

RELEVENCE OF FORMAL EDUCATION ON INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The issue of Migration and African identity should be viewed beyond those migrants who have crossed the borders and moved out of Africa. This paper recognized the fact that IDPs in Nigeria are put together in different camps after being separated from their homes and schools. The need for formal education was equally discussed. The authour appraised factors such as lack of funds and conducive environment to be some of the factors responsible for the inability of the IDPs to have formal education in Nigeria. It concludes that, these factors hold a terrible platform for the future of these concerned persons. It therefore suggests that strategic management approach involving setting of goals and mission, evaluation of threats be employed to solve the problems of IDPs formal education in Nigeria. Also, that educated ones among them should be integrated into the society.

Keywords: Formal Education, Internally Displaced Persons and Nigeria

Introduction

The issue of Migration and African identity should be viewed beyond those migrants who have crossed the borders and moved out of Africa. Since Migration in Africa comes in local, Regional and intercontinental levels, this paper therefore looks at the issue of education of internally displaced persons (IDP) in Nigeria. This people had everything at their disposal before the case of displacement ever came up. All their woes came up suddenly hence their inability to asses anything. In the case of formal education however, this cannot be assessed easily because the school system will continue, leaving those who are not available out of it. This may be due to the fact that schools, colleges and universities are far away from them or they are not in a conducive environment that will enable them to study. Another reason may be lack of finances since the internally displaced people are been catered for by the government, non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or well-wishers.

Education is one of the most important aspects of our lives – vital to our development, our understanding and our personal and professional fulfilment throughout life. In times of crisis, however, millions of displaced young people miss out on months or years of education, and this is damaging to them and their families, as well as to their societies, both in the short and long term. Mayada et al (2017). Terhemba (2016) states emphatically that, globally, refugees and IDPs are missing out on education, or are participating in low-quality education, where they face barriers to learning, such as language issues, poor quality teaching and inaccessible or irrelevant curriculum. Also, Anselme et al (2017) is of the opinion that the situation of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), youths are worse than other refugees. The lack of legal framework that outline and monitor their rights considerably result in a lack of access to services such as education, as does the absence of state and will to provide it.

In the research conducted by Nbanugo in (2012) he identified ethnic and religious strife, internal armed conflicts, militancy and insurgency to be the basic reasons for people to migrate from one country to another for refuge. He added that, protracted inter-communal conflicts fueled by religious, regional or ethnic divisions regularly lead to death and displacement throughout the country. It has in fact been noted that crises induced by religious divisions have produced the greater number of refugees especially IDPs in Nigeria. He concluded by adding some other factors that are responsible for displacement in Nigeria as flood, erosion, brutal killings in some parts of the country and other isolated cases like governments implementation of states master plans and the deportation of citizens.

By and large, internally displaced children are driven away from the schools of their original home communities through ethnic conflict, tsunami, typhoon, flood, drought, earthquake, volcanic eruption or other factors. When children are swept along with their families in mass migrations, they leave the place where they may have been able to access primary education, and usually settle temporarily in a place where there is no provision of education. Sambo (2017) conducted a research and he concluded that education is not planned for the sudden new arrivals in a place of temporary refuge. Planning by ministries of education does not take into account unexpected and temporary populations. Displacement can last years or even decades. In many protracted displacement situations, displaced children lack access to schools and can grow up without an education. Couldrey and Herson (2017) state that the average lifespan of a refugee camp is 17 years, with such settlements developing gradually and

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usually organically from an emergency camp into what is fundamentally a new town. With this reality in mind, what role do host governments and the humanitarian community have in the initial camp planning process especially in education and what they become afterwards.

The number of internally displaced persons keeps increasing by day especially in Nigeria considering the view of Nigeria's National Population Commission (NPC). Delivering Nigeria's statement on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration at the 51st Session of Commission on Population and Development in New York, Duruiheoma asserts that the Displacement Tracking Matrix round XXI of January 2018 identified estimated 1.7 million IDPs in over 321,580 households across six states of North-East Nigeria with 40 per cent residing in camp-like settings in urban areas, plus 1.4 million returnees. He added that the number of IDPs represented 4.5 per cent increase compared to the 1,702,680 identified in Round XX (Dec. 2017) "This shows that 766,206 persons have become displaced due to security issues in the country," IDPs camps are located in various places in Nigeria like Abuja that have four IDPs camp in Lugbe IDP Camp, Area One IDP Camp, New Kuchingoro IDP Camp and Kuje IDPs Camp. Also, Borno has one that is situated in Bakassi IDPs camp in Maiduguri. All the internally displaced persons in these camps exist day in day out without formal education.

The report of Unicef in 2015, supports this assertion in the sense that, there are 1,235,294 IDPs in northern Nigeria with the highest number of IDPs in Borno (672,714 IDPs), followed by Adamawa (220,159 IDPs) and Yobe (135,810 IDPs). In addition, 47,276 IDPs (5,910 were identified in Plateau, Nasarawa, Abuja, Kano and Kaduna states (NEMA, 2015). The total number of IDP children (3-17 years of age) in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states is 452,620. Of these 387,287 (85.6%) live in host communities while 65,333 (14.4%) live in IDPs camps.

The importance of formal education for internally displaced persons cannot be under estimated. We live in a country where education is the bases for having white collar jobs. Education in Nigeria has become more popular than what it was. The research of Tajudeen, et al (2019) on issues of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Nigeria revealed that there are neglects on the part of the State apparatus (government) in ensuring better, effective and functional policies in all areas especially education. Its magnitude is capable of threatening national cohesion of the country and endangering high rate of internally displaced persons across the country. The research of Rhoades (2002) on *The Road to*

Recovery: Education in IDP Communities revealed that education programmes beyond primary level are few and far between in states affected by conflict. Additionally, at present no international agencies dealing with displaced people have a specific policy or strategy directed at literacy or adult and youth basic education. Also, considering that the period of displacement for most IDPs now lasts over a decade, the need for comprehensive educational programming during this time is critical.

Formal Education And Internally Displaced Persons

Formal education is also known as formal training. This is the process of integral education commonly divided formally into such stages as preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and then college, university, or apprenticeship. It entails a systematic and deliberate intention that concretizes itself in an official curriculum, applied with defined calendar and timetable. This is quite relevant to everybody, internally displaced persons as well.

Ambe-Uva (2018) on how education can be relevant to IDPs states that education is not only a right, but in situations of emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction, it provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection, which can be both life-saving and life-sustaining. Education sustains life by offering safe spaces for learning, as well as the ability to identify and provide support for affected individuals – particularly children and adolescents. Education mitigates the psychosocial impact of conflict and disasters by giving a sense of normalcy, stability, structure and hope for the future during a time of crisis, and provides essential building blocks for future economic stability. However, Esenowo (2017) paying attention to displaced persons opines that education is key to life. It benefits each of us individually but it also has a positive impact on those around us. Through higher education we can obtain knowledge, skills and qualifications that can give us better jobs and better lives.

To corroborate this, Huseynov R. et al (2003) say that, education is essential to prepare refugees and internally displaced persons for life, for employment and for democratic citizenship. They added that for refugees and IDPs education is a basic essential, as also, depending on age, are further education and vocational training. Education can also be a tool for protection and for introducing tolerance, peace and conflict resolution between opposing communities, for developing notions of intercultural understanding and dialogue and for active peace-keeping operations.

Ajayi, I.G and Awodiji, O. A (2016) conducted a research on Managing Educational Needs of Internally Displaced Persons for Sustainable Development In Nigeria: The Way Forward. The result showed that the degree of educational needs of internally displaced persons in North-East, Nigeria is very high. It also revealed that provision of library service for displaced students and provision of education materials such as uniform, textbooks, locker, etc. in the IDPs camps were rated as “Highly Needed”

The education sector has negatively been affected and schooling has continuously been interrupted by the Boko Haram insurgency for the past few years in North East Nigeria. School children were killed, abducted, displaced leading to a high level of trauma. Many of the School facilities were destroyed or burnt down. Large numbers of the population in the affected states have been displaced leading to thousands of children being out of school. This has adversely affected the gains in education achieved prior to the insurgency in 2009. It is clear that with large numbers of children out of school, the north east states (especially Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) and Nigeria as country will suffer socially, economically and even politically unless meaningful interventions are devised to circumvent the situation. (UNICEF 2015).It is important to note that education is a weapon for liberation from ignorance and diseases.

Apart from discussing formal education for internally displaced persons in Nigeria, attention should be paid to those of them who are already educated, certificated or has learnt some trades before being displaced. Government and stake holders may need to look into this group of people within the IDP camps for empowerment as they become self -reliant and properly integrated into the new environment. This may reduce the number of people in these camps for better.

Finances And Internally Displaced Persons

In other to adequately sustain any organization, the issue of finances should be paramount. The case of IDPs is not different. Finance in this sense will includes activities like investing, budgeting, saving and forecasting as a way of making the IDP camps conducive.

Mayada El-Zoghbi et al (2017) Over 75 percent of adults living in countries with humanitarian crises remain outside of the formal financial system and struggle to respond to shocks and emergencies, build up productive assets, and invest in

health, education, and business. Demand for financial services in crisis contexts, however, is high.

In the same vein, Azaiez (2009) states that access to financial services, when combined with other assistance and protection programmes, can have a significant impact on the economic stability and self-reliance that is needed so desperately among protracted IDP populations. It is necessary, however, to look beyond micro-credit and define the range of potentially appropriate financial services for protracted IDPs. This will allow donors, policymakers, governments, NGOs and other actors to better assess their needs and to tailor programmes to them. It is important to assess a household's remittance flows, cash and asset management, income, risks, spending needs, borrowing needs, repayment capacity and whatever formal or informal financial services are currently available to them.

However, Huseynov R. et al (2003) feel that considerable resources and sustained commitment by governments and donors are necessary for the education of refugees and IDPs. Such soft sector needs are too often ignored. More effective intervention at an early stage can reduce the long-term costs. Without substantial amount of money therefore and with much dedication, it may be difficult to sustain the IDP camps in Nigeria.

Conducive Environment And Internally Displaced Persons

Conducive environment is very important in other to add meaning to the lives of the IDPs in their various camps. As everyone desire, so also the planners of these various camps should feel that conducive environment will give IDPs reasons to have access to good water, sanitation, accommodation and better feeding. This will help them psychologically to be disposed for leaning.

Couldrey and Herson (2017) assert that most camps are swiftly constructed as a response to rapid displacement, and in many cases are planned incrementally, and even retrospectively, in attempts to impose order on a chaotic, ad hoc camp layout. Even when the initial spatial planning incorporates water and sanitation, shelter, drainage, access roads and physical locations for provision of health, education and other services, it is difficult to take into account the whole lifespan of the camp during the design phase; political resistance, funding limitations and lack of agreement on duration are key factors that prevent longer-term planning. The political context is a key determinant of the adequacy of a refugee settlement. The attitude of host communities, security concerns and the

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willingness of a host government to meet their obligations have a direct impact on the viability and adequacy of refugee settlements.

However, how would the IDPs feel save in a situation like this? Outside the camp, children may face the possibility of being kidnapped or encountering armed clashes or explosions, harassment from community members and traffic accidents. Telling IDPs especially children that they are safe when they face numerous risks on a regular basis can disempower them. These are the issues faced by IDPs in some of the camp that are not really conducive.

Couldrey and Herson (2017) added that displaced population is relegated to the poorest land, far from host communities, isolated from services and possessing few natural resources. This limits the reality of integration with existing services, and places a longer-term burden on donors to fund settlements that have little chance of being viable without continuous programmatic support. The factors for a refugee settlement to thrive, rather than merely to exist, are rarely explicit and easily determined, nor are they stable, but a resilient refugee community will invest in a settlement if enabling factors such as their legal status, security of tenure and economic opportunity exist. Most times, the IDPs camps are set outside the city. On a farm land that is rather far from amenities. This is one of the reasons why they lack their needs.

Conclusion And Suggestions

This paper has highlighted some of the issues affecting education of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. It is strongly recommended that strategic management approach involving setting of goals and mission, evaluation of threats be employed to solve the problems of IDPs formal education in Nigeria. It is equally important to deploy a more tailored and diverse set of financing the immediate and long-term needs of IDPs in other to facilitate the provision of further education and vocational training for them so as to reduce their dependence and to enable them to have a normal life. While working on this, the educated ones among them should be incorporated into the society and be empowered. It is very urgent therefore, that education support is designed to address the particular barriers to learning faced by IDPs in Nigeria.

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