

**Practices and experiences on psychosocial support (PSS) to teachers:
UNESCO's & Cameroon's responses to conflict and COVID-19 crisis in Cameroon
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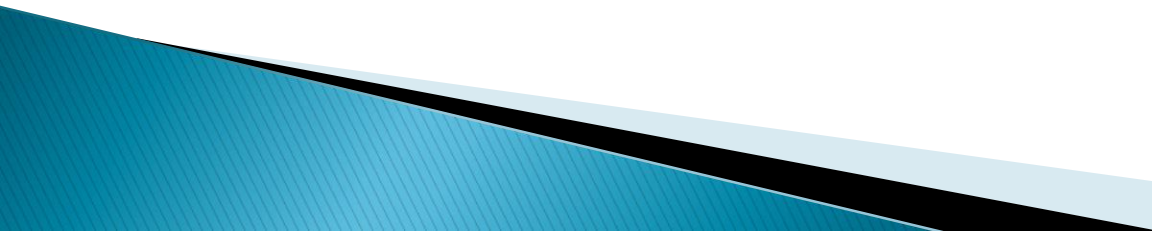
Structure of presentation

- ▶ Rationale and problem statement
- ▶ The Psychosocial Implications for Reopening
- ▶ Need assessment study on psychosocial support
- ▶ Understanding the concepts and related issues of psychosocial support by all Education Stakeholders
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Implementation model for Cameroon
- ▶ The role of government in promoting the psychosocial well-being of teachers
- ▶ Government 's inputs and expected outcomes for teachers' psychosocial wellbeing: Adopted from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943)
- ▶ Recommendations for further action

Rationale and problem statement

- ▶ The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted education in an unprecedented manner.
- ▶ In order to contain the spread of the virus, the government of Cameroon on March 18, 2020 shutdown
 1. Public and private training establishments of the various levels of education from nursery to higher education.
 2. Technical and vocational training centres
- ▶ To meet with the demands of providing quality education, educational establishments were asked to revert to online and distance education
- ▶ NB: It should be noted that the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon are equally experiencing a separatists arm conflict in addition to COVID-19 pandemic

The psychosocial implications for reopening schools

- ▶ The government of Cameroon reopen schools by the 1st of June, 2020 but only for public examination classes at the primary and secondary levels and Universities.
 - ▶ This means that teachers will be faced with a double challenge:
 1. Providing onsite classes for pupils and students at public examination classes.
 2. Providing online and distance education for the rest of the pupils and students.
 - ▶ Teachers can therefore be faced with psychosocial problems related health risks and the increased workload of teaching in new and challenging ways with inadequate training and resources.
 - ▶ Hence, education responses to COVID-19 need to ensure teachers and education support staff receive ongoing psychosocial support.
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Needs assessment study on psychosocial support: The experience of Cameroon

- ▶ In March 2020, a needs assessment study on the provision of psychosocial support to teachers and school administrators was conducted by UNESCO head office, Younde in collaboration with UNESCO Chair at the University of Buea.
- ▶ Twenty three (23) schools of the North West and South West Anglophone regions of Cameroon were selected for the study

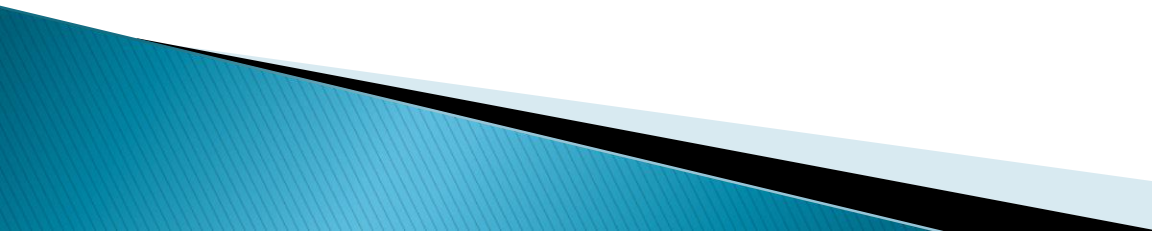
Findings

- ▶ Qualitative findings of the study highlighted the following psychosocial problems that need attention
 1. Presence of psychologically battered/depressed staff as a result of fear, anxiety and intimidation
 2. Inadequate health and safety measures
 3. Poor incentives for teachers and lack of resources to manage online/distance education
 4. Teachers and administrators lack skills to manage diverse learners especially those that are displaced

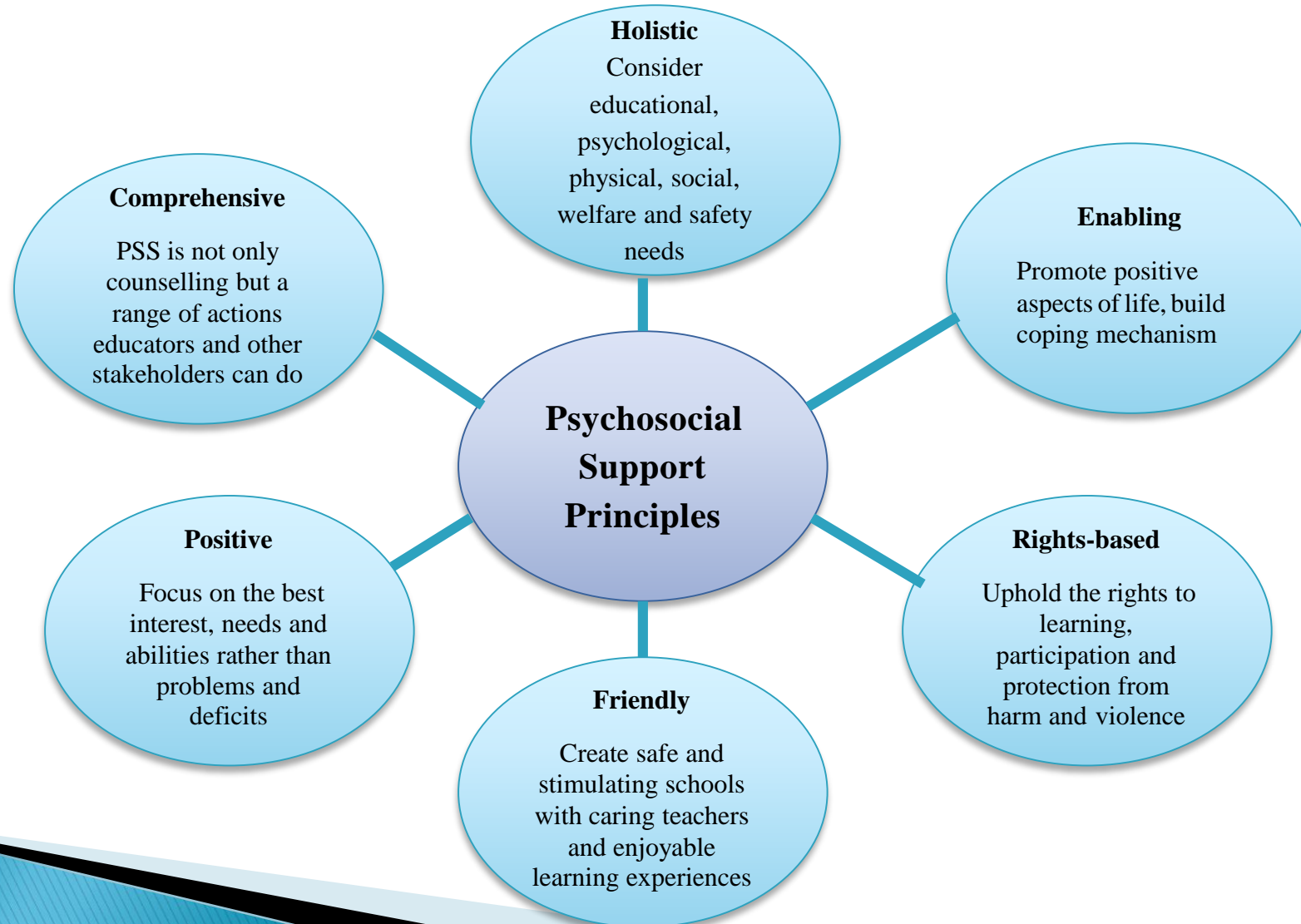
Understanding the concepts and related issues of psychosocial support by all Education Stakeholders

- ▶ In order to provide teachers and school administrators with psychosocial support, it is useful to enable educational stakeholders to be familiar with eight basic concepts:
 1. *Psychosocial development*– the development of thoughts, emotions, behaviours, memories and social competence.
 2. *Psychosocial needs*– basic elements people need for a positive social, emotional and intellectual development.
 3. *Psychosocial well-being*– a situation in which people’s basic social and emotional needs are sufficiently met.
 4. *Barriers to psychosocial well-being*– things caused by the outside environment and other people that negatively impact someone’s psychosocial well-being


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5. *Psychosocial support*– is about helping individuals cope with and overcome difficult life situations.
 6. *Protective factors*– external issues that support psychosocial well-being and development
 7. *Coping mechanism*– behaviors and thoughts that help a person to master, tolerate or minimize stressful or difficult situations
 8. *Emotional resilience*– a person's ability to cope with difficult life situations, adapt to change and have a positive outlook for the future
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Proposed principles of psychosocial support in education: Implementation model for Cameroon



The role of government in promoting the psychosocial well-being of teachers

- ▶ Factors of a healthy and balanced development and well-being.
 1. Enable access to opportunities for healthy psychosocial development for the enhancement of professional engagements
 2. Provide intellectual and physical stimulation to reduce absenteeism at attrition.
 3. Ensure health and psychological security for hopefulness / optimism about the future
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Government 's inputs and expected outcomes for teachers' psychosocial wellbeing: Adopted from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943)



Recommendations for further action

- ▶ Provide legislations for ensuring teachers receive appropriate psychosocial support to enhance the professional engagements
 - ▶ Put in place structures to develop teacher's computer literacy skills for managing online teaching
 - ▶ Create mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of psychosocial support and welfare services to teachers and schools administrators
 - ▶ Establish modalities for teacher incentives
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