



Challenges to Effective Implementation of Humanitarian Services by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in North-East Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated the factors confronting the effective implementation of humanitarian services by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in IDP camps in North-East Nigeria. Using the discourse analysis to analyze qualitative data collected through participant observation, informal discussion and interview from 42 officials selected through snow-ball sampling techniques in NEMA recognized and approved camps. Among other findings, it was revealed that in terms of jurisdictions, some of the NGOs are limited in operation, while others are versatile but limited in service delivery; also, policy and guiding principles of the various NGOs has created duplication of the nature of service and role conflict. It was recommended majorly that there is need for the government of Nigeria to take the center stage in the management of programmes and activities of humanitarian services in-line with international best practices. This will help to create a central coordination and administration of long-term programmes for the IDPs.

Keywords: Humanitarian services, Non-governmental organization, internally displaced persons, long-term intervention, North-East.

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INTRODUCTION

International non-governmental organizations have a history dating back to at least 1883 (Davies and Hossain, 1997). International NGOs were important in the anti-slavery movement and the movement for Women's suffrage, and reached a peak at the time of the World Disarmament Conference (Lewis, 2010). However, the phrase "non-governmental organization" only came into popular use with the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organizations which are neither governments nor member states. The definition of "international NGO" (INGO) is first given in resolution 288 (x) of (United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on February

27, 1950: it is defined as "any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty". The vital role of NGOs and other major groups in sustainable development was recognized in Chapter 27 Earth Summit (1992) of Agenda 21, leading to intense arrangements for a consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian intervention.

Rapid development of the non-governmental sector occurred in western countries as a result of the processes of restructuring of the welfare state. Further globalization of that process occurred after the fall of the communist system and was important to the Washington consensus (Zaleski, 2006).

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Globalization during the 20th century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. Many problems could not be solved within a nation. International treaties and international organizations such as the World Trade Organization were centred mainly on the interests of capitalist enterprises. In an attempt to counterbalance this trend, NGOs have developed to emphasize humanitarian issues, developmental aid and sustainable development. A prominent example of this is the World Social Forum, which is a rival convention to the World Economic Forum held annually in January in Davos, Switzerland. The fifth World Social Forum in Porte A1ce, Brazil, in January 2005 was attended by representatives from more than 1,000 NGOs. Some have argued that in forums like these, NGOs take the place of what should belong to popular movements of the poor. Others argue that NGOs are often imperialist in nature, that they sometimes operate in a racialized manner in third world countries, and that they fulfill a similar function to that of the clergy during the high colonial era. Thus, NGO transnational networking is now extensive (Stone, 2004).

In ascertaining the growth of NGO and the background to internally displaced people, the attacks by Islamist Boko Haram militants increased dramatically from mid-2014, causing an unprecedented protection crisis in North- Eastern Nigeria. The insurgency has reportedly forced 1.5 million people to flee to other parts of the country and at least another 150,000 have taken refuge in neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Government counter-insurgency operations have also contributed to displacement; both in the North East and in neighbouring countries (Abdulazeez, 2016; Cook, 2013 and Lenshie & Henry, 2016).

Internally displaced people (IDPs), the vast majority of whom are women and children, face a range of threats to their physical safety and restrictions on their freedom of movement. Many are traumatized by the violence that prompted them to flee and are afraid to return. Those whose homes have been damaged or destroyed by conflict and flooding have nowhere to go back to. Most internally displaced families live and share resources with host communities.

Efforts by national and state governments to address their needs are inconsistent and poor access to means of support from international agencies and Nigerian civil society is also limited. People who live in or near camps receive some assistance, though often not enough to meet their food and other basic needs. They also tend to live in cramped and unhygienic conditions. The most vulnerable IDPs — the young, older people and those with disabilities—are most at risk. There is a lack of strategy guiding

humanitarian assistance and only limited discussion of durable solutions at both the national and local level.

The full impact of displacement in Nigeria is unclear, because figures are often only available after larger-scale crises. Estimates suggest that violence and disasters caused by natural hazards have forced a staggering number of people to flee their homes, but information is anecdotal and primarily about the minority of IDPs who live in camps. Data collection is inconsistent and unreliable, leading to lack of understanding of displacement dynamics and fragmented or inadequate responses.

Both the Nigerian authorities and the international community have focused disproportionately on North East Nigeria. The current emphasis on short-term, emergency response also prevents understanding of how vulnerabilities increase with each cycle of displacement, how to address the causes of displacement and how to facilitate IDPs' to achieve a durable solution.

Even though in May 2012 Nigeria ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (also known as the Kampala Convention) and rewrote a draft policy on IDPs to incorporate its provisions, until December 2014, the federal cabinet had yet to adopt the policy, despite persistent advocacy on the issue. The failure in defining the roles and responsibilities of development and humanitarian agencies has continued to hamper their response and holistic approach towards durable solutions and efforts not only to cater for IDPs, but to prevent and prepare for future displacement. It is to this end that this study investigated the factors confronting the effective implementation of humanitarian services by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in IDP camps in North-East Nigeria.

METHODS

Research Design

This study was a qualitative interrogation of activities of non-governmental organization among the displaced people in selected states of the North – East, Nigeria. Being a qualitative investigation, it made no attempt to control or manipulate emerging data from the field. In that case, a mixed-method survey design was adopted in this study based on its characteristic lack of control. This design was considered most appropriate because its exploratory, descriptive and explanatory potentials facilitated a search for information to gain insight into substantial issues of the study. The approach proved very useful in examining the intervention

models adopted by non-governmental organisations among the displaced people resulting from insurgency in the North East.

The Population of the Study

The population of the study consist 42 officials of the various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) rendering humanitarian services within NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency) recognized IDPs camps in North East Nigeria.

Sampling Techniques

The researcher adopted a multi-stage sampling technique because it was discovered that no single sample method was good enough to give the desired sample size (Usono, 2016). In recognition of the above, a combination of snowballing and purposive sampling techniques was used to select NGO officials. In purposive sampling technique, the researcher uses his experience and expertise in the field to decide the purpose for information and go out to find some. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in this work because the camps were also occupied by non-humanitarian workers. Therefore, the researcher had to purposively identify those who are directly offering humanitarian interventions.

In snowballing sampling technique, the researcher was introduced to respondents through chain of referrals. After some NGO officials were purposively identified and interviewed, the interviewees introduced the researcher to other respondents in the camp and the trend went on until the sample size of this study was arrived at. This sampling technique was chosen because it reduced the constraint of searching for respondents and also helped the researcher to identify genuine displaced people in these camps.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

Since the study was qualitative research, which involves collection of narrative data in a natural setting in order to gain insights into phenomena of interest (Usono, 2016). Multiple methods of data collection techniques consisting of participant observation, informal discussion and interview were adopted in this study. This method was used because researchers using qualitative approach usually start with more general open-ended questions. They move towards greater precision as detailed information emerges (Jegede, 2006).

Method of Data Analysis

This research is substantially qualitative. Qualitative researches set out to unravel or understand the context in which research questions

are situated. In this study, information about thought pattern, behaviour and intervention issues confronting the IDPs came to us raw as naturally occurring texts. Discourse analysis was employed in this study to place participants' responses in perspectives. Discourse analysis involves the close study of naturally occurring interactions. During the observations in the field, the researcher took down notes on opinions that addressed substantive issues in this research. This helped the researcher to provide answers to research questions and analyse other topical issues by presenting the insiders and researcher's opinions in perspectives. The different methods of texts analysis used in this study enabled the researcher to categorise or group ideas in a certain pattern to establish similarities and difference among respondents' responses.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This section of the paper is set to describe, analyse and report the results of the study.

What is the Level of Awareness of NGOs' Policy on Service Delivery on the IDPs in North East Nigeria?

Generally, the NGOs agreed to be guided by international, national and local policies for humanitarian service delivery. Nevertheless, some of the NGO staff does not have full details of what these policies entails, as they mostly argued that the guidelines lie with their executive members who decides the roles of members and specifies activities which each member must follow. Therefore, by following the organisational policy of ones' organisation, each of the NGO staff are aware that they are following policy guidelines for NGOs humanitarian service delivery.

Asked on whether there are any guidelines to the humanitarian service delivery policy available to their organization, a staff of UNHCR in Bukar Ali camp, answered as follows:

...yes, there are. ...we have principles of operation which stipulates that we must observe impartiality, unity and universality among other principles.

On same question, a staff of ICRC (40years), Married, who have served for 6years in Bukar Ali camp, explained thus:

...we have seven fundamental principles we use to work with it. They are impartiality, humanity, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. We use these seven fundamental principles to guide us and with other organisations.

The data indicates also that the laws guiding the NGOs humanitarian service delivery policy considers IDPs rights and privileges as well as international and local guidelines for service

delivery. But on the areas of jurisdiction, it was found that some NGOs are limited in operation, while others are versatile but unlimited in service-delivery. To this effect, a staff of the ICRC (28years) male in Damare camp answered as follows:

...what we have is that of coordination policy. Any organisation that come into the IDP use to coordinate. They ask who are the first organisation that was here, who are the managers? You know, we are using that policy.

In a similar response, a WHO official (38years) male in Dalori 1 camp answered as follows:

...the normal coordination of IDP camp is that the government of the federation will have laid down principles of operation which will guide the NGOs as they arrive the camp...

...yes, the first organisation to arrive must have received the guiding principle from the government and therefore will be the one to help coordinate other NGOs as they arrive.

Further query on the areas of jurisdiction reveals that while other NGOs selected for the study may have areas of limitation, ICRC does not have areas of jurisdiction as one of the staff responded thus:

...Red cross does not have a jurisdiction, but the IOM and other organisation use to come two or three times a week but Red Cross remains in the camp for effective delivery of assistance. ...we don't have any duration. As long as they remain here, we continue to support them.

The study also found that the policy and guiding principles of the various NGOs has created duplication of services and role conflicts. Educational services have been discovered to be absent in many of the camps under study, and this has been attributed to organisational policy issues.

Asked on the specific policy that hinders educational activities in their camp, a female staff (38years) of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who is serving in Dalori 1 camp, responded thus:

...my organisation would want to sponsor educational activities in the camp, but the problem is who is in charge of that service.

...we know UNICEF is also interested in education, but the challenge is on execution of the educational service, we are yet to find an organisation whose operational guidelines covers specifically, the education of IDPs in the camp.

What are the Factors Confronting Humanitarian Services by NGOs in IDP Camps in North East Nigeria?

One of the objectives of this study is set to investigate factors challenging the humanitarian services by NGOs in the IDP camps in North East Nigeria. This meant to measure the challenges in thematic areas as challenges with security agencies, the IDPs, government agencies as well as with other NGOs. This focus on interrogating the challenges that could possibly hinder the effective execution of the best humanitarian intervention model for IDPs in North East Nigeria. This analysis is made with the assumption that disharmony between humanitarian stakeholders in the North East IDP camps is capable of disrupting the effective execution of the durable solution model for Nigerian North East IDPs. Therefore, the humanitarian officials and IDPs were interviewed to collect data to measure these variables.

From the analysis of the collected data, the result reveals that there is no high-level conflict between stakeholders in the North East IDPs such as NGOs, security agencies, government officials and IDPs. Nevertheless, it is also discovered that the absence of conflict does not indicate total understanding and effective management of the camps and activities in the camp, but could just be a result of compromise from some officials. Interestingly, data gathered indicates that such compromise may not last, as was pointed out by the respondents.

There exists an issue of role conflict among the humanitarian interventionists. The issue of duplication of duties and superiority among the interventionist shows why there have been slow progress in realizing the goals of humanitarian intervention to IDPs in North East Nigeria. This finding suggests a proper harmonization of humanitarian intervention activities. Duplication of services and assistance renders other components of the humanitarian intervention ineffective, and therefore creates a gap in what the IDPs were supposed to access from the intervention.

Then on challenges from the government on the delivery of humanitarian services, the majority of the respondents believe that the government, though have not obstructed the NGOs in delivering their assistance to the IDPs, yet have not been doing as much as expected of them. And this makes relief materials and other resources that could help the NGOs to be effective, insufficient. In explanation of this challenge, the following excerpts were extracted from the responses of respondents interviewed:

...we only have problem with food stuff and that is all. The governments don't come here always... (40years Male IDP in Pompomari camp).

... actually there is no any help from government and before we were in government camp and now we are on our own, they don't want to assist us with anything and sometimes NYSC do help us. And again what I will say on this, as we are on our own, sometimes ADSEMA do come to help us when there is any problem between we the IDPS and the Community they use to intervene not always. Apart from that, there is nothing from the Federal Government... (32years Male IDP in Damare camp).

In confirmation, an official of the World Food Programme (WFP), 29 years Female, serving in Bukar Ali camp, Damaturu - Yobe State, answering on possible challenges with the government responded as follows:

...we don't have any challenge with the government, government are trying, but since the IDPs came here government has not provided anything for them, it is just my organisation, the Red Cross and other NGOs.

Further on the challenges between the NGOs, an official of the World Health Organisation (WHO), aged 40, married and have served with the WHO for 15 years and 7 years in Dalori 1 camp responded as follows:

...I have been in camp that is not centrally managed, where humanitarian agencies functions as they chose. In such camps, they will seem to be peace and understanding for a while as we see here, but that is just because we are all still overwhelmed by the crisis. When things stabilise, people will seek their right and if it is not well handled, all our good deeds may waste for lack of follow-up.

In a similar response, a staff of IOM, (40years), single, who has been in Mairi camp for 6 years responded thus:

...yes we don't have physical conflict, but that doesn't mean we don't have misunderstanding and conflict of interest, but we let it be.

...the reason I think is because all humanitarian agencies believe in the dignity of human life, so since we are all after the interest of the IDPs, we let our difference lay aside for the greater goal.

The above answers and other similar ones indicate possible conflict of interest at the back of activities going on in the IDP camps. Therefore, the respondents were interviewed in that direction and it was discovered from the responses that the major challenges faced by the NGOs is conflict between the IDPs, and lack/limited support from the federal government. Asked on the challenges they face with

the IDPs an official of the ICRC (31years), Male, Married answered as follows:

...one of the challenges we have with the IDPs first of all is their character, either they say this is my tribe or they will say this is my close brother, relations, or that they came from this area or that area.

...the challenge we are facing here is the differences between the tribe and the community.

On the other hand, the IDPs were quizzed on any challenge with the NGOs and the general agreement was that there is no challenge, except for household headed by women who mostly complained that they are being ignored by the NGOs when sharing relief materials. Further investigation revealed that this is as a result of sharing by household heads, which the officials had had the oversight of seeing only men as household heads. And to compound the issues, the women were constraint by their culture that forbids them from speaking up in the public as was answered by a 40years old female IDP in Damare camp:

...some organization helped us with some lectures when it comes for help we women we are not noticed in this place, if they want to help, they only help men and forgets about the women. ...Well my only problem is that when they come to help they should not leave the women and helps only the men, we also need help

Further asked on why they (women) don't call the attention of the officials, she responded thus: ...it is not good and no respect to our husband and to Allah. We (women) don't speak, men speak for us...

Interestingly, it was found that there is no challenge in the line of religion, which is probably because the IDPs are more of the same religion.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that the NGOs are aware that there are international and local policies guiding service delivery and for the protection of the internally displaced persons. It is also revealed that some of the NGO officials do not have full information on what the policy holds. Nevertheless, it is found that the organisations are structured in such a way that obedient to the organisation policy amounts to working in line with the international national policies guiding the operation of NGOs with the IDPs. Therefore, it could be concluded that the NGOs working with the IDPs in the North East Nigeria infrequently aware and are working in consonance with the IDPs policy guidelines (UNHCR, 2007; IOM, 2017).

An issue of interest is on the jurisdiction or areas of interest of the NGOs which is provided for in

each organisation's policy. Some of these policies are not out rightly against the international and national policy guidelines for NGOs, but predispose any of the organisation to limitations that left alone, they cannot tend to the needs of the IDPs. Nevertheless, the NGOs from the findings of the study, are craving for central coordination of the NGOs activities in the camps which is believed will enable them execute each other's programmes without hitch.

Therefore, juxtaposing these two interests, that is the need to meet IDPs' needs which one organisation may not be able to do, and central coordination of the NGOs activities which may have some organisations removed from camps, a challenge is envisaged. There could be a situation that some organisation that has the services that a particular camp is in need of could be removed from the particular camp, or an organisation that has what a camp does not need is sent to that camp in the name of jurisdiction and interest. Therefore, it becomes necessary that such central coordination must take into consideration the need of the IDPs in each camp before sending into or removing an organisation from a camp. And to know those needs, some high level research and opinion polls must be carried out to involve the IDPs in the expression of their needs.

Majorly, the IDPs are not fully aware if there is any constraint to humanitarian services in their camp, more than the fact that they do not get all they need. They do not get food always, the women complain of being neglected in the process of sharing relief materials, which was found to be a consequence of the officials sharing relief materials according to household and overlooking the fact that some household are being headed by women. And the culture of the people which has made it difficult for women to speak out in the public therefore ends up denying the women-headed households the resources shared to the IDPs.

The study also found that one of the major challenges confronting humanitarian services delivery in the North East Nigeria is the lack of coordination of activities in the camp. The NGOs are expected to be independent both in funding and operations, yet the proliferation of NGOs in same camp with similar interest and areas of jurisdiction has exposed the NGOs to possible conflict of interest, neglect in some aspect and components of humanitarian intervention to the IDPs. The study found that educational services are not well implemented yet, because the humanitarian agencies interested in sponsoring the activities are having challenges with policy issues which entails that they must be an organisation in charge of

educational activity execution, who the funding will be made to for accountability and responsibility.

Moreover, the IDPs themselves constitute another challenge in the humanitarian service delivery. The study revealed that the IDPs are aligning themselves to communal identities, as a way of discovering themselves socially. This has made organisation of the camp difficult for the NGOs, such that the IDPs wants to manipulate and influence where they are assigned for shelter, because they want to stay close to people from their community. This has sometimes raised conflicting situations in the camp. But this study agrees that it is not altogether unhealthy, if it is well managed, rather it can help the NGOs in their psychosocial support activities and later in the social reintegration programmes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact remains that the menace of insurgency world over cannot be overemphasized. Its impact on the North East Nigeria has increased from 2009 till date, and the Nigerian government is still battling to put a stop to the activities of militants in the country at large. Nevertheless, the internally displaced persons of the North East Nigeria, who are survivors of the activities of insurgency, are seeking their rights as full citizens of the republic and human beings that deserve the right to live and survive. It is this right of theirs which the international policies for IDPs protect that has brought and empowered the NGOs to their assistance.

The study has found that NGOs in the IDP camps in North East Nigeria are not following tenaciously the durable solution model for Nigeria, due to some challenges facing the execution of their programmes and activities.

Therefore, the study recommends as follows:

1. The government of the federation should take the center stage in the management of programmes and activities in the IDP camps. This will help to have a central coordination and administration of long term programmes for the IDPs. This is necessary because, failure to realise the need for a religious adoption of the durable solution model in the intervention for the IDPs of the North East, may just result to a vicious cycle of insurgency.
2. The NGOs, especially the international and world agencies should take the leading position in the execution of the durable solution models for the IDPs in the North East Nigeria. This is because they have experience in the management of such emergency situations and should be abreast

with the best alternative for any peculiar situation.

3. The NGOs should streamline their activities to a particular area of interest each, in order to avoid duplication of programmes in the camp while some other areas of needs abound unattended to. This will help to settle the challenge of educational needs in the camp which is yet to be adequately attended to, due to policy discrepancies.
4. Finally, the NGOs can also see the advantages inherent in the present challenge of IDPs falling along communal line and affinity. They can use the advantage by rearranging the camps according to identified communities, such that the IDPs can easily identify their community members. This will to a large extent give the IDPs a sense of belonging and help them feel at home, and consequently help in their reintegration into normal social life at the period of resettlement.

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