that education was not incidental to the crisis but formed part of the institutional terrain through which political identity and grievance were articulated.

9.2 Effects of Armed Conflict on Schooling

Agbor et al. (2022) provide one of the strongest empirical examinations of teaching under the conflict. Their sequential exploratory mixed-methods study first collected qualitative data from 19 participants and subsequently administered a questionnaire to 652 teachers, finding significant disruption to attendance, teaching, assessment, discipline and safety. Yenika (2024) similarly used qualitative and quantitative methods and reported declining enrolment and increased dropout based on 220 returned questionnaires in the North West Region. These studies demonstrate that conflict affects both access and the quality of education within schools that remain operational. Human Rights Watch (2021), through investigative interviews and documentation, further demonstrated the direct protection risks faced by students and teachers. The literature therefore supports the conclusion that educational disruption ranges from complete exclusion to degraded learning under continuing insecurity.

9.3 Temporary Learning Spaces and Community Education

Temporary Learning Spaces constitute one of the most visible EiE responses in the two regions. UNICEF describes TLS as tents, borrowed halls and other temporary shelters established where conventional schools have been destroyed, abandoned or rendered inaccessible, with the explicit intention that they serve as bridges rather than permanent replacements for formal education (UNICEF, 2026a). The model combines accelerated learning with structured routines and, in some locations, radio-supported instruction. Community-based approaches and neighbourhood learning arrangements similarly attempt to reduce distance and security barriers by locating education closer to affected populations (UNICEF, 2026a). Such interventions correspond with INEE (2024) standards emphasising safe alternative sites, community

participation and continuity of education during emergencies. Their long-term effectiveness, however, requires systematic evaluation of learning and transition outcomes.

9.4 Radio and Flexible Learning

Radio education is particularly relevant in contexts where insecurity limits movement and internet infrastructure remains uneven. Interactive radio instruction has a long history as a low-technology approach capable of extending structured teaching to hard-to-reach learners when supported by appropriate curriculum design and facilitation (Bosch, 1997; Ho & Thukral, 2009). Within current TLS programming in Cameroon, radio lessons complement facilitator-led instruction in subjects including English, mathematics and environmental education (UNICEF, 2026a). Evidence from other low-resource emergencies also indicates that low-technology communication can support learning when conventional schooling is disrupted, although intervention effects depend on access, instructional quality and household support (Angrist et al., 2022). Radio should therefore be understood as a complementary continuity mechanism rather than a complete substitute for teachers and schools.

9.5 Remedial and Accelerated Education

Learning recovery becomes critical when children return after prolonged absence because physical return does not automatically restore missed competencies. UNICEF and the Ministry of Basic Education launched a remedial programme in January 2025 targeting learners in Classes 4–6 who were performing below expected standards, using differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, small groups and individualised support (UNICEF, 2025c). The programme enrolled 5,627 learners and provided repeated sessions in foundational areas, illustrating a shift from measuring access toward addressing actual learning gaps. International evidence on targeted instruction similarly indicates that teaching aligned with children's demonstrated competency can improve foundational learning where learners are substantially behind grade expectations (Banerjee et al., 2017). However, UNICEF's reported results remain programme-monitoring evidence rather than a controlled evaluation of causal effects. Independent longitudinal evaluation is therefore necessary before strong claims concerning sustained effectiveness can be made.

9.6 Inclusive Education

Children with disabilities face compounded disadvantages during emergencies because disruption can remove not only schooling but also health, rehabilitation, assistive and protection services. UNICEF's 2026 disability-inclusive programming in the North West and South West Regions reported screening more than 3,000 children in schools and TLS, providing assistive devices to more than 100 children and training more than 82 teachers and facilitators in inclusive practices (UNICEF, 2026c). Earlier Cameroon research had already identified difficulties in implementing inclusive education for learners with hearing impairment, including inadequate instructional adjustments and support within mainstream secondary schools (Mngo & Mngo, 2018). Conflict can worsen existing barriers through displacement, inadequate temporary facilities and shortages of specialised personnel. Inclusive Education in Emergencies should therefore extend beyond enrolment to ensure physical accessibility, skilled teachers, assistive technology, psychosocial support and family involvement.

9.7 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Conflict also creates significant psychosocial needs among affected learners. Youmbi Mbenowol's (2026) study of 85 children in Bafanji identified several trauma-related psychological and behavioural difficulties, highlighting the need for trauma-sensitive learning environments. Human Rights Watch (2021) similarly documented children's exposure to threats and violence associated with attacks on education. UNICEF programmes have incorporated structured play, peer interaction, life skills, psychological first aid and referral into learning environments, reflecting the principle that psychosocial recovery and learning are interconnected (UNICEF, 2026b). Such interventions are consistent with INEE (2024) guidance that supportive educational environments should address learners' social and emotional wellbeing. The empirical gap remains the limited number of longitudinal studies measuring whether school-based MHPSS produces sustained educational and mental-health outcomes in the Anglophone regions.

10. Methodology

10.1 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative documentary research design to examine existing evidence concerning educational needs, EiE interventions and implementation challenges in the North West and South West Regions. Documentary analysis involves systematic examination and interpretation of documents to generate meaning, understanding and empirical knowledge and is particularly useful when evidence is dispersed across institutional reports, policy documents and published research (Bowen, 2009). The design was appropriate because the study sought to synthesise an existing body of academic and humanitarian evidence rather than collect new information from participants. No interviews, questionnaires, observations or experimental data were generated by the present study. Findings should consequently be understood as a thematic synthesis of documented evidence rather than original field data (Bowen, 2009).

10.2 Sources of Information

Evidence was drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, recognised academic publications, UNICEF humanitarian situation reports, EiE programme documentation, international humanitarian standards and other credible institutional sources relevant to the Anglophone crisis. Peer-reviewed studies were prioritised for empirical and theoretical claims, while institutional reports were particularly important for recent information concerning school functionality, humanitarian reach and current interventions. This distinction was necessary because humanitarian reporting is generally more current than academic publication but often focuses on programme outputs rather than independently evaluated long-term outcomes (Bowen, 2009). Particular attention was given to whether statistics referred specifically to the North West and South West Regions or to Cameroon nationally. Evidence was triangulated across source types wherever possible in accordance with documentary-analysis principles and EiE information-management standards (Bowen, 2009; INEE, 2024).

10.3 Inclusion Criteria

Documents were included where they directly addressed the Anglophone crisis, educational conditions in the North West and/or South West Regions, relevant EiE interventions, or conceptual and empirical literature necessary for interpreting the study objectives. Sources had to contribute to at least one of the three research questions and possess identifiable academic

authorship or institutional ownership sufficient to permit verification. Empirical studies, conceptual literature, humanitarian reports and programme documents were retained where they provided evidence concerning educational needs, programme responses, implementation conditions or theoretical interpretation. Broader international EiE literature was included where it provided established concepts or comparative evidence directly applicable to the Cameroon context. Documents whose geographical scope was national were used cautiously and were not represented as North West/South West-specific evidence unless the source explicitly disaggregated the relevant information (Bowen, 2009; INEE, 2024).

10.4 Data Analysis

The documents were analysed thematically following principles of qualitative thematic analysis and documentary interpretation (Bowen, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Sources were read and re-read, relevant evidence was extracted and coded, and codes were compared and organised into categories corresponding primarily to the three research questions while remaining open to inductively emerging subthemes. The first overarching theme concerned **educational needs**, the second EiE interventions and their responsiveness, and the third challenges affecting accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability. Evidence from peer-reviewed research was compared with humanitarian and programme documentation to identify convergence, divergence and gaps. The final interpretation was informed by Ecological Systems Theory, Resilience Theory and the HDP Nexus, thereby linking documentary findings to multilevel educational environments, social-ecological resilience and the transition from humanitarian response toward sustainable educational systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; OECD, 2019; Ungar, 2011).

11. Findings and Discussion

11.1 Research Question One: Major Educational Needs Generated by the Crisis

The documentary evidence relevant to the first research question was subjected to thematic analysis through familiarisation, extraction of relevant statements and statistics, coding, comparison across sources, and clustering of related codes into subthemes. Consistent with Braun and Clarke (2006), recurring patterns were identified across peer-reviewed empirical studies, humanitarian situation reports, Education in Emergencies programme documentation and institutional publications. Nine substantive subthemes emerged under the overarching theme of Educational Needs: safe access to education; continuity of learning; remedial and catch-up education; teachers and teacher support; learning infrastructure and essential materials; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support; gender-responsive education; disability-inclusive education; and legal identity and civil registration. Table 1 presents the thematic synthesis.

Table 1

Thematic Analysis of Major Educational Needs Generated by the Anglophone Crisis

Subtheme	Documentary codes/evidence identified	Synthesised finding	Educational need identified	Key sources
Safe access to education	School closure; attacks on schools; abduction; threats; fear during travel; unsafe school routes; insecurity; school boycott; non-functional schools	Insecurity affects both physical availability of schools and willingness of children, parents and teachers to use them. In 2024, 41% of schools in the North West and South West were non-operational, while UNICEF's needs evidence indicated that more than half of children felt unsafe travelling to and from school.	Protected schools and routes; community-based safety mechanisms; protection of learners and teachers; accessible learning sites; implementation of safe-school measures	UNICEF (2024, 2025); Agbor et al. (2022); Human Rights Watch (2021); Yenika (2024)
2. Continuity of learning	Recurrent closures; displacement; lockdowns; prolonged absence; irregular attendance; interrupted transition; inaccessible formal schools	Children experience repeated rather than one-off educational interruption. Some remain outside formal education for months or years, creating a need for learning opportunities that can continue despite insecurity.	TLS; radio learning; neighbourhood/community learning; flexible schedules; accelerated learning; alternative and non-formal education	UNICEF (2025, 2026a); Yenika (2024); Yuomeyse & Njengoué Ngamaleu (2024)
Remedial and catch-up education	Learning gaps; below-grade performance; weak literacy; weak numeracy; interrupted curriculum exposure; difficulty progressing	Return to school does not necessarily equal recovery of learning. Crisis-affected learners may be enrolled in the appropriate class by age while lacking competencies required at that level.	Diagnostic assessment; remedial teaching; differentiated instruction; peer tutoring; small-group instruction; accelerated/catch-up programmes	UNICEF (2025a); Agbor et al. (2022)
Teachers and teacher support	Teacher displacement; threats; absenteeism; reduced content delivery; psychological distress; professional-development disruption; anxiety; difficult postings	The crisis affects the availability, safety, morale and instructional effectiveness of teachers. Teacher shortages and psychological strain can undermine education even when schools remain operational.	Teacher security; psychosocial support; EiE pedagogy; incentives; deployment strategies; professional development; training in MHPSS, multigrade and remedial teaching	Agbor et al. (2022); Nji et al. (2026); Human Rights Watch (2021); UNICEF (2025)
Learning infrastructure and essential resources	Destroyed/abandoned schools; overcrowding; lack of furniture; insufficient materials; inaccessible buildings; inadequate water and sanitation	Conflict reduces both the number and quality of usable learning environments. Children who gain access may still learn under overcrowded and poorly equipped conditions.	Safe classrooms/TLS; furniture; textbooks and materials; water; sanitation; gender-sensitive WASH; accessible infrastructure; rehabilitation of schools	UNICEF (2024, 2026a); Human Rights Watch (2021); Yuomeyse & Njengoué Ngamaleu (2024)
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	Fear; trauma; emotional distress; withdrawal; disrupted peer relationships; loss of normalcy; anxiety; concentration problems	Conflict-related psychological distress can interfere with children's participation, behaviour, concentration and learning, making emotional recovery part of educational recovery.	Structured play; psychological first aid; life skills; peer interaction; safe routines; psychosocially supportive teaching; referral pathways	UNICEF (2026b); Youmbi Mbenowol (2026); Human Rights Watch (2021)
Gender-responsive education	Early marriage; pregnancy; sexual and economic vulnerability; menstrual-health barriers; inadequate WASH; inability to afford menstrual materials; domestic responsibilities	Girls experience crisis-related barriers that interact with poverty, displacement and gender norms, increasing risks of interrupted attendance and dropout.	Menstrual-health materials; gender-responsive WASH; safeguarding; re-entry opportunities; protection from exploitation and early marriage; targeted financial/social support	UNICEF (2026c, 2026d); UNICEF Cameroon Education; Fonkwo et al. (2023)
Disability-inclusive education	Physical and communication barriers; stigma; inaccessible TLS/schools; displacement; lack of assistive devices; inadequate specialised teacher skills	Conflict compounds pre-existing disability-related barriers, making children with disabilities particularly vulnerable to prolonged exclusion from learning and associated services.	Disability screening; assistive technology; accessible spaces; Braille/sign language; Universal Design for Learning; trained teachers; rehabilitation/referral support	UNICEF (2026e); Mngo & Mngo (2018); Human Rights Watch (2019)

Legal identity and civil registration	Lost birth certificates; inaccessible registry offices; displacement; non-registration at birth; inability to register for national examinations	Legal identity has become an educational-access issue because conflict disrupts civil registration while birth certificates remain necessary for examinations and continued educational progression.	Catch-up birth registration; school-linked registration; mobile civil-registration services; replacement of UNICEF (2025b, 2026f) lost documents; integration of civil registration with education programming
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The first major finding is that safe access to education remains the foundational educational need. School availability has little practical meaning if learners, parents and teachers believe that attendance exposes them to unacceptable security risks. UNICEF reported 41% of schools in the North West and South West Regions as non-operational in 2024 and documented 43 attacks on education during the same year, while 2,460 schools remained closed because of insecurity in early 2025 (UNICEF, 2025a, 2025b). Human Rights Watch (2021) similarly documented attacks, abductions and threats affecting students and education personnel. Safe access therefore requires attention to school sites, travel routes, community risk assessment and the broader protection environment.

A second need is continuity of learning for children whose formal education has been interrupted. Agbor et al. (2022) found significant disruption to attendance and instructional processes even within operational schools, while Yenika (2024) identified declining enrolment and increased dropout. Continuity requires alternative arrangements capable of functioning during periods when conventional schools cannot operate, including TLS, community learning and low-technology modalities. The evidence from current UNICEF programming confirms that some children have remained out of formal schooling for years before accessing alternative learning opportunities (UNICEF, 2026a). Maintaining connection to structured learning is therefore an immediate educational need rather than something that can wait until complete security is restored.

A third need concerns learning recovery through remedial and accelerated education. Children returning after prolonged interruption cannot be assumed to possess competencies corresponding to their chronological age or nominal grade. UNICEF's remedial programme explicitly targeted underperformance in English and mathematics and enrolled 5,627 learners in Classes 4–6, demonstrating the extent to which access must be complemented by targeted recovery (UNICEF, 2025c). The broader targeted-instruction literature supports assessment-based approaches that teach children at their actual learning level rather than relying exclusively on grade-level curriculum expectations (Banerjee et al., 2017). Educational recovery therefore requires diagnostic assessment, differentiated teaching and structured pathways for accelerated progression.

A fourth group of needs concerns teachers, infrastructure and learning materials. Teachers have themselves been displaced, threatened and psychologically affected, while operational schools may experience overcrowding and shortages of basic resources (Agbor et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2025a). The presence of a learning site does not guarantee quality education if trained teachers, appropriate materials, seating, WASH and safe infrastructure are absent. Teacher support must consequently include emergency pedagogy, remedial instruction, inclusive education, MHPSS competencies and professional wellbeing. Infrastructure should similarly be understood broadly to include safe learning environments, sanitation, accessibility and instructional resources. These constitute enabling conditions for both access and effectiveness.

A fifth need is psychosocial support and protection. Evidence from Bafanji demonstrates significant psychological and behavioural manifestations of trauma among conflict-affected children, while humanitarian programming has increasingly integrated structured psychosocial activities into learning environments (UNICEF, 2026b; Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). Psychological distress can affect concentration, motivation and peer relationships even after schooling resumes. Teachers and facilitators therefore need basic skills to recognise distress and create supportive classrooms, with referral services available for severe cases. Protection and psychosocial well-being are therefore essential to sustained educational participation.

The findings further highlight needs related to gender, disability and legal identity. Girls may experience menstrual-health challenges, early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, sexual violence and domestic responsibilities, while children with disabilities face inaccessible facilities, stigma and limited specialised support (UNICEF, 2026c, 2026d). Displaced children may also lack documents needed for examinations and educational progression. Restoring education alone therefore does not guarantee equitable access. The first research question identifies a needs pathway from safety and access to continuity, learning recovery, progression and resilience, supported by adequate teachers, infrastructure, protection, psychosocial well-being and inclusion (INEE, 2024).

11.2 Research Question Two: Education in Emergencies Interventions and Responsiveness

Documentary evidence relating to the second research question was analysed thematically by extracting information on the types of Education in Emergencies interventions implemented in the North West and South West Regions, identifying the educational needs targeted by each intervention, examining available evidence of reach or implementation, and assessing remaining limitations. In keeping with the deductive thematic framework established in the methodology, intervention evidence was compared directly with the educational needs identified under Research Question One. Eight principal intervention subthemes emerged: Temporary Learning Spaces, Neighbourhood Learning Corners, Radio Education, Remedial Education, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Inclusive Education, Menstrual Health and Girls' Education, and Digital Education. Two additional cross-cutting responses—teacher capacity-building and school-linked civil-registration support—also emerged from the documentary evidence because they directly respond to teacher and legal-identity needs identified under Research Question One. The extent of responsiveness was interpreted qualitatively as strong but incomplete, moderate/partial, emerging/limited, or major remaining gap, depending on evidence of geographic reach, beneficiary coverage, correspondence with identified needs, and sustainability. Table 2 presents the thematic synthesis.

Table 2

Thematic Analysis of Education in Emergencies Interventions and the Extent to Which They Address Identified Needs

Intervention subtheme	Need(s) primarily addressed	Documentary evidence of intervention	Main strengths	Remaining limitations/gaps	Overall responsiveness
Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS)	Safe access; continuity; infrastructure; protection; MHPSS	UNICEF-supported TLS operate across both North West and South West in	Flexible; close to communities; provides structured learning,	Temporary; vulnerable to lockdowns and insecurity; variable infrastructure;	Strong but incomplete

		communities where formal schools are destroyed, abandoned or inaccessible; tents, halls and simple shelters are used	protection and routine; accommodates accelerated learning, radio and MHPSS	dependent on facilitators, materials and external funding; cannot replace permanent schools	
Neighbourhood Learning Corners	Continuity; safe/local access; out-of-school children; foundational learning	Mobile/inclusive learning corners documented in Babessi, Njinikom and other hard-to-reach communities; more than 3,000 children reportedly accessed learning in the North West, while broader project support reached over 10,000 children across NW/SW	Reduces distance; community-based; reaches out-of-school learners; provides literacy/numeracy and learning materials; supports transition to formal school	Localised programme coverage; continued large out-of-school population; dependent on community facilitators and donor support	Moderate/partial
Radio Education	Continuity; access during closure/lockdown; foundational learning	Recorded radio lessons used in crisis settings and integrated with TLS; UNICEF reports 29,283 children reached through REP in its current education programme reporting and wider annual reporting documents substantial radio-supported access	Low technological threshold; scalable; can reach learners beyond physical schools; relatively safe during insecurity	Limited real-time interaction; difficult individual assessment; radio/device/power availability can still vary; requires facilitator or caregiver reinforcement	Moderate, with scalability potential
Remedial Education	Learning loss; literacy; numeracy; grade-level gaps; progression	Programme launched January 2025 with Ministry of Basic Education; 5,627 children enrolled; differentiated teaching, peer tutoring, small-group and individualised support	Directly targets learning rather than attendance alone; assessment-driven; focuses on English and Mathematics; programme reports indicate improved progression	Only a small proportion of children needing assistance reached; programme-monitoring rather than controlled impact evaluation; continued disruption may recreate learning gaps	Strongly relevant but limited in scale
MHPSS integrated with education	Trauma; emotional regulation; confidence; peer relationships; classroom engagement	Yoke-Muyuka TLS integrates play, life skills, peer interaction and psychosocial support; 56,523 children, adolescents, parents and guardians reached through community	Integrates wellbeing with learning; trains facilitators in psychological first aid and referral; rebuilds routine, relationships and confidence	Overall figure includes adults; availability of specialised referral services may vary; programme evidence does not establish causal educational effects	Substantial but incomplete

		MHPSS across NW/SW			
Inclusive Education	Disability access; adapted teaching; assistive support; stigma reduction	More than 3,000 children screened; more than 100 received assistive devices; over 82 teachers/facilitators trained in UDL, Braille, sign language and psychosocial support	Addresses barriers at child, teacher and community levels; combines screening, assistive technology and inclusive pedagogy	UNICEF reports fewer than half of children with disabilities access required services; specialised resources remain limited	Emerging and important, but inadequate to need
Menstrual Health and Girls' Education	Girls' attendance; MHM; dignity; WASH; stigma	Dignity boxes and menstrual-health education provided in schools/TLS across multiple divisions; more than 10 schools supported and supplies sufficient for approximately 4,200 menstrual incidents documented	Directly addresses practical attendance barrier; combines supplies, information and stigma reduction	Small geographic/programme scale relative to regional population; does not alone address early marriage, pregnancy, GBV, poverty and caregiving burdens	Relevant but limited/targeted
Digital Education	Learning quality; digital inclusion; supplementary learning; teacher capacity	Limbe E-Container initiative exposed 443 children from four schools to practical digital learning and trained more than 20 teachers/head teachers	Interactive; supports literacy, numeracy and digital skills; strengthens teacher digital capacity	Highly localised; electricity, equipment, connectivity, maintenance, teacher capacity and poverty constrain scalability; cannot presently substitute for broad EiE access	Emerging/pilot-level
Teacher training and professional support	Teacher capacity; emergency pedagogy; MHPSS; remedial/inclusive education	Teachers and facilitators trained in remedial methodologies, inclusive education, psychosocial support and radio-supported instruction	Strengthens quality across several interventions; builds local capacity	Does not fully resolve insecurity, teacher displacement, workload, anxiety, posting difficulties or incentive problems	Partial response
School-linked civil registration	Legal identity; examination participation; progression	School-based catch-up registration supported by UNICEF, Government and partners; approximately 48,000 primary-school children targeted nationally, with interventions documented in NW/SW	Removes administrative barrier to examinations and progression; connects education with civil-registration services	Not exclusively an EiE education programme; access remains uneven where registry offices are non-functional	Important cross-sectoral response but incomplete

The second objective identified a diverse range of interventions demonstrating substantial adaptation within the crisis. Temporary Learning Spaces constitute a principal mechanism for restoring access where formal schools have been destroyed, abandoned or rendered inaccessible. UNICEF's current model uses tents, borrowed halls and simple community shelters and combines these with accelerated learning designed to facilitate eventual transition into formal schooling (UNICEF, 2026a). TLS therefore respond strongly to the identified needs for safe access, continuity and learning recovery. Their limitation lies not primarily in conceptual relevance but in scale, security and the danger that temporary arrangements could become prolonged where formal recovery remains stalled.

Community and neighbourhood learning arrangements provide another important response by locating education closer to affected children. Such approaches can reduce travel-related exposure and enable local communities to participate directly in identifying sites, facilitators and vulnerable learners. Community participation is consistent with INEE (2024) standards and with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) emphasis on interactions among families, schools and communities. However, community-based programmes require curriculum alignment, quality assurance and recognised pathways into formal education if they are to avoid becoming a second-tier system. Their strongest contribution lies in flexible local access rather than permanent replacement of public education.

Radio education addresses continuity where internet connectivity and physical access are constrained. UNICEF currently integrates interactive radio lessons into some TLS, covering subjects such as English, mathematics and environmental education (UNICEF, 2026a). International evidence indicates that well-designed interactive radio instruction can support learning in hard-to-reach settings, particularly where it is combined with facilitation and structured materials (Bosch, 1997; Ho & Thukral, 2009). Radio is therefore highly relevant to the digital and geographical realities of many conflict-affected communities. Its effectiveness nevertheless depends on access to devices, scheduling, instructional design and opportunities for learner interaction.

Remedial education responds directly to accumulated learning loss and represents one of the clearest examples of movement from access toward educational recovery. The 2025 programme implemented with the Ministry of Basic Education used differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, small-group learning and individualised support for 5,627 learners (UNICEF, 2025c). These approaches correspond with wider evidence supporting instruction matched to learners' demonstrated competency (Banerjee et al., 2017). However, programme monitoring cannot establish how effects compare with non-participating learners or whether gains persist over time. Remedial education is therefore strongly aligned with identified need but requires broader coverage and independent longitudinal evaluation.

MHPSS and inclusive education demonstrate increasing recognition that learning recovery must incorporate wellbeing and equity. UNICEF has integrated structured psychosocial activities into crisis-affected learning environments and has also supported disability screening, assistive devices and teacher training in inclusive practice (UNICEF, 2026b, 2026c). These interventions correspond directly with evidence of trauma-related difficulties and disability-specific barriers (Mngo & Mngo, 2018; Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). Menstrual-health and WASH interventions similarly address practical barriers affecting girls' attendance and dignity in schools and TLS (UNICEF, 2026d). The principal concern remains whether such specialised support reaches the full population requiring it.

Emerging digital-learning interventions, teacher training, WASH support and school-linked civil registration further demonstrate that EiE has evolved beyond temporary classrooms. Digital education can strengthen preparedness and diversify learning opportunities, but unequal electricity, connectivity and device access mean that it should complement rather than displace radio, print and face-to-face modalities. Teacher development responds to the need for emergency pedagogy, remedial instruction and psychosocial competence, while WASH and legal identity address barriers that can prevent attendance and progression. Collectively, the interventions correspond with virtually all major needs identified in the first research question. The central conclusion is therefore one of strong conceptual alignment but inadequate alignment in scale and sustainability (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2025a, 2026a).

11.3 Research Question Three: Challenges Affecting Accessibility, Effectiveness and Sustainability

Documentary evidence addressing the third research question was analysed thematically by extracting statements and findings concerning barriers to the delivery, utilisation, quality and continuation of Education in Emergencies interventions in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. The extracted evidence was coded and grouped according to whether it principally affected accessibility, effectiveness, sustainability, or several of these dimensions simultaneously, while recurrent patterns were compared across peer-reviewed research, humanitarian situation reports, institutional publications and programme documentation. Twelve major challenge subthemes emerged: persistent insecurity; attacks on education; lockdowns and movement restrictions; population displacement; teacher shortages and teacher wellbeing; accumulated learning loss; household poverty and economic vulnerability; gender inequality; disability exclusion; the digital divide; humanitarian funding constraints; and the sustainability of temporary educational solutions. These challenges were found to be strongly interconnected rather than operating independently. Persistent insecurity, for example, contributes simultaneously to school closure, displacement, teacher attrition, humanitarian-access restrictions and reliance on temporary learning arrangements, while poverty and social inequalities determine which children are most capable of benefiting from the limited opportunities that remain available. Table 3 presents the thematic synthesis.

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of Challenges Affecting Accessibility, Effectiveness and Sustainability of Education in Emergencies

Challenge subtheme	Documentary indicators/codes	Effect on accessibility	Effect on effectiveness	Effect on sustainability	Overall thematic interpretation
Persistent insecurity	Armed violence; fear; unsafe roads; volatile communities; inaccessible areas; restricted humanitarian access	Prevents children, teachers and humanitarian personnel from safely reaching learning sites	Interrupts lessons, supervision, assessment and programme implementation	Makes long-term planning, teacher retention and reconstruction uncertain	Fundamental cross-cutting challenge
Attacks on education	School attacks; abductions; killings; threats; intimidation; destruction of facilities	Discourages attendance and leads to school closure	Creates psychological distress and disrupts teaching	Damages infrastructure and weakens confidence in formal schooling	Severe and continuing challenge
Lockdowns and	School boycott; imposed shutdowns;	Prevents movement to schools/TLS and	Reduces instructional time	Produces unpredictable	Major episodic disruption

movement restrictions	prolonged lockdown periods; restricted travel; irregular resumption	limits humanitarian reach	and programme continuity	calendars and recurring interruption	
Displacement	Repeated movement; IDP status; loss of records; overcrowded host schools; interrupted enrolment	Separates children from schools and services	Creates curriculum, language and placement difficulties	Weakens educational continuity and stable progression	Major structural challenge
Teacher shortages and wellbeing	Teacher displacement; fear; difficult postings; anxiety; absenteeism; limited incentives	Reduces availability of learning opportunities	Increases pupil-teacher ratios and reduces instructional quality	Threatens continuity of EiE and formal education	Critical human-resource constraint
Accumulated learning loss	Interrupted schooling; literacy/numeracy deficits; prolonged absence; age-grade mismatch	Children may return but cannot meaningfully participate at expected level	Reduces benefit from ordinary instruction without remediation	Requires continued remedial and accelerated programmes	Major effectiveness challenge
Household poverty	Lost livelihoods; inability to meet education costs; transport, food, materials and uniform expenses	Prevents enrolment and regular attendance even when schools are open	Hunger, unstable housing and lack of materials reduce learning engagement	Increases dropout and dependence on humanitarian support	Major socioeconomic barrier
Gender inequality	Menstrual barriers; early marriage; pregnancy; GBV risks; domestic work; economic vulnerability	Disproportionately constrains girls' participation	Interrupts attendance and continuity	Increases permanent dropout risk among adolescent girls	Persistent equity challenge
Disability exclusion	Inaccessible spaces; lack of assistive devices; insufficient specialised teachers; stigma	Children with disabilities may remain unreachable	Non-adapted teaching reduces participation and learning	Specialist services are difficult to maintain in insecure settings	Major inclusion gap
Digital divide	Lack of devices; electricity; connectivity; digital literacy; household poverty	Excludes poorer and remote learners from digital interventions	Unequal access reduces educational reach and consistency	Technology requires recurrent infrastructure, maintenance and training	Emerging inequality risk
Funding constraints	Funding gaps; competing humanitarian priorities; donor dependence; insufficient resources	Limits programme coverage and geographic reach	Restricts materials, staffing, MHPSS, WASH and specialised support	Threatens continuation and scaling of interventions	Major systemic constraint
Sustainability of temporary solutions	Long-term TLS dependence; temporary facilitators; donor-funded provision; delayed formal-school restoration	Maintains some access but may leave communities in parallel systems	Temporary facilities may provide lower levels of infrastructure and specialist services	Risk that emergency arrangements become prolonged substitutes for functioning schools	Central transition challenge

Persistent insecurity and attacks on education remain major barriers to Education in Emergencies, affecting school operations, teacher availability, humanitarian access and parents' willingness to send children to school. The 43 attacks recorded in 2024 and the closure of 2,460 schools in early 2025 reflect the extent of the problem (UNICEF, 2025a, 2025b). Renewed violence, lockdowns and movement restrictions can disrupt even established interventions, making educational access closely dependent on security conditions.

Displacement and household poverty further undermine consistent participation. Displaced families may move repeatedly, lose documentation, live far from functioning schools or struggle to meet transportation and educational costs. Economic vulnerability can also increase pressure on children to contribute to household livelihoods rather than attend school. These factors demonstrate why educational supply alone cannot guarantee participation and why social protection may need to accompany EiE interventions. The ecological perspective is particularly relevant because educational outcomes are shaped by household and community conditions outside the classroom (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Access must therefore be analysed in relation to both educational provision and families' capacity to use it.

Teacher shortages, accumulated learning loss and psychosocial distress constrain programme effectiveness. Conflict-affected classrooms may combine children of different ages and competency levels, while teachers themselves may be working under stress or insecurity. Agbor et al. (2022) documented significant effects on teaching and assessment, while Youmbi Mbenwol (2026) demonstrated psychological difficulties among affected children. Reopening a classroom under such circumstances does not restore normal educational functioning. Effectiveness requires trained personnel, diagnostic assessment, remedial pedagogy, psychosocial support and manageable learning conditions.

Gender inequality, disability exclusion and the digital divide create unequal access within the affected population. Girls may confront gender-specific protection and menstrual-health barriers, while children with disabilities require adapted environments, assistive technology and trained teachers (UNICEF, 2026c, 2026d). Digital interventions can create new opportunities but may also reproduce socioeconomic inequalities where devices, connectivity and electricity are unavailable. EiE programmes therefore require disaggregated monitoring capable of identifying who remains excluded even when aggregate beneficiary numbers increase. Equity should be considered a measure of programme quality rather than a supplementary objective.

Finally, funding constraints and dependence on temporary arrangements threaten sustainability. Humanitarian programmes are often financed through time-limited grants even though the educational crisis is protracted, creating tension between short funding cycles and long recovery trajectories. TLS, radio programmes and externally supported remedial interventions can preserve education during crisis, but they cannot substitute indefinitely for functioning schools, stable teachers and institutional financing. The HDP Nexus is therefore particularly relevant because humanitarian provision must progressively connect with development-oriented system strengthening and conditions for peace (OECD, 2019). The third research question consequently demonstrates that accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability are interconnected dimensions rather than separate implementation problems.

12. General Discussion

Three central conclusions emerge from the findings. First, the Anglophone crisis has transformed education from a conventional public service into a humanitarian, protection and

recovery need. Second, the crisis has stimulated important innovations including TLS, community learning, radio instruction, remedial education, MHPSS and inclusive programming. Third, these emergency mechanisms cannot indefinitely substitute for sustainable formal education systems (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2026a). The challenge is therefore not choosing between humanitarian education and formal schooling but designing a pathway through which the former preserves and restores access until the latter can function safely and effectively.

12.1 Education as Protection

Education should be understood as a protective environment when it provides safe routines, supervision, peer interaction and links to supportive services. This interpretation is consistent with international evidence showing that education can reduce some risks associated with prolonged exclusion while supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing (Burde et al., 2017; Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). In the Anglophone context, however, the protective value of education depends upon preventing schools and travel routes from becoming sources of danger. Protection must consequently encompass safeguarding, school safety, community engagement and referral mechanisms. A learning space that exposes children to violence cannot fulfil the protective promise of EiE.

12.2 From School Access to Learning Recovery

A major analytical implication is that attendance should not be confused with learning. Children returning after prolonged interruption may remain substantially behind expected competency levels even when they are physically present in school. The remedial programme implemented in 2025 demonstrates recognition of this problem and reflects wider evidence that targeted instruction can support learners who have fallen behind (Banerjee et al., 2017; UNICEF, 2025c). Educational monitoring should therefore incorporate literacy, numeracy, progression and retention alongside enrolment. Recovery begins when access produces meaningful learning rather than when classroom doors simply reopen.

12.3 Psychosocial Recovery and Learning

Psychosocial wellbeing should similarly be integrated with educational recovery. Trauma-related emotional and behavioural difficulties can affect concentration, relationships and motivation, making it unrealistic to assume that children will immediately resume normal classroom functioning after exposure to violence and displacement (Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). MHPSS should therefore be embedded in classroom routines while specialised services remain available for children requiring more intensive intervention. Teachers need trauma-sensitive competencies but should not be expected to replace trained mental-health professionals. Learning recovery and psychosocial recovery should be mutually reinforcing components of EiE.

12.4 Community-Based Education and Flexibility

Community-based education is especially valuable in a conflict whose intensity varies geographically and temporally. Local learning arrangements can respond more rapidly to changing security conditions and reduce distances between learners and educational opportunities, while community participation can strengthen trust and local ownership (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2026a). Nevertheless, flexibility should not legitimise permanent inequality between children attending formal schools and those confined to emergency alternatives.

Curriculum alignment, assessment and transition pathways are therefore essential. The most resilient system is one capable of moving among formal, community, radio, remedial and digital modalities without disconnecting learners from recognised educational progression.

12.5 Education and Resilience

Resilience in this context should not mean expecting children, parents and teachers to tolerate indefinite insecurity. Social-ecological resilience depends upon access to supportive resources and institutions capable of adapting to adversity (Ungar, 2011). Educational resilience therefore requires safe infrastructure, trained teachers, flexible delivery, psychosocial support, inclusive systems, reliable data and sustainable financing. It also requires the capacity to recover learning after disruption rather than merely maintaining nominal enrolment. The unit of resilience is consequently the broader education ecology, not the individual learner alone.

12.6 Education and Peace

Education has potential relevance to peacebuilding but should not be romanticised as automatically producing peace. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) emphasise that education can reinforce division where systems reproduce inequality or contested identities, while Fabo and Russell (2025) demonstrate the continuing importance of language ideology within Cameroon's educational materials. Conflict-sensitive education should therefore address inclusion, language, identity, curriculum and equitable governance while avoiding the reproduction of grievances. At the same time, education policy cannot substitute for political processes required to address the armed conflict itself. Sustainable education and lasting peace are closely linked, although they remain distinct objectives.

13. Proposed Integrated Framework for Education in Emergencies and Educational Resilience

Drawing on the findings, the study proposes an integrated framework for Education in Emergencies and educational resilience in Cameroon's North West and South West Regions. The framework integrates the three research questions by connecting the context generating educational disruption with immediate EiE responses, recovery mechanisms and longer-term resilience as shown on figure 1 below. It is informed by Ecological Systems Theory, social-ecological Resilience Theory and the HDP Nexus, which collectively emphasise multilevel environments, access to supportive resources and coherence between humanitarian response and sustainable development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; OECD, 2019; Ungar, 2011). Rather than presenting EiE as an endpoint, the framework conceptualises it as a bridge toward safe and sustainable formal education. This distinction is particularly important in a protracted crisis where temporary arrangements risk becoming normalised.

The framework begins with the Crisis Context: political and educational grievances → armed conflict → insecurity and displacement. These conditions produce Educational Consequences: school closure + teacher displacement + learning loss + psychological distress + poverty + protection risks + exclusion. The immediate response consists of TLS + community learning + radio education + learning materials + teacher support + MHPSS + WASH + child protection, while the recovery phase introduces remedial education + accelerated learning + diagnostic assessment + school rehabilitation + teacher recruitment and development + inclusive education + girls' education + formal reintegration (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2025c, 2026a). Long-term resilience requires safe formal schools + resilient education governance + digital inclusion +

community participation + conflict-sensitive education + institutionalised inclusive and psychosocial practices. Gender responsiveness, disability inclusion, protection, teacher wellbeing, equity and community participation operate across all stages.

The framework is intentionally flexible rather than rigidly linear because communities may move forward or backward as security conditions change. A community may resume formal schooling, revert temporarily to community learning during renewed insecurity and later re-enter the recovery stage. The central trajectory nevertheless remains Emergency Access → Continuity of Learning → Learning Recovery → Formal-School Reintegration → Educational Resilience → Sustainable Formal Education. The ultimate outcome is expressed as Access + Safety + Learning + Wellbeing + Resilience, because no single dimension adequately represents successful EiE. Access without safety exposes learners to danger; attendance without learning fails educational objectives; learning without wellbeing neglects psychosocial consequences; and temporary access without resilience leaves education vulnerable to repeated disruption (INEE, 2024; Ungar, 2011).

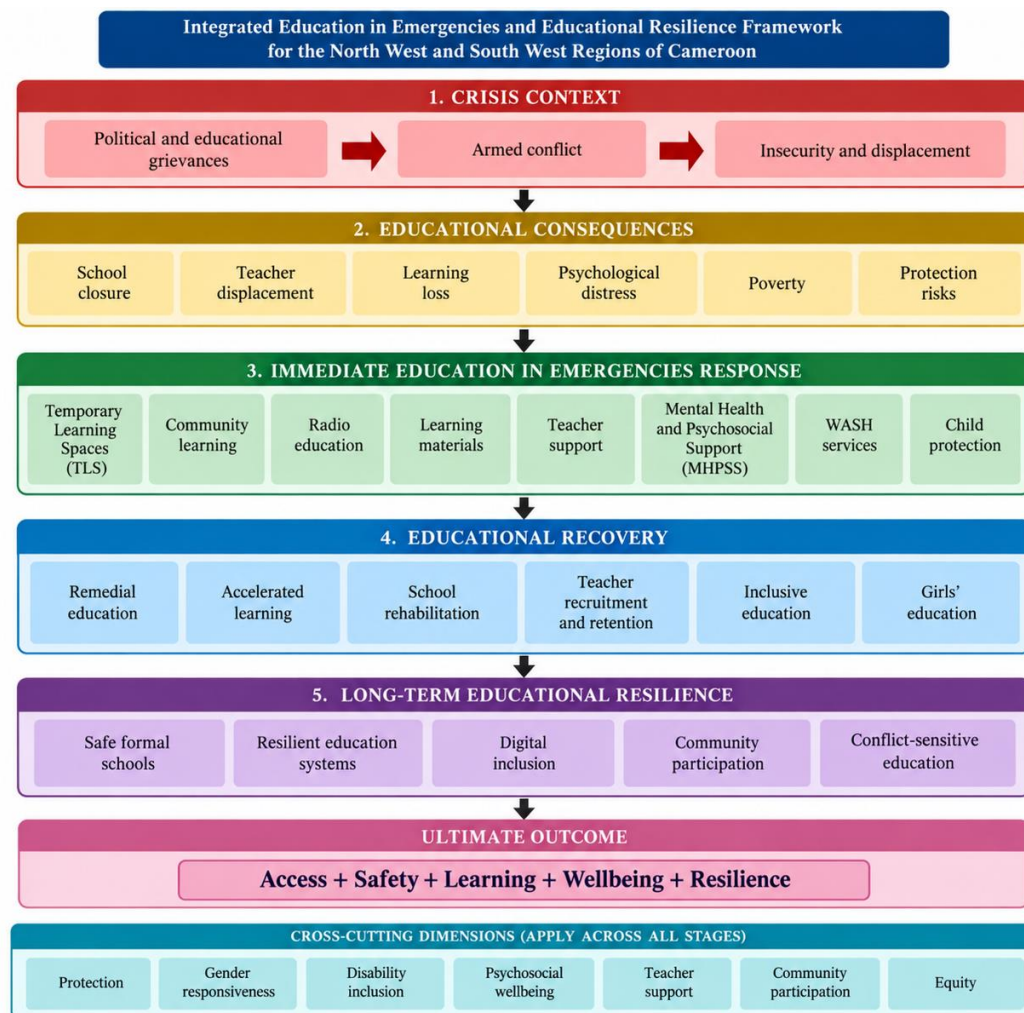


Figure 1: Integrated Education Framework in Emergencies and Educational Resilience for the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon

14. Recommendations

14.1 Protect Schools as Civilian Spaces

All parties to the conflict should respect the civilian character of schools, learners and education personnel. Schools should not be attacked, threatened, occupied or used in ways that expose civilians to additional danger, and community-based risk assessment, safeguarding and incident-reporting systems should be strengthened. The continuing documentation of attacks demonstrates that school protection is a prerequisite for every other educational intervention (Human Rights Watch, 2021; UNICEF, 2025a). Protecting education means protecting both learning sites and children's journeys between homes and schools.

14.2 Expand Safe Temporary and Community Learning

TLS and community-based learning should be expanded in locations where conventional schools remain inaccessible, while maintaining minimum standards for safety, WASH, accessibility, learning materials and trained facilitators. UNICEF's experience demonstrates that such spaces can reconnect children who have spent prolonged periods outside education, but they should retain explicit pathways into recognised formal schooling (UNICEF, 2026a). Community organisations should participate in identifying safe sites and vulnerable learners. Expansion should therefore increase both reach and quality.

14.3 Expand Remedial and Accelerated Education

Every learner returning after prolonged interruption should receive appropriate assessment to identify competency gaps, followed by remedial or accelerated support where necessary. The 2025 remedial programme demonstrates the relevance of differentiated instruction and small-group support for learners performing below expected standards (UNICEF, 2025c). Similar approaches should be progressively integrated into routine education in heavily affected communities. Educational recovery should be judged by competency acquisition and progression rather than physical return alone.

14.4 Strengthen Teachers

Teachers should receive training in emergency pedagogy, remedial instruction, multigrade teaching, inclusive education, MHPSS, safeguarding and flexible learning modalities. They also require teaching materials, supportive supervision, appropriate incentives, security support and access to psychosocial services because teachers themselves operate under crisis conditions (Agbor et al., 2022). Teacher deployment and retention policies should recognise the exceptional challenges of insecure and hard-to-reach communities. Sustainable EiE is impossible without protected, competent and motivated teachers.

14.5 Mainstream MHPSS

Psychosocial support should become a routine component of emergency education rather than an optional supplementary activity. Teachers and facilitators should be trained to create psychologically supportive classrooms, identify distress, provide basic psychological first aid and refer children requiring specialised care (INEE, 2024; Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). Structured play, peer interaction, life skills and predictable routines should be incorporated into learning environments. Mental-health professionals and specialised services should remain part of the referral system.

14.6 Prioritise Girls and Children With Disabilities

Gender-responsive interventions should include menstrual-health support, safe sanitation, prevention of gender-based violence, protection against early marriage and non-discriminatory reintegration of adolescent mothers. Disability inclusion should include accessible learning spaces, assistive technology, screening, inclusive pedagogy and specialised referral where required (UNICEF, 2026c, 2026d). Equity should be monitored through participation and learning outcomes rather than enrolment counts alone. EiE cannot be considered successful if its most vulnerable learners remain excluded.

14.7 Combine Radio and Digital Learning

Radio should remain an important low-technology modality where internet access is weak, while digital education should be progressively expanded where electricity, connectivity, devices and teacher competence permit. UNICEF's use of radio within TLS demonstrates the continuing relevance of low-technology learning during insecurity (UNICEF, 2026a). Digital expansion should avoid replacing accessible modalities with technologies unavailable to poorer households. A resilient system should therefore maintain multiple delivery channels.

14.8 Strengthen Legal Identity, Social Protection and WASH

School-linked birth-registration programmes should identify and assist children lacking documentation required for examination and progression, while vulnerable households should receive appropriate education-related social protection where poverty prevents attendance. Safe water, sanitation, handwashing and menstrual-health facilities should be standard components of emergency and rehabilitated learning environments (UNICEF, 2026d). These interventions demonstrate that educational access depends partly on administrative, economic and health conditions beyond classroom teaching. Cross-sectoral coordination should consequently form part of EiE planning.

14.9 Strengthen Local Organisations and Educational Data

Credible Cameroonian organisations working directly with affected communities should receive greater technical, financial and decision-making responsibility, accompanied by appropriate safeguarding and accountability systems. Educational monitoring should improve data on school functionality, attendance, dropout, learning outcomes, disability, gender, teacher availability and displacement while preventing double counting of beneficiaries participating in multiple programmes (INEE, 2024). Programme evaluation should increasingly examine learning, wellbeing, retention and transition rather than outputs alone. Strong local capacity and reliable data are essential components of educational resilience.

14.10 Connect Emergency Education to Recovery and Peace

Every temporary programme should contain a clear pathway toward sustainable formal education whenever conditions permit. TLS, community learning and radio instruction should preserve educational trajectories while school rehabilitation, teacher recruitment, curriculum alignment and institutional strengthening prepare for reintegration (OECD, 2019; UNICEF, 2026a). At the same time, no EiE intervention can permanently compensate for continuing armed conflict. Sustainable educational restoration ultimately requires conditions in which children and teachers can participate without fear, making peaceful resolution of the wider crisis essential to long-term educational recovery.

15. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation concerns the study's reliance on secondary documentary evidence rather than primary data collected directly from learners, teachers, parents or programme implementers. Documentary analysis enables systematic synthesis of dispersed evidence but remains dependent on the availability, quality and original purposes of existing documents (Bowen, 2009). The study could therefore not independently verify all programme experiences or obtain first-hand accounts from affected populations. Its conclusions should be interpreted as an integrated thematic synthesis rather than a population survey or field evaluation.

A second limitation is the rapidly changing nature of humanitarian conditions. School functionality, displacement, programme coverage and security can change within short periods, meaning that statistics represent specific reporting periods rather than permanent conditions. The study addressed this by retaining dates and distinguishing current from earlier evidence, but later developments may alter particular estimates (UNICEF, 2025a, 2025b). Humanitarian figures should consequently be interpreted as time-bound indicators of a dynamic crisis.

Third, inaccessible communities may be underrepresented because the locations experiencing the greatest insecurity are often the hardest places in which to collect reliable information. Humanitarian organisations and researchers may have better access to urban centres and communities where programmes already operate, potentially producing visibility bias. Children completely disconnected from schools and humanitarian services may therefore be less represented in existing datasets (Bowen, 2009). The true extent of exclusion may differ from what can be documented through accessible populations.

Fourth, institutional reports frequently emphasise programme activities and outputs rather than independently evaluated long-term outcomes. UNICEF documentation provides indispensable current evidence concerning reach, implementation and programme design, but reported improvements should not automatically be interpreted as causal effects without appropriate comparative evaluation (Bowen, 2009; UNICEF, 2025c). The study therefore differentiated programme-monitoring evidence from peer-reviewed impact evidence. This limits the strength of conclusions concerning comparative effectiveness.

Fifth, some statistics are national rather than specific to the North West and South West Regions, and reporting definitions differ across documents. The study avoided attributing national humanitarian figures exclusively to the Anglophone crisis unless disaggregation was explicitly available. Programme beneficiaries may also overlap because the same child can participate in TLS, radio learning, MHPSS and remedial programmes. Beneficiary counts were therefore not aggregated across interventions where unique individuals could not be identified. These limitations constrain precise estimates of overall coverage.

Finally, there remains limited peer-reviewed research evaluating the long-term learning outcomes of specific EiE interventions in the two regions. Existing studies provide strong evidence concerning educational disruption, but fewer independently evaluate TLS, radio education, remedial learning, MHPSS or community education longitudinally (Agbor et al., 2022; Yenika, 2024). The documentary design also cannot establish causal relationships between particular interventions and educational outcomes. The study's principal contribution therefore lies in synthesising available evidence and developing an integrated conceptual framework rather than estimating intervention effect sizes.

16. Suggestions for Further Research

First, future studies should conduct comparative evaluations of learning outcomes across EiE modalities, including TLS, community learning, radio-supported education and conventional schools. Outcomes should include literacy, numeracy, attendance, retention, progression and successful transition into formal education, and longitudinal or quasi-experimental approaches would provide stronger evidence than programme-output monitoring alone (Banerjee et al., 2017; UNICEF, 2025c). Such studies would identify which interventions work best under different security and resource conditions. They would also permit empirical testing of the assumption that temporary education functions effectively as a bridge to formal schooling.

Second, longitudinal research should examine learning loss and psychosocial consequences of prolonged educational interruption. Children should be followed over time to determine how duration of closure, displacement and repeated interruption influence academic competencies, emotional wellbeing, behaviour and educational progression. Current evidence demonstrates psychological distress and instructional disruption but provides less information about long-term trajectories (Agbor et al., 2022; Youmbi Mbenowol, 2026). Research should also examine whether integrated remedial education and MHPSS produce stronger recovery than either intervention alone.

Third, future studies should investigate educational inclusion among particularly vulnerable learners, including girls, children with disabilities, displaced children and learners from economically vulnerable households. Mixed-methods studies involving children, parents, teachers and service providers could identify barriers that remain invisible within aggregate programme statistics. Particular attention should be given to menstrual health, adolescent motherhood, disability accessibility, assistive technology, documentation and repeated displacement (UNICEF, 2026c, 2026d). Such evidence would strengthen equity-focused EiE planning.

Fourth, research should examine teachers, community perceptions and the relationship among education, resilience and peacebuilding. Studies should assess teachers' safety, psychological wellbeing, professional motivation, training needs and willingness to remain in insecure communities while also investigating parents' perceptions of school safety and decisions concerning children's attendance (Agbor et al., 2022). At the broader level, research should test whether sustained educational participation contributes to individual and community resilience and whether conflict-sensitive education influences trust and social cohesion (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Ungar, 2011). Such research would provide an empirical basis for validating and refining the Integrated Education in Emergencies and Educational Resilience Framework.

17. Conclusion

This study examined Education in Emergencies within the context of the Anglophone crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon through three interrelated objectives concerning educational needs, EiE interventions and implementation challenges. The evidence demonstrates that the crisis has produced a prolonged and multidimensional educational emergency in which insecurity, school closures, attacks on education, displacement, poverty, learning loss and psychological distress interact to undermine children's educational trajectories (Agbor et al., 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2021; UNICEF, 2025a). Education occupies a distinctive position because it formed part of the institutional grievances associated with the origins of the crisis and subsequently became one of the sectors most seriously affected by

armed violence (Beseng et al., 2023; Ndille, 2018). EiE must therefore be understood simultaneously as educational provision, humanitarian protection and a mechanism for longer-term recovery.

Regarding the first objective, the study identified needs for safe schooling, learning continuity, remedial and accelerated education, trained teachers, adequate infrastructure and materials, psychosocial support, water, sanitation and hygiene, disability inclusion, gender-responsive education and legal identity. These needs are closely linked, as insecurity causes school closures and displacement, disrupted schooling leads to learning loss, poverty limits participation and psychological distress may hinder learning after access is restored (INEE, 2024; Youmbi Mbenwol, 2026). Vulnerable learners face additional barriers, requiring educational recovery that integrates safety, access, learning, protection and equity.

Regarding the second objective, the study found considerable educational adaptation through Temporary Learning Spaces, community learning, radio education, remedial programmes, mental health and psychosocial support, disability-inclusive initiatives, menstrual-health support, teacher development and digital learning. These interventions have enabled thousands of crisis-affected children to continue learning and largely respond to identified educational needs (UNICEF, 2025c, 2026a, 2026c). However, their coverage remains insufficient, while evidence of long-term effectiveness relies largely on programme monitoring rather than independent evaluation. Education in Emergencies interventions are therefore essential, but gaps remain in coverage and evidence of sustained outcomes.

Regarding the third objective, persistent insecurity remains a major barrier to the accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of Education in Emergencies. Attacks on education, lockdowns, displacement, poverty, teacher shortages, learning loss, gender and disability inequalities, digital gaps and unstable humanitarian funding further constrain educational recovery (Human Rights Watch, 2021; UNICEF, 2025a, 2025b). Interventions may be available but inaccessible, accessible but inadequate, or effective only in the short term. Sustainable recovery therefore requires quality programmes supported by favourable institutional, economic and security conditions, consistent with the study's ecological and Humanitarian–Development–Peace perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; OECD, 2019).

A key conclusion is that reopening schools does not necessarily signify educational recovery. After prolonged disruption, returning learners may need assessment, remedial instruction, psychosocial support, social reintegration and assistance with economic or inclusion-related barriers. Temporary Learning Spaces, radio education and community learning should sustain education during crises rather than permanently replace formal schooling (INEE, 2024; UNICEF, 2026a). The long-term goal should therefore be safe, inclusive, well-resourced and resilient formal education.

The study therefore proposes a pathway that begins with emergency access, followed by continuity of learning, learning recovery, formal-school reintegration and educational resilience, leading ultimately to sustainable formal education in the North West and South West Regions. This pathway links humanitarian response to educational recovery and recognises that resilience depends on supportive institutional resources rather than individual endurance alone (Ungar, 2011). Educational recovery should therefore be assessed in terms of access, safety, learning, well-being and resilience, rather than enrolment or school reopening alone. Gender

responsiveness, disability inclusion, teacher well-being, protection and community participation should remain central throughout the process.

Ultimately, however, Education in Emergencies addresses the consequences of the Anglophone crisis rather than its fundamental political and security causes. Temporary classrooms can replace inaccessible buildings, radio can maintain learning during disruption, remedial programmes can reduce competency gaps and MHPSS can support children experiencing psychological distress, but none can permanently substitute for an environment in which learners and teachers can participate in education without fear (Human Rights Watch, 2021; OECD, 2019). Sustainable restoration of education therefore requires both continued educational innovation and progress toward a durable peaceful resolution of the wider crisis. Until such conditions are achieved, EiE will remain indispensable for protecting children's right to learn, their psychological wellbeing, their dignity and their future.

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