

Country Report:

Introduction to the Didactics of Philosophy in Cameroon

Vincent Rocard Kalla Kotchop, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon
kallavincent5@gmail.com

Philosophy has been taught in schools in Cameroon for several decades. As far as the secondary education that interests us here is concerned, the teaching is done by professionals trained for the most part in the country's institutions of higher education, the *Ecoles Normales Supérieures*. However, the reality to be deplored is that there are not many specialists in philosophy didactics in Cameroon, let alone discussions on the subject (Kalla 2018). This explains the stagnation of philosophy teaching at the secondary level in this country, the teaching programs having changed in 2018, following a global reform of the Cameroonian education system. This reform, carried out by the pedagogy inspectors in particular, made it possible to introduce philosophy as a subject in high school in the third year before the *baccalauréat*, the *seconde*, and above all to include the competency-based approach in the teaching and learning of this discipline in secondary education (Kalla 2019b), even though the program of the last year of high school, the *terminale*, remains unchanged since 1998.

As regards the teaching programs, the one in force in the *terminale* is contained in the Ministerial Order N°114/D/28/MINEDUC/SG/IGP/ESG of 07 OCT 1998, that means, 22 years ago. We may easily realize that this is not without problems, especially when we know all the changes that have and are taking place in the field of philosophy in particular and in education in general. This makes the parameters of didactic action contained in this document inappropriate in relation to the current context (Kalla 2019a). Fortunately, this is bound to change with the reform of the Cameroonian education system. Hence the teaching of philosophy in the *seconde*, whose curricula are set by Ministerial Order N°226/18/MINESEC/IGE of 22 August 2018, which is innovative by introducing philosophy to students who are still in early adolescence, in addition to introducing a new pedagogical approach, in particular the competency-based approach starting with real-life situations. The year after, philosophy was also introduced in the second to last year of high school, the *première*, as a continuation of the program of the *seconde*, and it also includes some lessons from the *terminale*. The logical consequence is that the program of the *terminale* will also undergo changes next year. This reform is not without a notable impact on the revision of teaching methods, the elaboration of teaching contents, the evaluation and even the improvement of teaching aids, in short, the didactics of philosophy, or rather the didactics of philosophizing in general. This implies an important work on the part of teachers who are invited to appropriate the new philosophical practices contained in these new programs in Cameroon.

As far as teachers are concerned, it must be said that to be a philosophy teacher in Cameroon, both in the public and private sectors, it is compulsory to have a background that leads to at least a bachelor's degree (*licence*) in philosophy. This diploma gives the holder the right to teach the discipline even at much lower levels. In other words, a student who has validated all

of the credits at the bachelor's level has almost no difficulty with the philosophy teaching programs at the secondary level, except for the notions of didactics that do not appear in the curriculum. This is neglected in the private sector, where one is most often satisfied with the bachelor's degree in addition to some teaching experience for the recruitment of philosophy teachers. However, in the public sector, it is necessary to have gone through a higher teacher training college, which guarantees, beyond philosophy itself, the learning of pedagogy in addition to didactics (Kalla 2019a), it is understood that one enters by competitive examination, which makes the recruitment very selective.

It must be said, moreover, that the teaching of philosophy in Cameroon had not changed much over the past twenty years, so that teachers were no longer even innovating in terms of developing didactic content and even teaching techniques (Kalla 2019a). This led to a very unproductive routine in terms of didactics. It is only very recently with the reform of the Cameroonian education system as mentioned above that it has been necessary to adapt to new curricula for different and new levels (*seconde* and *première* in addition to the traditional *terminale*), and above all with new practices that are part of an approach that is itself new, in this case the competency-based approach. A recent study has shown that philosophy teachers in Cameroon were refractory to these yet salutary changes in the framework of the didactics of philosophy in Cameroon (for the conclusions of the study see Kalla 2020). It should be mentioned that these teachers would gain from an interest in the didactics of philosophy, a necessary condition for a significant improvement of the teaching and learning of philosophy in Cameroon.

From the point of view of researchers in the didactics of philosophy, it must be said, unfortunately, that Cameroonians are hardly interested in it. Given the almost nil number of specialists in the subject, the absence of journals, debates or more simply discussion forums concerning the teaching and learning of philosophy in Cameroon. Fortunately, for nearly three years now there has been a group of young researchers, most of them graduates of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* of Yaoundé, working as philosophy teachers in public and private secondary schools, who are writing theses in the didactics of philosophy, necessarily soliciting the supervision of experts sometimes from abroad. This points to a better future for the didactics of philosophy in Cameroon.

References

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