

# Rightswatch

**The Infrastructure of Government School Mungong,  
Bridge 5, Buku, Abafum, Ndaka in the Bum, Misaje  
and Ako Sub Divisions of the North West province,  
Cameroon**



*The infrastructure of Government School Mungong  
Courtesy CHRAPA (The Center for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy)*

Mungong in the North West province, Misaje Sub-Division provides a shouting testimony of the dire consequence of economic genocide as practised by the Biya regime in Cameroon with the English-speaking When The children of Bum-Mugong, Buku-Ako, Ndaka-Ako, and Bridge-5-Misaje, three sub-divisions in Cameroon's North West province, may not exactly resemble the forebears of the most ancient of the Homo Neanderthals but surely their classrooms (as evidence from the picture above) make the shrewd Homo Australopithecus thump his hairy chest in great delight. Here electricity is exotic; the computer never-been-heard-of. And Christmas? Do they know it is Christmas?

Small wonder the five-year-old must get up at 4.am, rising from an even more unpleasant hovel that he or she shares with some lurking shrewd snake and then start the 10-15 mile walk to school. The poor devil must rise early and sally forth lest the frustrated teacher's odious cane anoint his or her fragile buttocks for coming late to school.

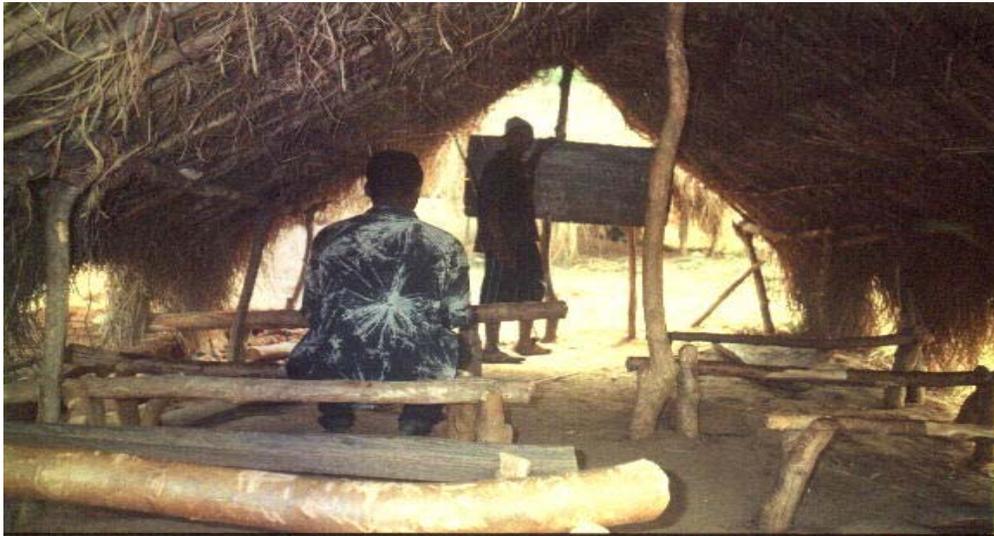
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That sally to school takes the poor child the bushes where some feline terror lurks; the wide 30-metre long Kwei River mercifully not flooded or threatening in floods and very likely to sweep the poor soul to kingdom come. In these parts at least three children are swept away every year by wild rivers as they make their way to school.

In this place that time forgot, danger threatens the child at every turn. Believe it or not in the year of 2004 now grading to 2005, the chain of huts above is where some 605 Cameroonian children actually go to school! This Class 7 School with an enrollment of 605 pupils operate in 4 open grass huts with 3 teachers and one community employed teacher.

As Mr. Biya presides.

The absence of a suitable and well-equipped classroom in a school environment definitely creates an inappropriate learning atmosphere for school children. This is because the poor things are exposed to the howling winds, the biting cold, the blazing sun, the roaring thunder or some hidden



*Classroom situation in Buku*

airborne disease and tsunami. They are vulnerable to such attacks as malaria, catarrh, cough, tuberculosis, etc.

The classrooms lack basic infrastructure such as benches, chairs and cupboards. The classes are often dusty and the children sit on dusty floors. The general hygienic condition of the place is precarious.

Small wonder children who frequent this abode slightly better than the lodging of the Australopithecus suffer terrible malady and have to stay away from school most days. And when they do fall sick the nearest hospital is across the Nigerian border some 45 kilometres away via some more wild-animal infested bush-paths and across raging rivers with lianas strewn across acting as bridges. Wherever they are present the government health centres and clinic lack basic drugs not to mention trained doctors who would

definitely not want to live and operate in a neighbourhood that has neither electricity nor portable water. In these parts major and minor surgery, like cutting out the old fellow's hernia are done without anaesthesia. Several muscular touts hold down the patient as the 'doctor' cuts away, often with something that looks like a rusty cutlass or an unhealthy blade.

At 10, the girl-child need not go to school. Tradition says that at ten she is too old for marriage. The young girls are shipped off into forced marriage with older men often in payment of 'bar' bills owed by the parents.

Young school dropouts here live like animals. Standard industries start and end with fishing and hunting. Or, ferrying smuggled truck, caterpillar tyres or entire Suzuki bikes on their heads all the way from the Nigerian side of the border and then footing it all day for 50-plus miles to Cameroon side. They are paid...10.000FCFA (\$20) per head load! And once the torturous goods are downloaded these poor devils rush to the nearest watering hole to download their hard-earned revenue and sorrow into the nearest 'Ntop' (crudely brewed whiskey). As the night comes whatever remains of the income will go to the cranky village prostitute who had probably never heard of HIV-Aids or condoms. This is not life. This is death...slow, vicious, tortuous, miserable death.

As Mr. Biya presides.

Mungong is situated right along the infamous Ring Road still standing untarred years after a certain Sombrero-touting Mr. Biya, president of Cameroon, surfaced on national television to announce that he will "personally supervise the tarring thereof of the Ring Road."

In neighbouring Ndaka, Abafum, Buku villages in the same area and close to Nigeria border, three miserable classrooms serve a class seven school with three government teachers and a few dilapidated benches. The pupils from 3

different classes share one classroom with one teacher and a single blackboard. Older pupils sit on benches while class one pupils sit on bare floor.

Ironically, Anglophone Cameroon provides for 2/3 of Cameroon's circa 1.500 Billion FCFA annual state budgets. Yet this is what the English-speaking part of the country gets for its effort...taxation without representation.

Small wonder in Mr. Biya's latest government there are 20 ministers from the president's very own ethnic group, 17 from his new-found backers - the ally northern merchants and zero minister from the North West province...well except, well, a certain Philemon Yang who may not be too sure from whence he cometh.

Mr. Biya's latest 65-minister strong cabinet has four ministers of education catering for weird concepts like basic, vocational, technical natural and higher education. Not one of them is from the English-speaking parts to articulate the interest and the plight of abandoned areas like Bum, Misaje, Ndaka, Abafum and Buku. Yet these areas actually voted for the president in the last elections. No wonder separatism is a red-hot agenda in the English-speaking provinces.

### **Help the Effort to Provide A Decent Primary and Secondary School for Mungong**

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