



RESEARCH ARTICLE

WHY DO CAMEROONIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS MASSIVELY MIGRATE TO CANADA?

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ABSTRACT

Teacher migration from Cameroon to Canada has become an increasingly visible trend, shaped by a complex interaction of push and pull factors within national and global labor markets. This study examines three key determinants such as professional development opportunities, work environment conditions, and salary prospects that influence Cameroonian secondary school teachers' decisions to migrate. Utilizing a mixed-methods design comprising questionnaires, stakeholder interviews (Cameroon's Ministry of Secondary Education and Ontario Ministry of Education), and documentary analysis, this study examines how restricted career progression and poor remuneration in Cameroon drive migration, while Canada's enhanced professional frameworks act as significant pull factors. By situating teacher mobility within broader educational governance, economic constraints, and international labor demand, the article contributes to ongoing debates on skilled workforce migration and teacher retention in Sub-Saharan Africa. The findings highlight the need for policy reforms that strengthen teacher professional development, improve working environments, and enhance compensation frameworks to reduce migration pressures and sustain the national education system.

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INTRODUCTION

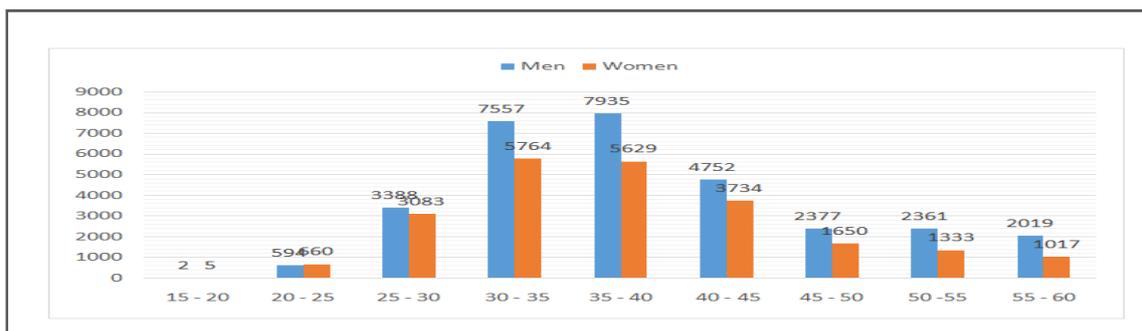
Cameroon's education system at large and Secondary Education subsector in particular is beset by multiple interrelated structural challenges that constrain its capacity to deliver quality learning and to meet the needs of a rapidly growing student population. A critical shortage of qualified teachers persists across the country, with many schools operating far above recommended pupil-teacher ratios, and limited access to in-service training undermining instructional quality and effectiveness (Agbor Smith Fombo, 2024; UNESCO, 2024). The available workforce is also disproportionately young and often insufficiently experienced to manage expanding classroom demands, contributing to concerns over teacher retention and educational outcomes. Simultaneously, rapid increases in student enrolment driven by population growth and policies expanding access have not been matched by proportional investments in physical infrastructure, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, inadequate sanitation, and limited basic facilities such as water and electricity (UNICEF, 2025; Broken Chalk, 2023). These infrastructure gaps extend to teaching and learning resources, with many schools lacking textbooks, laboratories, and technology to support effective pedagogy. Financial constraints further compound these issues; government budget allocations to education are still below UNESCO's recommended threshold, limiting capacity for hiring, teacher development, and infrastructure expansion (Engozo'o, 2025b; Stop BlablaCam, 2022; Mekolle, 2024). Collectively, these systemic challenges — a strained teacher workforce, burgeoning student enrolments, weak infrastructure, and tight financial resources shape the broader context in which secondary school teachers operate in Cameroon and help explain why many seek opportunities abroad.

Background and Context: International migration of skilled teachers has become an increasingly visible phenomenon in the global education landscape. Although teacher mobility has historically been examined largely through the lens of developed countries, recruiting educators internationally to address shortages, recent migration flows from Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Cameroon to destinations such as Canada reveal deeper structural inequalities in the global education workforce. This trend reflects not only the globalization of labor markets, but also the uneven distribution of professional opportunities, working conditions, and career advancement pathways across national education systems. In many low- and middle-income countries, persistent challenges such as limited professional development opportunities, inadequate school resources, administrative constraints, and low or irregular salaries contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and migration aspirations (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2023). In the Cameroonian context, secondary school teacher migration has become increasingly associated with broader patterns of skilled labor outflows, often described as "brain drain," in which trained professionals relocate to countries offering stronger institutional support and better economic prospects. The education sector is not immune to this process. Teachers—

particularly those with higher qualifications, bilingual (French and English) competencies, and transferable professional skills—are increasingly drawn toward countries with more stable work environments, structured career progression, and higher remuneration (Feng, 2009; Feng, 2011; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). Canada has emerged as a particularly attractive destination due to its demand for skilled workers, pathways for permanent residency, and relatively favorable employment conditions for educators. Recent immigration statistics illustrate the scale of this mobility. For example, nearly 20,000 Cameroonians were reportedly granted permanent residency in Canada through economic immigration streams in 2024, signaling intensified professional migration among educated Cameroonians, including teachers (Mforlem, 2025). This figure is significant because it suggests that teacher migration should not be treated as an isolated education issue, but rather as part of a larger national and regional pattern of professional migration. Consequently, understanding the determinants of Cameroonian secondary school teachers' migration to Canada requires attention to both push factors within Cameroon—such as limited professional growth opportunities, poor work environments, and salary constraints—and pull factors in Canada, including professional recognition, improved working conditions, and economic stability (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

This article explores three principal determinants of the migration of Cameroonian secondary school teachers to Canada, professional development opportunities, work environment conditions, and salary prospects through the veins of the push–pull migration framework. A growing body of research demonstrates that limited access to continuous professional development and in-service training in Cameroon contributes to teachers' dissatisfaction and desire to seek opportunities abroad (Agbor Smith Fombo, 2024; Tendongmoh & Didimus, 2023). Professional growth disparities act as *push factors* when teachers cannot access meaningful advancement locally, while structured professional learning communities and mentoring systems in Canada act as *pull factors* by offering clear pathways for skill enhancement and career growth (Mitchell et al., 2024; Canadian visa and immigration analyses, 2024). Similarly, adverse work environment conditions in many Cameroonian secondary schools — characterized by inadequate infrastructure, heavy workloads, and poor support — have been linked to low morale and professional dissatisfaction, reinforcing outward mobility intentions (Ngo Djon, 2024). In contrast, schools in Canada generally provide supportive work environments, with collaborative teaching cultures and resources that improve job satisfaction (MdC Canada, 2024). Finally, salary differentials between Cameroon and OECD countries such as Canada remain a critical driver of migration, as remuneration in Cameroon's public sector often fails to match cost-of-living needs, whereas competitive salaries and benefits abroad *pull* teachers toward international professional opportunities (La Voix des Entreprises, 2025). Together, these determinants illustrate how adverse structural conditions in Cameroon push teachers toward emigration, while attractive professional and economic prospects in Canada pull them abroad in pursuit of improved careers and livelihoods. The teaching staff in public General Secondary Education (GSE) institutions in Cameroon is predominantly young, with a significant concentration in the 30–40 age range. This demographic skew reflects structural shifts in public employment over the past decade. In particular, a largescale special recruitment of 25,000 young graduates into the civil service was launched in 2011, under governmental decree, as part of an expansive hiring drive across the public sector, including education. The special recruitment was explicitly designed to integrate *young graduates* into state employment, significantly enlarging the pool of young professionals entering the public service, including the Education and Training Sector. Additionally, subsequent recruitments incorporated early cohorts from teacher training institutions such as the Higher Teacher Training College of Maroua, further reinforcing this youthful cohort within the teacher workforce. The result of these policy actions has been a sharp rise in teacher numbers in the 30–35 and 35–40 age groups, largely irrespective of gender, as these recruits have matured within the system and now occupy core instructional roles. Although detailed age profile data specific to GSE teachers are not centrally published in recent public statistics, the recruitment emphasis on newly graduated teachers and the integration of training college graduates naturally privileges younger age cohorts, producing a workforce where middle career professionals dominate. Looking ahead, human resource projections suggest a looming shift in the age structure of the teacher workforce. Based on retirement age and current age distributions, models indicate that a substantial cohort of teachers estimated at around 6,730 educators will exit the system through statutory retirement by 2032. While official statistical breakdowns for this projection are typically generated through ministry workforce planning tools rather than public dissemination, these forecasts align with demographic expectations: the very cohorts that were heavily recruited in the early 2010s will be approaching retirement age by the early 2030s, creating both turnover and potential gaps in instructional capacity. The current youthful profile of Cameroon's GSE teaching staff is the product of deliberate recruitment policies and the incorporation of early training institution cohorts over the past decade, but demographic momentum now points toward significant attrition due to retirement in the coming decade, with implications for workforce planning and teacher supply strategies.

Graph 1. Distribution of Cameroonian Secondary School Teachers per Age Group and Gender



Source: MINESEC 2022

Learning conditions in Cameroon's public secondary schools are widely recognized as unfavorable, largely due to persistent shortages in school infrastructure, classrooms, and basic teaching resources. This challenge affects both General Secondary Education (GSE) and Technical and Vocational Secondary Education (TVSE), although it is often more acute in TVSE institutions where workshops, laboratories, and specialized learning spaces are required in addition to standard classrooms. The mismatch between enrolment growth and infrastructure expansion has therefore become one of the most visible indicators of strain within the secondary education system. A major manifestation of this strain is the phenomenon of overcrowded classrooms, which undermines effective teaching and learning. Overcrowding reduces teacher–learner interaction, limits classroom management, and weakens assessment quality, especially in large classes where individual follow-up becomes nearly impossible. Studies on learning environments consistently show that excessive class size negatively affects instructional quality, learner engagement, and overall academic performance, particularly for students who require additional support (Blatchford, Russell, & Brown, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). In the Cameroonian context, overcrowding also contributes to teacher stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction, factors that can reinforce intentions to exit the profession or seek better working conditions abroad. National policy documents have long recognized the importance of reducing class size to improve learning outcomes. According to projections in Cameroon's Education and Training Sector Strategy, the target pupil–classroom ratio for public secondary education was set at 36 students per classroom by 2024. This benchmark aligns with international recommendations that advocate for manageable class sizes as a foundation for quality education delivery (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). However, current realities show a wide gap between policy targets and actual conditions. The pupil–classroom ratio in public secondary institutions stands at approximately 75 students per classroom, more than double the intended target. By contrast, private secondary schools average about 27 students per classroom, highlighting significant inequality in learning conditions between public and private education providers.

This contrast reflects deeper structural challenges. Public secondary education remains the primary destination for most Cameroonian learners, especially those from low-income households who cannot afford private school fees. Yet government secondary schools have struggled to keep pace with increasing enrolment pressures, especially in urban centers where population growth, rural–urban migration, and high demand for schooling converge. As a result, many schools operate with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient furniture, and inadequate facilities, conditions that compromise the achievement of national education quality goals (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). Regional variations in pupil–classroom ratios further illustrate the complexity of the situation. In the North-West and South-West regions, relatively lower pupil–classroom ratios have been observed. However, this does not necessarily reflect improved infrastructure or better learning conditions. Instead, it is largely linked to internal student displacement and declining school attendance resulting from the ongoing security crisis in these regions. The crisis has disrupted schooling, displaced families, and reduced enrolment in many public schools, thereby lowering classroom density. In contrast, in nearly all other regions of the country, pupil–classroom ratios remain significantly above the national target of 36 students per classroom, confirming that overcrowding is not an isolated challenge but a systemic one across Cameroon's public secondary education subsector. From a broader perspective, overcrowded classrooms have implications beyond student learning outcomes. They contribute directly to teacher workload intensification, reduced job satisfaction, and declining professional morale. Large class sizes increase lesson preparation demands, classroom management difficulties, and marking burdens. Teachers working in such environments often experience professional frustration because they are unable to implement learner-centered approaches or provide individualized support. Research suggests that challenging work environments particularly overcrowded classrooms—are associated with higher teacher attrition and stronger migration intentions, especially when combined with low salaries and limited professional development opportunities (Borman & Dowling, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

Rapid Growth in Student Enrolment from 2021–22 to 2023–24: An analysis of school demography in Cameroon's secondary education subsector between the 2021–2022 and 2023–2024 academic years shows a clear and sustained rise in student enrolment. Over this period, total enrolment increased from 1,981,888 learners in 2021–2022 to 2,047,079 learners in 2023–2024, representing an overall growth of approximately 3.3%. Although the percentage increase may appear modest, the absolute gain of more than 65,000 additional students within a short period is significant for a system already facing structural constraints in staffing, infrastructure, and resource allocation. This upward trajectory strongly suggests expanded access to secondary education, likely influenced by a combination of demographic growth, increased transition rates from primary to secondary school, and stronger policy commitments to universal education. In many developing contexts, rising enrolment is commonly interpreted as a sign of improved educational participation and reduced barriers to schooling (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2022). In Cameroon, the steady increase may also reflect improvements in school coverage, community sensitization on the value of education, and national and international efforts to support inclusive education (Engozo'o 2025a). Importantly, the data indicate that public sector enrolment increased significantly, with growth observed among both female and male students. This pattern is particularly relevant because government secondary schools remain the main provider of affordable education for the majority of Cameroonian households. Increased public enrolment may signal a growing reliance on state education due to economic pressures affecting families, as well as the expansion of public school infrastructure and staffing in some regions. It also suggests that public education continues to serve as a central mechanism for promoting educational equity. The rise in enrolment between both genders further indicates progress toward broader inclusion, especially as gender disparities in education remain a persistent concern across many sub-Saharan African contexts. Global education monitoring reports consistently emphasize that increasing female participation in secondary education is a critical indicator of social development, human capital formation, and long-term poverty reduction (UNESCO, 2023; UNICEF, 2022). Therefore, the observed enrolment growth may reflect gradual improvements in gender-sensitive education strategies, such as community mobilization, scholarship support, and the promotion of girls' retention in school. However, rapid enrolment growth also has important implications for system performance. When student numbers rise faster than investments in classrooms, teaching personnel, and learning materials, the result is often overcrowding, increased teacher workload, and declining instructional quality (World Bank, 2022).

In Cameroon, where many public secondary schools already operate under resource constraints, sustained increases in enrolment can intensify pressures on the work environment—potentially contributing to teacher dissatisfaction, burnout, and attrition. This is particularly relevant to research on teacher migration, since a growing student population without proportional improvements in working conditions may function as a major push factor. The steady growth in secondary school enrolment between 2021–2022 and 2023–2024 reflects an encouraging expansion in access, especially within the public education sector and across both genders. Nevertheless, it also highlights the urgent need for proportional investments in teacher recruitment, professional support, infrastructure, and learning resources to ensure that increased access translates into improved educational quality and sustainable workforce stability.

Table 1: Trends in Student Enrolment from 2021–2022 to 2023–2024 in General Secondary Education (SGE) and Technical and Vocational Secondary Education (TVSE), by Region, Education Agency, and Sex

School Year	Education agency						Cameroon		
	Government			Private			Girls	Boys	Total
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total			
2021-22	629,272	757,041	1,386,313	307,170	288,405	595,575	936,442	1,045,446	1,981,888
2022-23	631,318	761,312	1,392,630	316,378	296,212	612,590	947,696	1,057,524	2,005,220
2023-24	650,676	761,267	1,411,943	327,312	307,824	635,136	977,988	1,069,091	2,047,079

Source: MINESEC 2024

Overcrowded Classrooms in Government Secondary Schools: Overcrowded classrooms represent a major structural constraint within Cameroon's public secondary education system. The gap between national policy targets and actual classroom realities underscores persistent underinvestment in school infrastructure, uneven regional dynamics, and growing inequality between public and private education. These conditions not only undermine learning quality but also create difficult working environments for teachers, thereby reinforcing the push factors that may contribute to teacher mobility and migration to countries such as Canada.

Table 2: Student-to-Classroom Ratio (Classrooms in Good Condition) by region and by education agency

Region	Government			Private
	SGE	TVSE	SGE + TVSE	
ADAMAWA	81	85	82	20
CENTER	79	81	80	23
EAST	93	100	96	29
FAR-NORTH	89	105	92	31
LITTORAL	81	53	74	30
NORTH	98	117	102	28
NORTH-WEST	21	34	25	45
WEST	73	78	74	27
SOUTH	72	68	71	19
SOUTH-WEST	45	47	46	34
CAMEROON	75	74	75	27

Source: MINESEC, 2024

Deficit of Qualified Teachers in the Secondary Education Subsector: The 2022 Study Report on Teacher Staff Needs in General Secondary Education, commissioned by Cameroon's Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC), highlights a significant imbalance between the distribution of qualified teachers and the instructional demands across subject areas. According to the report, teacher shortages pervade nearly all disciplines in General Secondary Education, with only a few subjects such as Physics–Chemistry–Technology and Life and Earth Sciences showing relatively adequate staffing levels. In contrast, the three core foundational subjects French, Mathematics, and English face the most acute deficits, with 1,865 French teachers, 1,718 Mathematics teachers, and 1,346 English teachers lacking relative to required staffing norms (MINESEC, 2022). This uneven distribution of teaching personnel reflects broader systemic challenges in Cameroon's education sector: rapid growth in student enrolments without commensurate expansion of the teacher workforce, difficulties in recruitment and deployment, and persistent gaps between demand and supply of qualified educators in vital disciplines. The shortages in French and English not only undermine the bilingual mandate of the national curriculum but also impact student achievement in language competencies crucial for academic progression (MINESEC, 2022). Similarly, the deficit of qualified Mathematics teachers aligns with global patterns of teacher scarcity in STEM subjects, where recruitment and retention difficulties are well documented due to alternative career opportunities and rigor of subject matter (OECD, 2024).

Academic research underscores the adverse effects of teacher shortages on educational quality and student outcomes, particularly in core subjects that underpin cognitive development and long-term learning trajectories (Darling Hammond et al., 2024). In the Cameroonian context, critical shortages have been linked to increasing teacher workloads, larger class sizes, reduced instructional time, and uneven pedagogical coverage, which collectively exacerbate disparities in educational access and achievement. These staffing imbalances also contribute indirectly to teacher migration pressures, as educators seek better working conditions, professional support, and workload management opportunities abroad. This notable increase in the share of temporary or contract teachers reflects deeper structural challenges in Cameroon's secondary education workforce management. Data from the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) show a rising reliance on nonpermanent teaching staff over recent years, a trend that mirrors both persistent teacher shortages and limitations in formal civil service recruitment pipelines. For example, in the 2021–2022 statistical yearbook, contract teachers accounted for a significant category of the secondary school workforce alongside civil servants and other part time instructors, underscoring their contribution to maintaining classroom operations in the face of growing

student enrolments and educational expansion efforts. The expansion of the contract teacher cohort can be interpreted as a stopgap response to the inability of regular civil service recruitment processes to keep pace with rising demand for qualified teachers. Although the government continues to recruit into the civil service, bureaucratic delays, limited budgetary quotas for permanent posts, and the logistical complexities of rural and conflict affected postings have constrained the speed and scale of formal hiring.

As a result, contractual appointments have grown more prominent, allowing schools to fill vacancies quickly but often without the long-term job security, benefits, and professional development pathways associated with tenure. This shift has implications for teacher motivation, retention, and the overall quality of instruction, as temporary contracts typically offer less stability and weaker incentives for long-term professional commitment. In the broader labor market context, a rising share of contract teachers signals persistent unmet staffing needs and may contribute to push factors in teacher migration. Teachers facing precarious employment conditions at home including short-term contracts, uncertain renewal prospects, and uneven integration into the civil service may be more inclined to explore opportunities abroad where employment conditions and professional recognition are perceived to be more stable and attractive. This dynamic helps explain why, even amid ongoing recruitment efforts, reliance on temporary staff has grown and why migration to destinations like Canada remains a salient trend among Cameroonian educators.

A Budget Largely Allocated to Teachers' Salaries (2014–2024): An examination of budgetary allocations to Cameroon's Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) between 2014 and 2024 reveals a clear pattern: while the ministry's overall budget share has gradually improved, the structure of spending remains heavily dominated by recurrent expenditures, especially teachers' salaries. Over the period under review, MINESEC's share of the national budget rose from 6.5% in 2014 to 8.07% in 2024, indicating a relative strengthening of the secondary education sub-sector within national fiscal priorities. This upward trend suggests a growing recognition of the importance of secondary education in human capital development, youth employability, and national productivity. In the same direction, MINESEC's weight within the education sector budget also expanded, reaching 57.53% in 2024, meaning that more than half of Cameroon's education spending was directed toward secondary education. However, these gains in aggregate allocation mask a persistent challenge related to the composition and efficiency of spending. Throughout the 2014–2024 period, the recurrent budget consistently absorbed around 80% of MINESEC's total resources. This recurrent envelope largely covers teachers' salaries, allowances, administrative operating costs, and other routine expenditures.

While teacher compensation is essential since teachers are the core drivers of learning outcomes this spending pattern has produced a structural imbalance in sector financing. The dominance of recurrent expenditure has occurred to the detriment of the Public Investment Budget (PIB), which is the component responsible for long-term development spending such as school construction, classroom rehabilitation, science laboratories, ICT infrastructure, libraries, teacher housing, sanitation facilities, and instructional equipment. As a result, MINESEC has remained constrained in its ability to modernize infrastructure, improve learning environments, and support innovations that would strengthen teaching effectiveness and student performance. This pattern aligns with broader public finance analyses in education systems across sub-Saharan Africa, where the education wage bill frequently consumes the largest share of resources, leaving limited fiscal space for quality-enhancing investments (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). In Cameroon's case, the long-term consequence is that the secondary education sub-sector risks becoming a system that pays for personnel but struggles to adequately finance learning conditions, curriculum implementation, and educational transformation. To support sustainable development in secondary education, a substantial increase in capital investment is therefore necessary. Expanding the PIB would allow the government to address infrastructure gaps, reduce overcrowding, improve pedagogical resources, and create school environments that promote teacher motivation and professional satisfaction. This is particularly important in a context where poor working conditions, limited professional development opportunities, and weak institutional support contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and may indirectly reinforce migration intentions among qualified educators. While MINESEC's rising budget share between 2014 and 2024 reflects an encouraging policy direction, the persistent dominance of recurrent spending largely salaries highlights the need for a more balanced budget structure. Strengthening investment expenditure is essential if Cameroon's secondary education system is to achieve sustainable improvement in quality, equity, and teacher retention.

Table 3: Evolution of the Budget Allocated to MINESEC in Relation to the National Budget and the Education and Training Sector Budget, 2014–2024

Year	MINESEC's Share of the National Budget	MINESEC's Share of the Education Sector Budget	Operating Budget (in billions)	PIB (in billions)
2014	6.5%	48.26%	211,837	20.79
2015	6.6%	48.26%	226,978	24.5
2016	6.1%	46.62%	224,444	21.624
2017	7.8%	49.79%	295,383	23.614
2018	7.79%	54.30%	344,526	20.685
2019	9.88%	55.55%	374,759	18.320
2020	8.20%	55.91%	388,726	16.209
2021	7.40%	52.83%	379,157	7.797
2022	7.15%	54.86%	389,967	10.300
2023	7.4%	55.8%	451,784	9.424
2024	8.07%	57.53%	524,877	14.365

Source: Budget Acts from 2013 to 2024, MINESEC, 2022, 2023, 2024

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional Development and Career Mobility: Professional growth opportunities including access to advanced training, certification, and recognition of credentials are central to understanding why secondary school teachers from Cameroon may

choose to migrate to destinations like Canada. For skilled educators, the promise of meaningful professional development and enhanced career mobility forms both a *push* factor (limited prospects at home) and a *pull* factor (perceived opportunities abroad). At the heart of professional development challenges for internationally trained educators is credential recognition. In Canada, teaching is a *regulated profession*, meaning that to practice; educators must have their qualifications assessed and approved by provincial authorities before obtaining the legal certification to teach. This process often involves detailed evaluation of foreign credentials, bridging courses, and sometimes additional local training steps that can be lengthy, costly, and complex. The *Foreign Credential Recognition Program* in Canada has been expanded to support internationally educated professionals (including teachers), and includes efforts to accelerate assessments and provide support for training and labor-market integration. However, despite these policy efforts, many internationally trained educators still face structural barriers in getting full recognition of their professional qualifications. Empirical educational research further underscores the significance of such professional development hurdles. Marom and Xu (2025) emphasize that Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) in the Canadian K–12 system frequently encounter systemic challenges in having their international experience and expertise recognized as professionally legitimate. Their study highlights that, even in the context of teacher shortages, IETs' international professional capital that is, the skills, knowledge, and experience gained abroad is often *devalued* relative to credentials obtained within Canada, and this devaluation can affect hiring, integration, and career progression. Such barriers are intertwined with institutional practices and perceptions about what counts as "local" professional expertise, which shape IETs' opportunities for advancement and meaningful professional growth once they arrive. Other research reinforces this dynamic: some literature reviews and qualitative studies show that IETs must not only navigate credential evaluation processes, but also *re-socialize* their professional identities in line with expectations in Canadian school contexts. Workplace interactions, professional networks, and institutional norms all influence how IETs can translate prior experience into recognized competencies and career trajectories. Studies by Morrisette and colleagues highlight how internationally trained teachers adapt their pedagogical knowledge, classroom practices, and self-conceptions in response to new professional environments—and how these processes are central to their ongoing professional development and positional mobility within Canadian schools.

In addition, research on professional integration emphasizes that the *structure and culture of professional learning environments* significantly affect IETs' career mobility. For example, ongoing professional learning opportunities, mentoring, and peer support are factors that can either facilitate or hinder effective integration. Barriers such as limited access to locally relevant professional development, unfamiliar evaluation standards, and insufficient professional networks not only delay full certification but may also slow career progression long after entry into the workforce. Taken together, these studies suggest that professional development and career mobility for internationally trained teachers in Canada are shaped by both formal systems of credential recognition and informal professional dynamics within educational workplaces. For Cameroonian secondary school teachers considering migration, these factors are often part of the calculus: the promise of structured professional growth, clearer pathways to in-service training and potential for advancing one's teaching career contribute to Canada's attraction, while the challenges in achieving these outcomes reflect broader systemic issues that influence teacher mobility globally.

In the Cameroonian education system, weaknesses in teacher training and professional development are well documented, and scholars have linked these structural gaps to both diminished instructional quality and teacher dissatisfaction. Agbor Smith Fombo (2024) found that significant disparities in access to teacher training and professional development persist across urban and rural regions of Cameroon, with rural teachers facing much greater obstacles in obtaining meaningful learning opportunities and continuing education aligned with classroom needs. This uneven access limits the effectiveness of CPD programs and reinforces outdated teaching practices that do not adequately prepare educators for contemporary pedagogical demands. Similarly, Benazia and Lawyer (2025) demonstrate that overreliance on traditional teaching methods and psychological barriers such as hesitancy toward ICT integration hinder professional growth among Cameroonian secondary teachers. Their study highlights that entrenched pedagogical routines in the absence of robust, context-sensitive training restrict teachers' abilities to innovate and adapt to modern classroom environments, further widening the gap between training content and significant instructional challenges. The issue is not only about access but also the relevance of training themselves. Recent research by Brenda Nachuah Lawyer (2026) illustrates that current professionalization strategies in Cameroon often lack alignment with 21st-century skills, such as education for sustainable development, digital integration, and student-centered pedagogies (Engozo'o, 2024). These gaps indicate a professional development regime that remains largely ineffective in responding to the complex demands of modern education, thereby limiting teachers' confidence in the system's ability to support their long-term growth. Moreover, systemic shortcomings in teacher education including outdated curricula, limited institutional support, and insufficient follow-up after workshops undermine the potential of CPD to bridge theory and practice. Qualitative evidence shows that many professional development initiatives in Cameroon fail to provide sustained, practical guidance for teachers once they return to classrooms, reducing the transfer of learned skills to everyday teaching tasks. Taken together, these weaknesses in the design, delivery, and accessibility of teacher training and professional development suggest that many Cameroonian teachers feel professionally under-prepared and unsupported. This perception likely acts as a push factor in migration decisions, as teachers seek educational systems abroad such as in Canada where professional growth pathways, resources, and mentoring structures are more robust and responsive to classroom realities.

Work Environment and Job Satisfaction: The quality of the work environment is widely recognized as a critical determinant of teacher retention, job satisfaction, and ultimately professional mobility, including migration. In the context of Cameroon, recent empirical research documents pervasive stressors and structural deficiencies in secondary school working conditions that undermine teachers' wellbeing and professional fulfilment. For example, Nkelzok Komtsindi, Kutche Tamghe, and Tadaha Moffo (2025) found that secondary school teachers in Cameroon experience *very high levels of professional stress*, significantly associated with poor physical and organizational work conditions such as heavy workloads, inadequate facilities, and limited

psychosocial support, highlighting how an uncondusive work environment contributes to teacher strain and dissatisfaction. Similarly, Asse, Fouda Ongodo, and Teupet (2025) showed that environmental factors including the availability of teaching materials, equipment, and adequate resources — strongly influence the wellbeing of secondary teachers in Douala, with poor conditions correlating with lower job wellbeing and potentially higher turnover intentions. Illustrating the broader psychosocial impact, a cross-sectional study in Douala reported *high prevalence of burnout, psychological distress, and anxiety* among teachers, particularly at primary and secondary levels, linked to poor job perception and interpersonal workplace factors, which can erode commitment to the profession and fuel intentions to leave the education sector or seek opportunities abroad.

Moreover, advocacy and sector reports emphasize that challenging conditions including inadequate infrastructure, lack of basic amenities in rural postings, and work overload diminish teacher morale and contribute to the current malaise within the profession, which in turn can motivate migration to contexts perceived as supportive and professionally rewarding. Recent research and reports highlight the challenging work environment faced by teachers in Cameroon, which contributes to diminished job satisfaction and may drive migration intentions. Empirical evidence from the public secondary education sector reveals that teachers experience high levels of occupational stress due to poor working conditions, including inadequate physical environments, excessive workloads, and limited institutional support, all of which negatively affect their wellbeing and professional commitment (Nkelzok Komtsindi, Kutche Tamghé, & Tadaha Moffo, 2025). Moreover, external analyses describe the profession as increasingly demoralized and socially marginalized, noting that reductions in living and working conditions since the 1990s such as lack of housing and basic infrastructure in rural areas, overcrowded classrooms, and subjective appointment processes—have weakened morale and professional identity among educators (Ngo Djon, 2024). A unionfocused report also underscores the symbolic and economic deterioration of the teaching profession, where limited respect, precarious employment conditions, and inadequate recognition exacerbate teachers' dissatisfaction and fuel advocacy for better status and support (Kaffo, as cited in EI Global, 2024). These conditions are seasoned with widespread infrastructure deficits in schools and resource shortages that make effective teaching difficult, particularly in underfunded and rural contexts, further undermining teachers' ability to perform and remain motivated (Broken Chalk, 2026). Collectively, these studies paint a picture of a profession struggling with structural constraints insufficient infrastructure, scarce resources, high workload stress, and social undervaluation that can weaken teachers' attachment to their jobs and encourage them to pursue opportunities abroad, including in countries like Canada where working conditions and professional prospects are perceived as more favorable.

Salary Prospects and Economic Drivers: Economic considerations are widely cited in migration research as key determinants of skilled worker mobility, with teacher remuneration and financial security being central push factors in many contexts. Although systematic quantitative studies specifically measuring salary related migration intentions among Cameroonian secondary teachers are limited, broader analyses and reports on the education sector indicate persistent challenges with low pay, wage arrears, and poor comparative compensation. For example, education sector unions and advocacy groups note that teacher salaries in Cameroon remain low relative to other professions with similar educational qualifications, contributing to declining professional status and motivating some educators to consider opportunities abroad (Education International, 2024; Turn1search4). Budget execution reports also show significant arrears in salary payments for educators, with secondary teachers absorbing a large share of government back pay liabilities while important arrears remain unresolved, reflecting fiscal stress and delayed compensation (News du Cameroun, 2025). Media accounts further document cases where newly recruited teachers go months without pay, undermining income stability and pushing educators toward alternative livelihood strategies, including international migration (Mimi Mefo Info, 2022; Turn0search1).

In the broader African context, research on teacher pay revealed that in several Sub Saharan countries teachers' earnings are comparatively low relative to other formal sector workers with similar qualifications, reinforcing the economic logic of migration for better remuneration and career prospects (Evans et al., 2022). Together, these findings align with migration theory that economic push factors particularly inadequate salary prospects and irregular payment structures significantly influence teachers' decisions to pursue opportunities in countries like Canada, where compensation, benefits, and stability are perceived as more favorable. Moreover, recent research on teacher migration highlights that economic pull factors such as higher salaries and improved living conditions in destination countries like Canada play a significant role in motivating teachers to leave Cameroon. In a critical examination of the phenomenon, Abdourhaman (2024) situates the emigration of Cameroonian teachers within the broader context of global labor mobility, noting that educators perceive better remuneration and enhanced quality of life abroad as central drivers of their decision to migrate (Abdourhaman, 2024). This aligns with OECD data showing that comparative salary prospects and relative earnings influence teachers' attractiveness to remain in or leave the profession, where disparities between domestic earnings and those available in higher income countries act as incentives for mobility (OECD, 2025).

Empirical evidence from broader international migration literature further supports this view : teachers from lower income contexts often face significantly lower pay compared with developed countries, and potential earnings abroad especially when adjusted for purchasing power serve as a strong economic incentive to migrate (Caribbean salary differentials illustrating higher earnings in Canada relative to origin countries). Collectively, these studies reinforce the idea that economic pull factors, particularly improved salary prospects and living conditions, interplay with professional motivations to shape teacher migration decisions toward Canada.

Migration Trends and Broader Labor Dynamics: Recent institutional reports and media coverage have highlighted an escalating exodus of Cameroonian secondary school teachers, a phenomenon that underscores significant structural deficiencies within the nation's academic framework and the compelling allure of international prospects. According to Communiqué no. 006/26/MINESEC/SG/DRH/SDDRH/SFS, issued on 23 February 2026, official data collection at national airports has identified

3,442 secondary school teachers who have departed the country, many of whom have relocated to destinations such as Canada. Supplementary reports suggest a more expansive crisis, with some estimates indicating that the number of Cameroonian teachers now residing and working abroad may exceed 10,000. This substantial migratory trend is placing severe strain on the domestic education system, leading to significant staffing gaps and the proliferation of "ghost workers" on the state payroll. Such departures are primarily driven by persistent economic hardship, suboptimal working environments, and a lack of professional advancement, compelling highly skilled educators to seek more lucrative and stable careers overseas. However, research on IETs in Canada reveals that being recruited does not guarantee smooth professional integration. Empirical work by Marom and Xu (2025) demonstrates that IETs often face systemic barriers during hiring and credential recognition where "*international capital*" (foreign professional experience and qualifications) is devalued relative to locally trained teachers leading many qualified migrants to work in temporary or underutilized roles early in their Canadian careers. Studies also note that credentialing processes can be long, complex, with high costs, and unclear pathways, which can delay or deter teachers from fully entering the profession despite ongoing shortages. Combined, these media reports and scholarly findings suggest that the Cameroon Canada teacher migration reflects both push factors (structural and economic pressures in Cameroon) and pull factors (labor demand and professional prospects in Canada), while also highlighting the nuanced challenges of professional integration that migrant teachers encounter even after relocation.

Push–Pull Synthesis: Teacher Migration from Cameroon to Canada: The migration of Cameroonian secondary school teachers to Canada can be effectively analyzed using the push–pull framework, which conceptualizes migration as a function of factors that drive individuals away from their home country (push factors) and those that attract them to a destination country (pull factors).

Push Factors in Cameroon: Cameroon's education sector presents several structural and systemic challenges that act as push factors for teacher migration. Limited professional development opportunities restrict teachers' access to advanced training, career advancement, and skill diversification, leaving many feeling professionally stagnant (Costa, 2023; Tendongmoh & Didimus, 2023). Additionally, challenging work environments including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials, poor infrastructure, and high administrative burdens—create stress and reduce job satisfaction (Abdourhaman, 2024; Oyono, 2024). Finally, poor remuneration and delayed salary payments further exacerbate dissatisfaction, undermining teachers' economic security and professional morale (EI, 2024). These push factors combine to create a strong incentive for qualified teachers to explore opportunities abroad where their skills and qualifications may be better recognized and rewarded.

Pull Factors in Canada: Conversely, Canada presents a set of pull factors that make it an attractive destination for skilled educators. The country's high demand for qualified teachers, particularly in certain provinces and specialized subjects, offers clear pathways for employment (Marom & Xu, 2025). Supportive work contexts, characterized by modern facilities, structured professional development programs, and collegial work environments, enhance both job satisfaction and career growth. Moreover, competitive salary structures and benefits, coupled with relative economic stability, offer financial security that contrasts sharply with the uncertainties faced in Cameroon. These pull factors collectively create a compelling incentive for Cameroonian teachers to migrate, as they promise both professional fulfillment and improved living standards.

Synthesis: When analyzed through the push–pull lens, teacher migration emerges as a strategic response to the interplay of constraints and opportunities. In Cameroon, structural deficiencies professional stagnation, unsupportive working conditions, and inadequate compensation push educators to seek alternative environments. In Canada, demand-driven labor shortages, supportive institutional structures, and attractive economic rewards pull teachers toward migration. Understanding this dynamic is essential for policymakers seeking to retain skilled educators in Cameroon, as it highlights that migration is not merely a matter of individual choice, but a rational response to systemic challenges and comparative advantages.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the determinants of teacher attrition from Cameroon to Canada, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to provide both breadth and depth in understanding the phenomenon. A survey was conducted among 250 Cameroonian secondary school teachers currently employed in Canada. The target population included teachers across multiple provinces, representing various subjects and years of teaching experience, to ensure a comprehensive overview of migration determinants. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire, designed to measure respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding three key factors: professional development opportunities, work environment and salary prospects. The Likert scale allowed respondents to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each item, facilitating the quantification of perceptions and enabling statistical analysis of the relative influence of each factor on migration intentions. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to capture an institutional perspective on teacher migration. Participants included principals from Cameroonian secondary schools, providing insights into local workforce management, teacher satisfaction, and retention challenges. Regional councilors, who could contextualize trends across Regional and Local Authorities and highlight systemic issues affecting teacher motivation. Senior officials from the central services of the Ministry of Secondary Education of Cameroon and the Ontario Ministry of Education, offering comparative insights into policy frameworks, recruitment practices, and strategies addressing teacher shortages or migration. Semi-structured interviews allowed an open-ended exploration of complex factors influencing teacher attrition, including systemic bottlenecks, policy inadequacies, and cross-national labor dynamics, which may not be fully captured through structured surveys. Combining surveys and interviews ensured a triangulation of data sources, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings. While the survey provided

quantitative evidence of individual teacher motivations and perceptions, interviews captured qualitative insights into institutional, structural, and policy-related drivers of teacher migration. This integrative approach provides a holistic understanding of why Cameroonian secondary school teachers choose to migrate to Canada and the interplay of professional, organizational, and economic determinants.

FINDINGS

This section presents the results on the determinants of Cameroonian secondary school teachers' migration to Canada, with emphasis on professional development opportunities, work environment conditions, and salary prospects. It gives a summary of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Data: Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to migration intentions and motivating factors. Responses were rated as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) were used to summarize respondents' perceptions and identify the most influential determinants. Higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement that the factor contributes to teachers' decision to migrate, while lower mean scores suggest weaker influence. The findings are presented under three thematic areas corresponding to the study objectives, providing a clear understanding of how professional growth opportunities, working conditions, and expected financial benefits shape migration decisions among secondary school teachers in Cameroon.

Table 4: Variables

• Professional Development Opportunities								
Item	Statement		SA	A	Un	DA	SDA	Mean
1	I had access to in-service training to improve my teaching skills.	<i>f_i</i>	82	112	33	9	14	3.96
		%	32.7	44.9	13.2	3.5	5.7	
2	My institution encouraged professional development and training.	<i>f_i</i>	72	78	42	34	24	3.56
		%	28.7	31.3	16.8	13.5	9.7	
3	I felt motivated to participate in teacher training days.	<i>f_i</i>	75	91	31	32	21	3.67
		%	30.0	36.4	12.4	12.9	8.3	
4	The professional development opportunities suited my needs as a teacher.	<i>f_i</i>	48	98	57	27	21	3.50
		%	19.1	39.1	22.9	10.7	8.3	
• Work Environment								
5	I felt supported by my superiors on a daily basis.	<i>f_i</i>	25	136	39	31	20	3.46
		%	10.0	54.4	15.5	12.3	7.9	
6	The material and educational resources available to me were sufficient.	<i>f_i</i>	124	36	36	38	15	3.87
		%	49.7	14.5	14.4	15.2	6.1	
7	The working environment (classrooms, staff rooms, etc.) was conducive to teaching and learning.	<i>f_i</i>	41	104	43	21	42	3.32
		%	16.5	41.5	17.1	8.3	16.7	
8	The students in my last duty post in Cameroon were disciplined.	<i>f_i</i>	84	102	34	23	8	3.92
		%	33.5	40.7	13.6	9.2	3.1	
• Salary Prospects								
9	I believe my remuneration was fair in relation to my responsibilities.	<i>f_i</i>	74	85	32	27	33	3.56
		%	29.6	33.9	12.7	10.7	13.2	
10	I think my remuneration was sufficient to cover my basic needs.	<i>f_i</i>	82	107	37	24	---	3.99
		%	32.9	42.7	14.7	9.7	---	
11	I was satisfied with the salary increases I received during my years of service.	<i>f_i</i>	91	94	31	24	11	3.92
		%	36.4	37.5	12.3	9.5	4.4	
12	I believe that teachers' remuneration should be increased to reflect their work.	<i>f_i</i>	75	105	---	50	20	3.66
		%	29.9	42.1	---	20.1	7.9	

Source: Field Statistics

The items in table 3 reveal facts. Item 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their access to in-service training aimed at improving teaching skills. 32.7% (82) and 44.9% (112) of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. 13.2% (33) were uncertain, while 3.5% (9) and 5.7% (14) disagreed and strongly disagreed, indicating that they did not have access to in-service training to improve teaching skills. The mean score of 3.96 falls within the acceptance zone. Item 2 presents the distribution of respondents regarding whether their institution encouraged professional development and training, 28.7% (72) and 31.3% (78) agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. 16.8% (42) were uncertain, while 13.5% and 9.7% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement, respectively. The mean score obtained was 3.56, which also falls within the acceptance zone, suggesting that most respondents agreed that their institution encouraged professional development. Item 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to their motivation to participate in teacher training days. 30.0% (75) and 36.4% (91) agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. However, 12.4% (31) were uncertain, while 12.9% (27) and 8.3% (21) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.67 falls within the acceptance zone, indicating that respondents generally accepted the statement. Item 4 shows the distribution of respondents regarding whether professional development opportunities suited their needs as teachers. 19.1% (143) and 39.1% (293) agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. 22.9% (172) were uncertain, while 10.7% (80) and 8.3% (62) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.50 falls within the acceptance zone, meaning that the majority of respondents accepted the statement. Item five presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they are supported by their superiors on a daily basis. Based on the data, the mean score is 3.46, which falls within the acceptance level. This indicates that most respondents accepted the statement. However, a considerable number of respondents (136) disagreed and 25 strongly disagreed. Item six shows the distribution of respondents according to whether the available material and educational resources were sufficient. Based on the data, the mean score is 3.87, which is also within the acceptance level. This suggests that most respondents agreed with the statement. Item seven presents the distribution of respondents according to whether the working

environment (classrooms, staff rooms, etc.) was conducive to teaching and learning. The mean score is 3.32, which is accepted. Nevertheless, 43 respondents were uncertain, 21 disagreed, and 43 strongly disagreed with the statement. Item eight presents the distribution of respondents according to whether students in Cameroon were disciplined. The data produces a mean score of 3.92, which falls within the acceptance zone. However, 34 respondents were uncertain, while 24 disagreed and 08 strongly disagreed with the statement. Item nine presents the distribution of respondents according to whether remuneration was fair in relation to responsibilities. The statistics produced an accepted mean of 3.56. However, a portion of the respondents remained uncertain (32), while some disagreed (27) and strongly disagreed (33). Item ten presents respondents' views on whether remuneration was sufficient to cover basic needs. 32.9% (82) and 42.7% (107) respectively agreed with this statement. 14.7% (37) were uncertain, while 9.7% (24) disagreed with the statement. The data produced a mean of 3.99, which falls within the zone of acceptance. Item eleven presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they were satisfied with the salary increases they had received over the years of service. 36.4% and 37.5% of respondents supported this statement. 12.3% were uncertain, and 9.5% and 4.4% disagreed. Again, although the mean of 3.92 falls within the acceptance zone, some respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Item twelve distributes respondents according to whether teachers' remuneration should be increased to reflect their work. 29.9% (75) and 42.1% (105) agreed with the statement. Only 20.9% and 7.9% disagreed. The data produced a mean of 3.66, implying that most respondents recommend salary increase.

Inferential statistics:

Table 5: Correlation between professional development opportunities and teachers' massive migration

		Professional development opportunities		Teachers' massive migration
Spearman's rho	1.000	.367**	1.000	.367**
	.	.000	.	.000
	250		250	250
	250	.367**	.367**	1.000
	.000	.	.000	.
	250	250	250	250

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents the results of a Spearman's rank correlation analysis examining the relationship between professional development opportunities and teachers' massive migration (N = 250). Spearman's rho was appropriate because it measures the strength and direction of association between ranked variables and does not assume normal distribution. The correlation coefficient between professional development opportunities and teachers' massive migration is $r = 0.367$. This value indicates a moderate positive correlation. The positive direction means that both variables move in the same direction: as professional development opportunities change, teachers' migration tendencies also change correspondingly. The magnitude of 0.367 suggests a meaningful but not strong association. In practical terms, professional development is an important factor influencing migration, although it is not the only determinant. The significance value is Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000, which implies $p < 0.01$. Therefore, the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that there is less than a 1% probability that the observed relationship occurred by chance. Consequently, the association between professional development opportunities and teachers' massive migration is statistically reliable and can be generalized to the broader population from which the sample was drawn. The positive and significant correlation suggests that professional development opportunities are closely linked to teachers' migration decisions. If higher scores represent limited opportunities, the findings imply that inadequate professional growth prospects contribute to increased migration. Conversely, if higher scores reflect greater opportunities, it may indicate that teachers who value professional advancement are more inclined to migrate to environments offering better career progression.

Table 6: Correlation between work environment and teachers' massive migration

		Work environment		Teachers' massive migration
Spearman's rho	1.000	.319**	1.000	.319**
	.	.000	.	.000
	250	250	250	250
	.319**	1.000	.319**	1.000
	.000	.	.000	.
	250	250	250	250

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 presents the results of a Spearman's rho correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between work environment and teachers' massive migration (N = 250). Spearman's rho was considered appropriate because it measures the strength and direction of association between ranked variables. The findings reveal a correlation coefficient (r_s) of 0.319, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), indicating statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Regarding the direction of the relationship, the coefficient of 0.319 is positive, which signifies a direct relationship between work environment and teachers' massive migration. This implies that variations in the work environment are associated with corresponding variations in migration tendencies. In practical terms, when teachers perceive their work environment negatively characterized by poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching materials, excessive workload, weak administrative support, or limited professional autonomy their likelihood of considering or engaging in migration increases. Thus, unfavorable working conditions function as push factors encouraging

teachers to seek opportunities elsewhere. In terms of strength, a coefficient of 0.319 indicates a moderate positive correlation. Although the relationship is not strong, it is meaningful and suggests that work environment plays a significant role in influencing migration decisions. However, it does not operate in isolation. Other determinants, such as salary prospects, professional development opportunities, career advancement pathways, and broader policy or international labor market conditions, may also significantly shape teachers' migration intentions. Concerning statistical significance, the p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.01) demonstrates that the observed relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. This means the probability that the relationship occurred by chance is extremely low. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between work environment and teachers' massive migration is accepted.

Table 7: Correlation between salary prospects and teachers' massive migration

		Salary Prospects		Teachers' massive migration
Spearman's rho	1.000	.357**	1.000	.357**
	.	.000	.	.000
	250	250	250	250
	.319**	1.000	.357**	1.000
	.000	.	.000	.
	250	250	250	250

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 presents the Spearman's rho correlation analysis examining the relationship between salary prospects and teachers' massive migration, based on a sample of 250 respondents ($N = 250$). Spearman's rho was appropriate because it measures the strength and direction of association between ranked or ordinal variables, particularly when data may not meet the assumptions of parametric tests. Regarding the strength and direction of the relationship, the correlation coefficient obtained is $r = 0.357$. This value indicates a moderate positive relationship between salary prospects and teachers' massive migration. A positive correlation implies that the two variables move in the same direction. In practical terms, as teachers' perceptions of better salary prospects elsewhere increase, the tendency or intention for massive migration also increases. Although the relationship is not very strong, it is sufficiently meaningful to suggest that salary considerations play an important role in migration decisions. In terms of statistical significance, the p-value reported is 0.000 (2-tailed). Since this value is less than the 0.01 level of significance ($p < 0.01$), the relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. This indicates that the likelihood of the observed correlation occurring by chance is extremely low—less than 1%. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between salary prospects and teachers' massive migration can be rejected. The implications of these findings are substantial. The results suggest that salary prospects constitute a significant determinant of teachers' migration decisions. Teachers are more inclined to migrate when they perceive more attractive remuneration packages abroad. Consequently, salary differentials function as a powerful pull factor, influencing the scale and intensity of teacher migration.

Qualitative Data: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and teachers to capture an institutional and complementary perspective on teacher migration. Some reactions include:

What factors motivated you to consider migrating from Cameroon to Canada as a secondary school teacher? *Primarily, my decision was motivated by the desire for stronger and more consistent professional development opportunities. In Cameroon, professional development activities for secondary school teachers are often limited, irregular, and not always aligned with teachers' real classroom needs. Many training sessions are short, infrequent, and sometimes inaccessible due to financial constraints, lack of institutional support, or limited availability of advanced programs. In contrast, Canada is perceived as offering a more structured and well-resourced professional development system, including continuous in-service training, mentorship programs, specialized certification pathways, and access to advanced academic and professional courses. These opportunities are seen as important for improving teaching effectiveness, strengthening career progression, and building long-term professional confidence. In addition to professional development, I was also influenced by the expectation of a more supportive work environment. In Cameroon, teachers often face large class sizes, inadequate teaching materials, heavy workloads, and limited administrative support. These conditions can reduce motivation and affect job satisfaction. Canada, on the other hand, is viewed as providing better school infrastructure, stronger teacher support systems, and a more respectful professional culture where teachers' contributions are recognized. Salary prospects played a significant role in shaping my decision. The compensation for teachers in Cameroon is generally perceived as low compared to the workload and responsibilities involved. In Canada, the promise of better pay, clearer salary progression, and additional benefits such as health insurance and pensions creates the hope for improved financial stability. This economic security is important, especially for teachers who are supporting families or planning for long-term personal and professional growth (Interview, February 12, 2026).*

How would you describe the professional development opportunities available to teachers in Cameroon compared to what you anticipate in Canada?

The interviewee explained that professional development opportunities for secondary school teachers in Cameroon are often inadequate and poorly structured. According to the participant, workshops are not frequent and, when they do occur, they are sometimes poorly funded and limited in scope. In many cases, teachers attend short seminars that do not provide sustained support or follow-up, making it difficult for them to translate new ideas into classroom practice. The respondent also highlighted that access to higher training is limited, especially for teachers who wish to pursue postgraduate studies. Financial constraints, lack of institutional support, and limited study leave opportunities were identified as major barriers. In addition, the interviewee noted that

professional supervision is minimal, meaning that teachers rarely benefit from consistent mentoring, instructional coaching, or constructive classroom observation that could improve teaching quality. In contrast, the respondent described Canada as offering more systematic and continuous professional development. The participant emphasized that teachers in Canada benefit from regular in-service training, stronger institutional support for postgraduate programs, and mentorship systems that guide early-career teachers. The interviewee further stated that the Canadian education system promotes a culture of lifelong learning, where continuous improvement is encouraged, valued, and often linked to career progression (Interview, February 12, 2026).

The work environment in many Cameroon secondary schools strongly affects teachers' motivation to remain in the profession or seek opportunities abroad. As one participant explained, teachers often face large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and heavy workloads, which make effective teaching difficult. In addition, the lack of administrative support and low recognition of teachers' efforts contribute to frustration and feelings of being undervalued. These conditions reduce job satisfaction and weaken professional commitment over time. Consequently, *the expectation of a more supportive and well-resourced environment in Canada characterized by smaller classes, better facilities, and stronger institutional backing becomes a major push factor for migration Yes, there are few aspects of the work environment in Canada that I feel may be challenging to adapt to. First, adapting to a new curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom expectations may require time and adjustment. The educational culture in Canada is also different, especially in terms of learner-centered approaches, assessment practices, and inclusive education. In addition, licensure requirements and professional standards may be demanding, since teachers are expected to meet strict certification procedures before full integration. However, I am prepared to undergo the necessary training and certification because I believe the long-term professional and personal benefits outweigh these initial challenges... In Canada, salaries are significantly higher and often come with benefits like health insurance, pensions, and sick leave — none of which are guaranteed or consistent in Cameroon. This stability gives peace of mind and enhances overall job satisfaction* (Interview, February 12, 2026).

This response suggests that salary and benefits are central determinants influencing Cameroonian secondary school teachers' migration intentions toward Canada. The participant perceives Canada's teaching profession as offering not only higher wages but also a comprehensive package of social protections and employment benefits. Unlike Cameroon, where teachers may experience delays in salary payments, limited allowances, and weak welfare coverage, Canada is viewed as providing stable monthly income, predictable salary progression, and strong employment rights. The interviewee highlights benefits such as health insurance, pensions, and paid sick leave, which are interpreted as key indicators of professional dignity and long-term security. These benefits reduce financial vulnerability, especially during illness, family emergencies, or retirement. In addition, the mention of "peace of mind" reflects the psychological impact of economic stability, suggesting that teachers' migration decisions are not purely financial but also linked to wellbeing, motivation, and job satisfaction. Therefore, salary prospects and benefit structures appear to shape teachers' perceptions of Canada as a more rewarding and sustainable professional environment. *Opportunities for career progression largely influence my decision to migrate. As a secondary school teacher in Cameroon, I have observed that professional advancement is often slow, uncertain, and in some cases influenced by factors that are not strictly based on merit or performance. Promotion procedures may take many years, and even when teachers demonstrate competence, dedication, and strong results, they may not easily access leadership roles or specialized responsibilities. This state of affairs demotivates and creates the feeling that personal effort does not always translate into professional growth. In contrast, the Canadian education system appears to offer clearer, more structured, and more transparent career pathways. Teachers can progress into positions such as department head, instructional coach, curriculum specialist, school administrator, or education consultant based on qualifications, experience, and demonstrated competence. There is also greater encouragement for continuous learning, including postgraduate studies, professional certifications, and ongoing training, which can directly contribute to career advancement. Therefore, the prospect of working in a system where career growth is more predictable, skill-based, and supported through professional development strongly motivates my interest in migrating* (Interview, February 12, 2026).

A sub director at MINESEC said:

To reduce the growing migration of secondary school teachers from Cameroon to countries such as Canada, educational policymakers need to implement reforms that address the main push factors affecting teacher motivation and retention. First, the government should invest more in continuous professional development by organizing regular in-service trainings, funding postgraduate studies, and creating mentorship programs that strengthen teachers' competencies and career satisfaction. Second, working conditions must be improved through the reduction of excessive workloads, recruitment of more teachers to limit overcrowded classrooms, and provision of basic teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, laboratories, ICT tools, and teaching aids. In addition, salary reforms are essential. Teachers' wages should be reviewed to reflect the rising cost of living, and timely payment of salaries, allowances, and benefits must be guaranteed. Beyond salary, teachers should be recognized through merit-based promotions, awards, and transparent performance appraisal systems. Establishing clear and fair career progression pathways can also increase teachers' long-term commitment to the profession. Strengthening school leadership and administrative support by training principals and inspectors in effective management can help create a more respectful and supportive work environment. Together, these reforms can significantly reduce teacher migration. (Interview, February 13, 2026).

The participant highlighted a few important concerns about the Canadian work environment, mainly linked to adaptation and professional requirements. According to the interviewee, *one of the main anticipated challenges is adjusting to a new curriculum and a different educational culture* (Interview, February 12, 2026). This includes learning unfamiliar teaching methods, assessment standards, classroom management approaches, and student–teacher relationships, which may differ significantly from what is practiced in Cameroon. The respondent also expressed concern about the professional licensure process, noting that

teaching in Canada requires meeting specific certification standards, completing evaluations, and possibly taking additional courses before being fully integrated into the system. These requirements can be stressful, time-consuming, and financially demanding, especially for migrant teachers who may already be managing settlement issues such as housing, family integration, and cultural adaptation. However, despite these concerns, the participant demonstrated a positive attitude and strong determination. The respondent stated a willingness to undertake training and certification processes, emphasizing that the long-term advantages, such as improved working conditions, professional growth opportunities, and better overall job stability, are worth the initial difficulties. This response suggests that although migration presents adjustment barriers, the perceived benefits of the Canadian teaching environment remain a strong motivating factor. What strategies can enhance teacher retention once they arrive in Canada? Retention strategies for Cameroonian secondary school teachers in Canada should be grounded in strong professional support, fair recognition, and a welcoming school culture. An official from the Ontario Ministry of Education opines that

First, structured mentorship and peer support can help migrant teachers navigate classroom expectations, provincial curriculum standards, and assessment practices. Pairing newly recruited teachers with experienced colleagues through formal mentorship programs reduces isolation, builds confidence, and accelerates professional adjustment. Second, school boards should provide ongoing professional development tailored to migrant teachers' needs, including training on inclusive education, classroom management in multicultural settings, student safeguarding, and communication with parents. Targeted workshops and coaching strengthen teaching effectiveness while helping teachers feel competent and valued in their new environment. Third, retention improves when there is recognition and meaningful use of international experience. Migrant teachers should not be treated as beginners simply because they are new to the Canadian system. Their prior expertise can be acknowledged through leadership opportunities, subject coordination roles, and clear pathways for promotion. Inclusive work cultures that respect diversity and promote wellbeing are essential. Anti-discrimination policies, mental health support, and culturally sensitive leadership can enhance belonging, job satisfaction, and long-term commitment to Canada's education system (Interview, February 12, 2026).

Cameroonian secondary school teachers who migrate to Canada may face several practical and professional challenges during their transition. One of the most significant barriers is credential recognition and licensing. Teaching in Canada is regulated at the provincial level, and foreign-trained teachers often need to undergo document verification, additional coursework, supervised practicum, or competency assessments. Differences in curriculum content, teaching standards, and classroom management expectations can delay full certification and entry into stable employment. Another major challenge is cultural and linguistic adaptation. Cameroonian teachers may struggle with unfamiliar classroom norms, learner-centered pedagogy, inclusive education requirements, and the strong emphasis on differentiated instruction. Language can also be a barrier, particularly for Francophone teachers relocating to predominantly Anglophone provinces, or for Anglophone teachers moving into Francophone school systems such as Quebec. Communication styles, professional interactions, and student-teacher relationships may differ considerably from what they are used to. The cost of settlement in Canada is often high. Housing, transportation, childcare, and professional licensing fees can create financial pressure, especially when employment is delayed. To ease integration, Canadian policymakers should strengthen bridging programs, mentorship, language support, and transparent credential pathways.

IMPLICATIONS

When secondary school teachers leave Cameroon for Canada in pursuit of better professional development opportunities, improved work environments, and higher salary prospects, the immediate implication is a loss of experienced educators within Cameroon's secondary school system. This teacher outflow can weaken the instructional capacity of schools, especially because migrating teachers are often those with years of classroom experience, stronger pedagogical skills, and higher professional confidence. In many cases, these teachers also occupy strategic roles such as heads of department, examination coordinators, discipline masters, or mentors to younger teachers. Their departure therefore creates not only a numerical shortage of staff, but also a leadership and expertise vacuum. This loss of experienced teachers may contribute to declining learning outcomes in the short and medium term. Experienced teachers typically possess deeper mastery of subject content, classroom management skills, and the ability to adapt instruction to diverse learners. When such teachers exit the system, schools may be forced to replace them with less qualified, less experienced, or temporary teachers who may struggle to deliver the same level of academic rigor. As a result, students particularly those preparing for national examinations such as the GCE Ordinary Level and Advanced Level may experience reduced academic support, inconsistent teaching, and weaker examination preparation.

Additionally, the departure of experienced educators tends to increase the burden on remaining teachers. With fewer qualified staff available, schools may respond by increasing workloads through larger class sizes, heavier teaching schedules, and additional administrative responsibilities. Over time, this may worsen teacher stress and job dissatisfaction, potentially triggering a self-reinforcing cycle where more teachers become motivated to migrate. In this sense, teacher migration does not only reduce staffing levels; it can also undermine staff morale and weaken the overall stability of the school environment. In the broader context, the loss of experienced secondary school teachers also reduces the system's ability to sustain internal capacity building. Experienced teachers often serve as informal trainers, supporting new teachers through mentoring, lesson planning, peer observation, and professional advice. Their exit limits opportunities for knowledge transfer and professional growth within schools. This makes it harder for Cameroon's education system to strengthen teaching quality from within, particularly in underserved regions where skilled teachers are already scarce. Teacher migration to Canada driven by professional development, working conditions, and salary prospects may produce a critical human capital gap in Cameroon's secondary education sector one that affects instructional quality, school leadership, teacher morale, and student performance.

DISCUSSION

The migration of secondary school teachers from Cameroon to Canada reflects a complex interplay of professional aspirations, workplace conditions, and economic incentives. Contemporary research highlights that teacher mobility is not solely a response to financial pressures but is deeply rooted in career trajectories and labor market dynamics.

Professional Development Opportunities: A dominant theme in the literature is the role of professional growth opportunities as a major determinant of teacher migration. According to Ochanji and Mogaka (2021), educators from Sub Saharan Africa often perceive developed countries like Canada as providing structured pathways for continuous professional learning, advanced certifications, and research engagement. This is consistent with findings by Johnson and Birkeland (2020), who argue that access to professional development not only improves teacher competency but also enhances long-term career satisfaction. For Cameroonian teachers, limited in-service training, inadequate pedagogical support, and minimal opportunities for postgraduate study intensify the appeal of migrating to systems where professional learning is prioritized (Foster & Reeves, 2022). The desire for growth is corroborated by Tchombe's (2023) qualitative study, where teachers expressed that Canada's robust teacher mentoring programs and professional networks significantly outweighed what was available locally.

Work Environment and Teaching Conditions: Work environment factors including class size, administrative support, and classroom resources are increasingly cited as influential in migration decisions. In Cameroon, teachers frequently contend with overcrowded classrooms, lack of instructional materials, and inconsistent administrative support (Essoungou & Nlend, 2021). These challenges contribute to dissatisfaction and burnout, making the structured and resource rich environments in Canadian schools particularly attractive (Asare & Ankomah, 2023). Research by Guérin and Sabatier (2022) emphasizes that safe working conditions and collaborative cultures significantly influence teacher retention; consequently, Canada's stable educational infrastructure becomes an important "pull" factor for Cameroonian educators. Moreover, cross national studies by Roberts (2024) suggest that perceptions of professional respect, autonomy in pedagogical decisions, and inclusive school cultures strongly shape migration intentions.

Salary Prospects and Financial Motivations: While professional development and work environment are critical, financial motivations remain central to migration decisions. Multiple studies demonstrate a strong association between salary disparities and teacher mobility. According to Adeyemi and Okorie (2020), Cameroonian teachers often earn salaries that lag far behind global benchmarks, limiting their ability to meet basic needs and invest in professional growth. In contrast, Canada offers not only higher base pay but also structured increments, benefits, and pension systems that provide long-term financial security (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2023; Nguyen & Pellerin, 2022). The work of Mbah and Nwosu (2023) supports this, indicating that financial remuneration plays a significant role in decision-making, particularly when teachers are supporting extended families or financing children's education abroad. However, scholars such as Kihoro and Mbembe (2024) caution against overly simplistic economic interpretations, noting that salary alone does not account for the sustained trend in teacher migration; rather, it interacts with perceptions of professional worth and quality of life.

Integrated Perspectives: Integrating these determinants, recent authors adopt multifaceted frameworks to explain teacher migration. The push pull model, for example, elucidates how systemic "push" factors in Cameroon (limited career progression, poor working conditions, and low pay) are counterbalanced by "pull" factors in Canada (advanced training opportunities, supportive work environments, and competitive salaries) (Lee, 2021). Additionally, transnational labor theories emphasize that teachers' decisions are shaped not only by institutional factors but also by personal goals, global mobility aspirations, and social networks that facilitate migration (Mensah & Addo, 2022). These integrated perspectives align with the work of Tambo (2023), who found that Cameroonian teachers often frame migration as a strategic response to both professional and socioeconomic constraints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance Professional Development Opportunities: Professional development is a critical factor in retaining secondary school teachers and reducing migration pressures. One of the most effective strategies is to expand continuous training programs. The Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) should implement regular and structured professional training courses focusing on pedagogical skills, curriculum innovations, and digital teaching techniques. Collaborating with universities and teacher training colleges to provide accredited postgraduate certificates and diplomas for in-service teachers will ensure that professional growth is recognized and formally certified, enhancing teachers' credentials and career prospects. In addition, career advancement pathways should be clearly defined. Establishing transparent career ladders that reward skills acquisition such as advanced teaching licenses leading to promotion will motivate teachers to remain in the profession. Mentoring systems that pair novice teachers with experienced educators can provide guidance, share practical knowledge, and foster a culture of professional growth, ultimately improving teaching quality across schools. Research and scholarship support is essential for sustained professional development. Scholarship schemes enabling teachers to pursue higher education, particularly in curriculum development and educational leadership can build a cadre of highly qualified educators. Furthermore, supporting teacher participation in local and international conferences exposes them to global best practices, innovative teaching strategies, and collaborative networks, reducing the incentive to migrate by fulfilling their aspirations for professional growth within Cameroon.

Improve Work Environment and School Conditions: Enhancing the work environment and overall school conditions is essential for retaining qualified teachers and reducing migration pressures. Strengthening school leadership and management is a critical starting point. Principals and administrators should undergo comprehensive leadership training to foster a positive organizational culture that values and supports teachers. Collaborative decision-making mechanisms should be promoted, enabling teachers to actively participate in policy formulation and classroom-level decisions, which increases their sense of ownership and professional fulfillment. Equally important is the provision of adequate teaching resources. Schools must be equipped with essential instructional materials such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, projectors, and reliable internet access. Dedicated learning spaces should be created to facilitate active pedagogical approaches that enhance student engagement. Prioritizing digital infrastructure ensures that teachers can effectively integrate technology into teaching, aligning with modern educational standards. Attention must be given to teacher welfare and psychological support. Wellbeing programs, including counseling services and stress management initiatives, can reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction. Transparent grievance systems are essential for resolving workplace conflicts promptly and fairly, thereby fostering a safe and supportive professional environment. Together, these measures create a more conducive work environment, promoting teacher retention and reducing the incentive to seek employment abroad.

Salary and Compensation Improvements: To address the financial push factors driving the migration of Cameroonian secondary school teachers to Canada, it is essential to adjust teacher salaries to reflect the actual cost of living, professional qualifications, and responsibilities. Teachers with higher academic and professional credentials should receive commensurate remuneration, ensuring their skills are recognized and rewarded. Additionally, the introduction of performance-linked incentives, such as achievement bonuses, merit-based rewards, and yearly increments, can motivate teachers to maintain high standards of teaching and remain committed to the profession. Ensuring transparent salary policies is equally important. Delays in promotions and salary adjustments have been reported as significant sources of frustration among teachers. Implementing automated payroll systems can streamline salary disbursement, reduce errors, and minimize delays, fostering trust in the management system. Clear guidelines on how allowances, promotions, and other benefits are earned should be communicated regularly, promoting fairness and reducing perceptions of inequity. Beyond direct salary, non-monetary benefits play a critical role in retention. Providing housing allowances, comprehensive health insurance, pension enhancements, and reimbursement for professional development costs can improve teachers' overall welfare. Additionally, support for childcare or education sponsorship for teachers' dependents can alleviate family-related pressures, making the teaching profession more sustainable and attractive. Collectively, these measures can significantly reduce the economic incentives for teachers to seek employment abroad.

Reform National Teacher Policies: To reduce teacher migration, Cameroon must update its national teacher policy to align with global best practices in professional development, working conditions, and career progression. Policies should clearly define recruitment standards, promotion pathways, continuous professional training, and performance evaluation frameworks, ensuring that teachers feel supported and motivated. Additionally, active engagement with teachers' unions and professional associations is essential during policy review and implementation, allowing for practical, context-sensitive reforms that address real classroom challenges. Such inclusive policymaking enhances teacher ownership, improves morale, and strengthens retention, ultimately reducing the push factors that drive skilled secondary school teachers to migrate abroad.

International Partnerships and Exchange Programs: Establishing bilateral partnership agreements with Canadian educational institutions can provide Cameroonian secondary school teachers with valuable professional exposure while remaining in their home country. Temporary exchange programs, visiting lectureships, and co-teaching opportunities allow teachers to experience diverse pedagogical approaches, curriculum designs, and classroom management techniques. Additionally, fostering joint research projects between Cameroonian and Canadian institutions enables teachers to collaborate on educational innovations, curriculum development, and applied research, enhancing their professional skills and global networks. Such initiatives offer a pathway for career growth and international experience without necessitating permanent migration, ultimately supporting teacher retention and capacity building in Cameroon. In the same vein, the governments of Cameroon and Canada should develop a bilateral partnership agreement to reinforce pre-service training in Cameroon. In other words, Canada, through structured cooperation mechanisms should finance pre-service training in Cameroon because it benefits from skilled teachers trained with Cameroonian public resources.

Monitoring and Research: To effectively address the migration of secondary school teachers from Cameroon to Canada, a robust monitoring and research framework is essential. Establishing a migration tracking system will enable educational authorities to systematically record and analyze teacher mobility patterns, identifying key push and pull factors such as salary gaps, professional development opportunities, and work environment conditions. Complementing this, annual satisfaction surveys should be conducted to evaluate teacher morale, professional growth needs, and retention challenges. The insights gathered will inform evidence-based policy decisions, allowing targeted interventions that enhance job satisfaction, reduce voluntary migration, and strengthen the overall quality of the teaching workforce.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, teacher migration from Cameroon to Canada is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by structural, professional, and economic factors. This study highlights that professional development opportunities, work environment conditions, and salary prospects are central determinants shaping teachers' decisions to seek employment abroad. Limited access to continuous training, insufficient pedagogical support, and inadequate recognition of professional expertise in Cameroon contribute to a strong push

toward countries like Canada, where teaching roles often offer advanced career pathways, supportive work environments, and competitive remuneration. Addressing these factors requires a holistic approach. Strengthening professional development programs, improving school infrastructure and administrative support, and implementing competitive salary structures could mitigate the drivers of outward mobility. At the same time, understanding the integration experiences of Cameroonian teachers in Canada provides valuable insights into the global education labor market, highlighting both opportunities for professional growth and the challenges of cross-cultural adaptation. Reducing teacher migration is not solely a national concern but a reflection of broader global educational inequalities. By implementing strategic reforms and fostering international collaborations, Cameroon can retain skilled educators, enhance the quality of secondary education, and contribute to sustainable professional satisfaction within its teaching workforce, while also preparing teachers for constructive engagement in international educational contexts.

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