

Access to Secondary Education in Refugees and IDP Camps in North Eastern Part of Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract: This paper examined the challenges children and young people experienced in accessing secondary education in refugees and IDPs camp and its opportunities in north-eastern Nigeria. The paper analysed that distance, poverty, documentation, language difference among refugees and cultural norms are some of the main problem facing IDPs and refugees' children and youths especially the girl-child. The paper concluded that government need to make adequate planning and recommendation for refugees and IDPs, provision of all the necessary educational facilities, feasibilities in the inclusion of vulnerable refugees, identification of problems and budgetary planning. The paper also recommended that government and humanitarian actors should make effective measures in addressing barriers that will affect the learning outcome of displaced children to school drop-out, the host country should enable refugees to engage in legitimate work to avoid child labour, provision of vocational and technical training skills should also be considered, among others. The paper used secondary sources of data collection.

Keywords: Challenges, children, youths, school, education, north-east, problems, refugees, camps etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rose and Greeley argue that special attention to post-primary education is vital in reducing the risk of the fragility of any nation, by given attention to youths (especially disaffected youth) and encourages robust national framework by supporting post-basic education for the successful development of economic, social and recovery of a nation (2011). In Nigeria, refugees and IDPs children find it very difficult to access post-primary education (especially children from the North-Eastern part). Even though according to the convention of the right of the child (CRC), 1951 convention on the status of refugees (CSR), 1948 Universal Declaration of Fundamental Human Right (UDFHR) all agreed on no discrimination, free education, compulsory education and right to emergency education for all children irrespective of status (Olaitan, 2016).

Evidence shows that there is a low commitment by the government through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to the education of refugees and IDPs. Provision made in some levels, but the quality and quantity still need improvement (Oluwayemisi, et al., 2017). As someone living in North-Eastern Nigeria, this topic is of great

importance to me. And this led me focuses on the 'Access to Secondary Education in Refugees and IDP Camps in North-Eastern Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities': Brief history of insurgency. Data assessment of refugees and IDPs, problems, the role of the Nigerian government and UNHCR in assisting and protecting refugees and IDPs education amongst youths, analysis of the process involves in policy report and way forward, are made in this paper.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY

Africa is described to be the "continent of refugees" (Adepoju, 2010a). The fact that almost all African countries witnessed intra-state and inter-state conflict, creating a huge number of refugee's issues. Example crisis happened in Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Code d'Ivoire etc (Adepoju, 2010b). African refugees' population rapidly increases as time goes on because of different factors, in different measures from various African countries. These cause a lot of problem to the government, international organisation, agencies, host communities, refugees and IDPs (Alupo, et al., 2018).

UNHCR stated that refugee is someone who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2016).

Whilst international refugee law defines a refugee as, someone who seeks refuge in a foreign country because of war and violence, or out of fear of persecution. Whilst internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people displaced within their own countries and they didn't cross any border (Adamu, 2017).

Nigeria involves different culture ethnic and sub-ethnic groups with different language and religions. Evidence revealed that there are approximately 400 ethnic groups with 450 languages exist in Nigeria (Eize et al., 2014). The challenges of insurgency happened when they took over a large area of North-Eastern Nigeria thereby, forcing millions of people (men, women, and children) displaced in both Nigeria and neighbouring Niger, Chad, Cameroon (Babagana, et, al. 2019a). These make government provision of camps to

accommodate them and ensure their wellbeing. Presently, displaced persons and refugees live in 32 formal camps, host communities, satellite camps in the various state of Northern Nigeria (Andu, 2018). According to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) the primary state affected by insurgency with the highest numbers of refugees and IDPs camp are Adamawa 136,481 IDPs (4 camps), Borno State 1,434,149 IDPs (19 camps), Yobe State 131,563 IDPs (9 camps), and refugees from Niger 73,520, Chad 61,152 Cameroon 144,234 (IOM, et al., 2016).

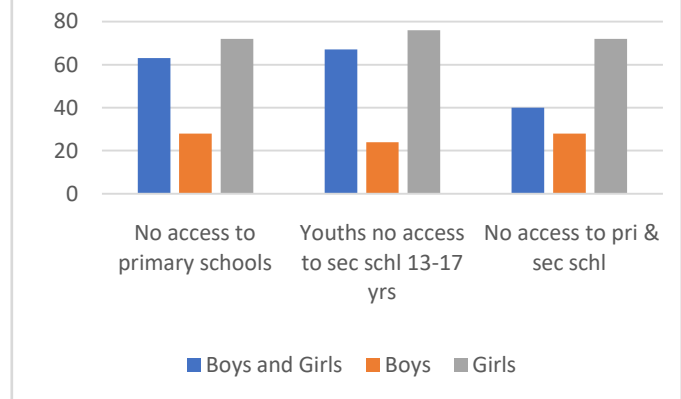
Also, in November-December 2016 another IDPs and refugee's assessment are conducted by the International Organisation for Migrants (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matric (DTM) team conducted in other 10 states affected by insurgency within North-Eastern Nigeria apart from Adamawa, Borno and the Yobe States, and all of them have IDPs camps, the states are Abuja 13,481 IDPs, Bauchi 70,078 IDPs, Benue 85,393 IDPs, Gombe 25,323 IDPs, Kaduna 36,976 IDPs, Kano 9,331 IDPs, Nasarawa 37,553, Plateau 77,317, Taraba 50, 227, Zamfara 44,929 (NEMA, 2019a). This show that the numbers of IDPs in Northern Nigeria is continuously increasing as time goes on; these also affected the Nigeria economy. In 2015, Nigeria government allocated \$722.28 million in constructing, rehabilitating and refurbishing all secondary schools damage by Islamic militant (Boko-haram), but the provision has not been made (Isokpan and Durojaye, 2016).

III. DATA ASSESSMENT FOR IDPs

The Nigerian government has made a significant effort in tackling the menace of Boko-haram since 2010. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) reported that 1,981,099 IDPs recorded from 3 states of North-eastern Nigeria, which are directly affected with the insurgency. Borno state has the highest number of refugees and IDPs 1,434,149, Adamawa State 136,481, Yobe State 131,563. In addition to that 278,908 refugees from the Niger Republic 73,520, Cameroon 144,234 and Chad 61,152 refugees recorded.

Therefore, more than one-third of the world out of school education lives in the conflict-affected states. According to UIS, there are about 262 million children and youths out of school in 2017 (Andu, 2018). 64 million children of primary school age, 61 million secondary school age and 138 million upper secondary school age. In North-Eastern Nigeria, the total number of refugees and IDP children in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states from ages 3-17 years are 452,620, with a larger percentage of the out of school. 63% attend primary school, education, 67% of 14-17 years adolescents do not have access to secondary education, but enrolled in primary schools, and 37% do not have access to either primary or secondary school education.

Accessesment of refugees and IDPs children enrolment to schools in North-Eastern Nigeria



The above chart showed that, out of 63% of children who are unable to access primary education, 72% are girls, and only 28% are boys. The chart also, shows that out of the 67% youth who are unable to access secondary education, 76% are girls and only 24% are boys. Also, out of the 40% refugees and IDPs children with no access to both primary and secondary education, 72% are girls, and only 28% are boys. This show that most of the refugees and IDPs girls are lagging educationally compared to the boys. And these happen because of cultural norms and religious factors in Northern Nigerian, which believed that girls should remain in the 'kitchen'. The issues of Boko-haram in killings and abducting girls in school discouraged most parent in sending their children to school and prepared to forced marriage them at the early stage of the adolescent.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Adolescent secondary education plays a vital role in the development of the youth; it serves as a link between primary and secondary education, vocational and technical training, which leads to the contribution of human growth and development.

- Secondary education serves as a protection to youths, especially girls. Adolescent's refugee or IDPs without secondary school will be vulnerable to child labour, early marriage, sexual exploitation etc. whilst adolescent boys would be vulnerable to arm group, thuggery, etc.
- Secondary education helps young boys and girls to be self-reliance, improve motivation for the future.
- Provide long term benefit of education to girls. Women with secondary education become a role model for their daughters and have a hope of raising families who will be educated.

V. PROBLEMS MILITATING EDUCATION OF IDPs AND REFUGEES' EDUCATION

Distance

In 2015, Boko-haram was analysed to be one of the world's deadliest terrorist in the world. Many children have been killed, kidnapped, abducted and displaced, and education was hugely affected due to attacks on children, teachers, schools, and educational facilities, (UNHRC, 2015). According to section 15 of the Child Right Act (CRA), which guarantee the right to free education, compulsory and universal basic education, as the responsibility of government to provide to every child in respective of tribe, religion and race (CRA, 2003). Also, Universal Basic Education Act (UBEA) addresses the problems of accessing inclusiveness, equity, and equal education to refugees and IDPs education, but many children (especially secondary school age) are unable to go to school because of distance from camps to host community school (Adamu, 2017).

Means of transportation is no longer available by the government or communities. These led to massive issues of abused, especially rape and abduction to secondary school age children. Example, 10 secondary school age students killed from refugee's camp to school, and terrorist tracked the school killing another 59 students, 15 teachers in BuniYadi secondary school, Yobe State on 17, May 2014. Another 276 girls are kidnapped from government secondary school ChibokBorno State on 14, April 2014, again 110 girls were abducted in Government Secondary School Dapchi. According to NEMA over 300 refugees and IDPs secondary school age were killed by the Islamic terrorist (NEMA, 2016b).

Graca (2006) argues that attacking school during any type of conflict is a grave violation of the child right. Any attack is supposed to be against students, teachers and educational facilities, these also include abduction, kidnapping, torturing and sexual abuse of students and teachers right to access education (Olaitan, 2016). Arm conflict can affect child education; death and injury to the teacher, closure of the school due to attacks, general insecurity which could reduce the possibility of teaching and learning process. Most of the IDPs and refugees secondary school age avoided going to school from camps in fear of abduction, rape, killing and thereby, reducing their contribution in the society (Nwanna and Nmachi, 2018).

Poverty

United Nation Office for the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) argues that there are about 62 million children and youths out of school in 2017. 64 million children of primary school age, 61 million secondary school age and 138 upper secondary school age (UIS, 201). In Nigeria, access to education for the children of refugees and IDPs is challenging. In North-Eastern Nigeria, the total number of refugees and IDPs children in Adamawa, Borno

and Yobe States from 3-17 years of ages are 452,620, a larger percentage of which are out of school. 63% attend primary school education, 67% of 13-17 years of ages are adolescent don't have access to secondary school education, but finished primary school, and 37% don't have access to primary school education either secondary school education (UIS, 2018b). Education database in Northern Nigerian shows 40% of children lack access to education because of extreme poverty (Isokpan and Durojaye, 2016a).

Language Differences

Many refugees and IDPs who lost their properties and valuable goods, education remained the best option for them. According to the 1989 convention of the right of the children, 2000 Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy in Nigeria stated that the main aims of education is to provide skills, knowledge and help children have a decent life, learn social, economic and cultural norms of the society, and contribute toward the development of such society. Nigeria used English as an official language whilst Niger, Cameroon and Chad use French as their official language (Isokpan and Durojaye, 2016b). These became a significant barrier in providing effective and efficient teaching and learning process. Research shows that refugees with a different language of instruction face difficulties in learning. Example, according to Human Right Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), Burmese government implemented an official curriculum where all the refugees and IDPs must study in the Burmese language. In Iraq, the Arabic language was used for both IDPs and refugees as the only language of instruction. These caused the major reasons for low enrolment rate from 45.8% to 31.7% respectively (Joshua, et al., 2016. p 42).

Documentation

Documentation is one of the significant challenges facing refugee's education, as many children need to proceed their education in the host communities and the host country, but lack of evidence (document) to be considered for enrolment make it difficult for them to further their education. Identification of certificate can hinder by both technical problems including (loss, differing validation across the border, destruction during displacement) (Nwanna and Nmachi, 2018). An effective process of accreditation of education is expected thereby, providing durable for IDPs and refugees children; these are to prevent child destruction of knowledge (UNHCR, 2008, P. 16).

In Nigeria, refugees' children from Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic have already abandoned their certificate on the process of conflict, as a result, they have no documents that will enable them to enrol into to schools, and no attention was given to them by the Nigerian government (NEMA, 2019). These are challenges for most African countries in dealing with refugees. Example, in Nepal, children need to provide evidence of school leaving certificate to enrol into schools, but most IDPs lack evidence documents (Walter, 2006, p. 16-17). In Guinea, which hosted English speaking

refugees (Sierra-Lionean and Liberia), the francophone education system didn't meet the students need. Therefore, a double shift system of 4 hours is provided, thereby providing the curriculum of their own country to meet the educational need of the refugee's children (UNCHR, 2003, P. 10).

Cultural Norms

The value and belief of people living in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria are to keep girls out of school. It is believed that girls' highest image is in the 'kitchen' (Makama, 2013, p. 166). Women constitute half of the Nigerian population and play an essential role as mothers and community developers. They contribute a lot in the social, economic development of the societies. Yet, their involvement in formal and informal structure system, regarding the use of societal resources, remains insignificant (Aina, 2003). The Nigerian society (especially Northern Nigeria) has been patriarchal which the primary nature of traditional society is. Patriarchy is a system of social relation where men have absolute power over women (Kramarae, 2008; Learner 2006).

In Nigeria, (especially North) boys have an absolute advantage when it comes to education, but most of the girls can only enrol in primary school after which they would be forced to marriage (Eme, 2019). The issues of insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria where 276 Chibok and 110 Dapchi girls were abducted in school on 14 April 2014 and 21 March 2018 discouraged the most parent from sending their children to school (Magaji, et al., 2018).

Role of the Nigerian Government and UNHCR

In 2019, Nigerian IDPs and refugee's crisis going into 9th year. The crisis has deepened with a lot of problem including scarcity of food, insecurity, severe malnutrition in Nigeria, and 3 of its neighbours (Cameroon, Chad and Niger) despite the effort of government and humanitarian aids (Mba, 2015). Nigerian military along with multinational joint task forces have driven the militants from most of the areas they once controlled, and Nigerian IDPs and refugees returned to accessible areas. According to UBEC Nigerian government has released \$722.28 million in constructing, rehabilitating and refurbishing all the secondary schools' damage by Islamic militants, but unfortunately, most of the provision has not been provided, thereby making it difficult for refugees and IDPs in accessing better education (UNHCR, 2016a).

UNHCR Role to Assist in North-Eastern Nigeria

UNHCR is working with the Nigerian government and other UN partners in helping and protecting the life of the refugees and IDPs. Their effort includes making sure that the right of the refugees is protected and providing legal support, shelters to the victims of sexual abuse, other gender-based violence (Andu, 2018). According to the Liz KpamAhua UNHCR Regional Refugee Coordinator for Nigerian Crisis, the Nigerian Regional Refugee Response Plan (NRRRP) for 2018, witnessed routine welcome from 23 partners in 2015 to 47 in 2018. This a signal that cooperation in assisting Nigerian

IDPs and refugees is working efficiently, as all the forces are ready to give their utmost best (UNHCR, 2019b).

VI. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

- Lack of adequate provision of secondary education to the adolescent refugees and IDPs will result in the loss to the economy and the country at large.
- These young people might grow up angry, rejected and turn to other illegal means of making money such as drugs and armed robbery for survival.
- They can decide to join the Islamic terrorist group (Boko-haram).
- There is evidence that some of the children with traumatic experience are likely going to develop a form of mental disorder or may have a problem to settle in a new environment. They, therefore, would benefit from psychological, emotional, financial, educational and medical support which will enable them to settle in their new environment.

Unfortunately, these vulnerable children seem to be at various camps with very limited support nor consideration for their further educational achievements. Which means the vulnerable refugees and IDPs will be behind academically and likely be limited in terms of developing appropriate social skills that their counterparts living supposedly normal lives would have, thereby, not putting them at a place they can compete in future.

Planning and Recommendation for refugees and IDPs

Identify and Recognise the Number of Refugees and Adolescent IDPs

Children who are expected to complete primary school in the current year, need to be identified and calculate the number of children required to enrol for secondary education. These will help plan the development of the refugees and IDPs child education effectively.

1. Provision of all the Necessary Educational Facilities

The survey should be carryout to identify the location, numbers of children in need of secondary education within all camps, these will determine the number of classroom block, laboratories and teachers to be provided.

2. Feasibility in the Inclusion of Vulnerable Refugees

The community hosting these schools should be funded to accommodate them and ensure the following are prioritised:

Government and especially the ministry of education should provide vehicles to convey the students from camp to host community school. Provision of uniforms, breakfast and lunch at school. Provision of free education to students in the camps. If the inclusion of vulnerable refugees in the national educational policy is not feasible, the creation of educational facilities on the camp will help in addressing issues of kidnapping students. These will also include the building of

classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories and vocational centres within each camp. The following should be considered as well:

- Recruitment and training of qualified staff or volunteers to maximise cost.
- Provision of free education to all refugees and IDPs children.
- Consider a shift pattern of 4 hours per set of children twice daily to enable all children to have access to limited schools.

3. Identification of the Problems

Most of the problems stopping adolescents from going to secondary schools and high education in the camps are poverty and unemployment. Therefore, the especial intervention will be initiated to train and empower youths with different skills in agriculture, business, teaching etc. These will enable them to be self-employed and economically responsible members of the society, not only in the refugees and IDP camps but to the community in general. The same method used in Kenya, Iraq and Syria and a lot of success witnessed.

4. Budgetary Planning

Planning for a better secondary school will be made, and the money allocated will be monitored by (EFCC) to avoid corruption and misallocating resources. Measurement and evaluation of secondary education for the refugees and IDPs will be undertaken to ensure all the goals achieved.

Way Forward

Government and humanitarian actors should provide effective measures in addressing barriers that will affect the learning outcomes of displaced children to drop-out for both children and girls. Sustainable and transparent intervention is urgently needed to ensure all children can access secondary education. The host country should allow refugees families to pay the school-related cost; the host country should enable refugees to engage in legitimate work. These could avoid children in participating in child labour. Host country must ensure that national education plans include refugee children, provision of vocational and technical training skills should be considered.

Host country must ensure that both refugees and IDPs children deserve the same protection to both primary and secondary school children. In line with the provision of a conducive atmosphere in schools. In providing a solution to refugees with different languages of instruction to the host country, the home country curriculum will be a carryover for use to refugee's children. The curriculum of the host country will also be implemented for refugees in the separate schools or mix into host country education system. Lastly, hybrid curriculums that addresses both home and host country is needed and introduce the language of both countries in the school system.

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