

Assessment of the Impact of Resettlement and Reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons on the Sustainability of Peacebuilding in Borno State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of resettlement and reintegration interventions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno State, Nigeria, and their implications for sustainable peacebuilding in a post-insurgency context. The study is anchored on a combination of Vulnerability Theory and Conflict Transformation Theory. While Vulnerability Theory explains the socio-economic insecurity and institutional challenges faced by displaced persons, Conflict Transformation Theory provides a framework for understanding how reintegration and peacebuilding interventions can rebuild social cohesion, restore livelihoods, and promote long-term peace and stability in conflict-affected communities. Using qualitative data generated through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with returnees and resettled IDPs in three local government areas - Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Jere, and Bama; the study explores how resettlement initiatives have influenced livelihoods, social cohesion, and human security. The findings reveal that although these interventions have contributed to improved welfare and relative community stability, their long-term sustainability is constrained by weak institutional coordination, inadequate funding, and limited community participation. The paper argues that effective peacebuilding requires sustained, participatory, and well-coordinated interventions that integrate economic empowerment, social cohesion, institutional accountability, and community resilience. It therefore recommends strengthening policy frameworks, promoting local ownership, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and expanding livelihood support to improve the sustainability of resettlement and reintegration programmes in Borno State.

Keywords: Resettlement; Reintegration; Sustainable Peacebuilding; Internally Displaced Persons; Sustainable Interventions.

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Global Report on Internal Displacement estimates that 75.9 million people are internally displaced across 116 countries, with 68.3 million (90%) displaced by conflict and violence and the remaining 10% by disasters. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 34.8 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), representing 46% of the global total, while Nigeria alone hosts about 3.6 million internally displaced persons (IDMC, 2024). These figures highlight the scale of displacement and the urgent need for sustainable resettlement and reintegration strategies to promote peace and social stability.

In Borno State, the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, federal and state governments working with international humanitarian and development partners, have implemented programmes aimed at resettling and reintegrating displaced populations. These initiatives have produced visible improvements in shelter, livelihood opportunities, and access to social services. However, the persistent presence of large numbers of IDPs in camps and host communities in Maiduguri and other urban centres raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of these interventions.

This paper examines the sustainability of IDPs resettlement and reintegration interventions and its implication on peacebuilding in Borno State. It assesses the effectiveness and sustainability of government programmes designed to facilitate the return, resettlement, and reintegration of internally displaced persons.

Study Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of IDPs' resettlement and reintegration interventions in Borno State.
2. Assess the sustainability of government interventions supporting resettlement and reintegration.
3. Explore how sustained resettlement and reintegration initiatives contribute to peacebuilding in Borno State.

CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention (2009), offers a comprehensive regional definition, describing IDPs as:

“Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.” (AU, 2009, Article 1)

Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, 2019) defines internally displaced persons (IDPs) as those who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes due to armed conflict or other forms of violence but who remain within their country's borders. These definitions have some common elements which include: Forced or involuntary movement; Threats to life and livelihood; and Displacement occurring within national boundaries.

In this study, IDPs refer specifically to individuals displaced by violent conflict in North-East Nigeria, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency, who have relocated within Nigeria.

Resettlement

Liman and Ladan (2021) conceptualize resettlement as a government- or developer-led activity involving the relocation of populations from one area to another. A more comprehensive conceptualization is given by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP, 2016, as cited in Francis, Haruna, & Bawa, 2021). The Institute defines resettlement of IDPs as: “A condition in which all individuals displaced from their homes during conflict are assured the option of voluntary, safe, and dignified return to their homes or into new homes and communities.”

Resettlement is therefore a planned intervention typically implemented by governments or humanitarian agencies to address displacement crises. In this study, it refers to a carefully structured set of activities aimed at relocating displaced persons to safe and sustainable environments either their ancestral homes or entirely new locations.

Reintegration

The concept of reintegration stems from the recognition that returnee IDPs must be reabsorbed into their communities to regain self-reliance and minimize long-term dependency on aid. The Federal Government of Nigeria's National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (FGN, 2012) defines reintegration as “the process of providing services to assist the displaced into meaningful employment or other forms of economic empowerment within society, and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery.” Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019) conceptualizes it as a multidimensional process through which

individuals re-establish the economic, social, and psychosocial relationships necessary for livelihood, dignity, and civic participation. It encompasses the integration of education, health, agriculture, and livelihood-support initiatives that link with broader development goals (Ikwuyatun, 2016).

In the context of this paper, reintegration refers to the establishment of social, economic, and institutional conditions that enable formerly displaced persons to enjoy full citizenship rights, live productively, and participate peacefully in community life.

Sustainable Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding can be traced to Johan Galtung, who defined it as “the process of creating self-supporting structures that remove the causes of wars and offer alternatives to war” (Galtung, 1976, p. 298). This conceptual foundation was later advanced by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), where peacebuilding was described as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” The United Nations Brahimi Report (2000) further expanded the concept by emphasizing activities undertaken after conflict to rebuild the foundations of peace and support reconstruction processes. In 2007, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Policy Committee defined peacebuilding as “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.”

These perspectives collectively portray peacebuilding as both a preventive and reconstructive process aimed at addressing the structural causes of violent conflict while strengthening the institutional, social, political, and economic foundations necessary for long-term stability. However, this study adopts the concept of sustainable peacebuilding to emphasize not merely the cessation of violence, but the establishment of enduring conditions that prevent the recurrence of conflict and promote social cohesion over time. Sustainable peacebuilding therefore refers to a continuous and inclusive process of rebuilding institutions, restoring livelihoods, promoting reconciliation, enhancing human security, and strengthening community resilience in ways that ensure long-term peace and stability.

Within the context of this study, sustainable peacebuilding is conceptualized as the extent to which the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) contribute to durable peace in Borno State through:

- Restoration of social relationships and community trust;
- Improvement in human security and livelihoods;
- Reduction in grievances and vulnerability to renewed conflict;
- Promotion of social inclusion and local participation; and
- Strengthening of institutional and community capacities for conflict management.

Accordingly, resettlement and reintegration are viewed not merely as humanitarian responses, but as critical components of sustainable peacebuilding capable of influencing long-term stability, reconciliation, and post-conflict recovery in Borno State. In this study, sustainable peacebuilding is operationalized through indicators such as: the level of community acceptance of returnees; access to housing and livelihoods; perceptions of safety and security; degree of social cohesion and reconciliation; reduction in communal tensions; and participation of IDPs in community and economic life.

Sustainable Interventions

Intervention refers to a deliberate action taken to influence a situation toward a desired outcome. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines it as “the act of taking action about something in order to have an effect on its outcome.” In development practice, interventions are actions undertaken by governments, civil society organisations, and international development partners to address social, economic, or humanitarian challenges. Their effectiveness

is often measured by sustainability which is the ability to generate lasting benefits and remain functional even after external support ends.

In this study, sustainable interventions refer to initiatives implemented by government agencies and development partners to facilitate the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno State through the provision of shelter, social services, livelihoods, and security. These programmes aim to strengthen resilience and promote self-reliance among displaced populations. Key institutions involved include the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative (PCNI), National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), and the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MRRR).

Government Interventions on Resettlement and Reintegration of IDPs in North-East Nigeria

Following the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009, the Nigerian government implemented several programmes to address the humanitarian and developmental challenges associated with internal displacement. These interventions evolved from emergency humanitarian responses to broader reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives. Key institutions involved include:

a. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

Established in 1999, NEMA coordinates disaster management and emergency response in Nigeria (NEMA, 2022). During the height of the Boko Haram crisis, the agency led humanitarian efforts by providing relief materials and establishing IDP camps in collaboration with international organizations. However, its interventions focused primarily on short-term humanitarian assistance rather than long-term reintegration.

b. National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI)

The NCFRMI serves as Nigeria's institutional mechanism for coordinating refugee and displacement management. Its mandate which was expanded in 2002 and 2009 includes advising government on displacement policy, coordinating protection and assistance programmes, and facilitating durable solutions such as reconstruction and reintegration of displaced populations (NCFRMI, 2021).

c. Presidential Initiative for the North-East (PINE)

Established in 2014 under President Goodluck Jonathan and domiciled in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), PINE was designed as a short-to-medium-term "Marshall Plan" for the North-East (Anyadike, 2015). The initiative supported livelihood programmes, infrastructure rehabilitation, and community stabilization projects. Although implementation challenges limited its effectiveness, it laid the foundation for subsequent recovery initiatives.

d. Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative (PCNI)

In 2016, the federal government established the PCNI to coordinate humanitarian, reconstruction, and development programmes in the region (The State House, 2020). Its strategic framework, known as the Buhari Plan, focused on relocation, rehabilitation, resettlement, and peacebuilding (PCNI, 2016).

e. North-East Development Commission (NEDC)

The NEDC was created in 2017 to coordinate reconstruction and development in the six states affected by insurgency in North-East Nigeria. Its mandate includes assessing and harmonizing humanitarian and development initiatives, managing funds for reconstruction, resettlement, and rehabilitation, and addressing poverty, illiteracy, and environmental degradation in the six North-East states - Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe (NEDC, 2020).

Overall, these interventions demonstrate the Nigerian government's evolving response to displacement, from emergency humanitarian assistance toward longer-term recovery and peacebuilding initiatives. However,

challenges such as weak institutional coordination, funding limitations, and persistent insecurity continue to affect implementation.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have interrogated the sustainability of IDPs resettlement and reintegration interventions, with particular attention to livelihood restoration and peacebuilding outcomes.

a) Livelihood Sustainability and Economic Reintegration

Alemu (2015), in a study of Ethiopia's intra-regional resettlement programmes involving 250 households through 28 key informant interviews and 6 focus group discussions conducted across the two regions, found that resettlement outcomes were mixed due to policy gaps and poor inter-sectoral coordination, underscoring the need for coherent national frameworks. Among its recommendations, the study stressed the need to establish effective coordinating mechanisms among the implementing agencies from the different levels of government. Similarly, Adekola et al. (2022) in their study of the Economic Drivers of Voluntary Return among Conflict-Induced Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria focused on the need for persons displaced by the Boko Haram conflict in North-East Nigeria to willingly return home after about a decade of insurgency which paralyzed social and economic activities in their area. The study established that livelihood assurance was the strongest predictor of voluntary return among IDPs as the regression results revealed that displaced persons were significantly more likely to return home when assured of employment and sustainable income sources. Consequently, the study recommends the economic empowerment of displaced persons through the provision of jobs and other sources of livelihood upon their return to their various home communities, just as it advised on government and other stakeholders to deepen their collaboration to achieve the objectives of resettlement of displaced persons. Together, these studies emphasize that durable resettlement and reintegration are inseparable from livelihood sustainability.

b) Institutional and Policy Dimensions

Adamu, et al. (2019) in their study on: Integrated Community Development Approach for Resettlement and Rehabilitation of IDPs in Nigeria, conclude that many Nigerian resettlement programmes emphasize physical relocation over socioeconomic reintegration, resulting in poverty and social dislocation. Ejiofor, et al. (2016) who assessed the impact of internal displacement on human security in Northern Nigeria, similarly describe government responses to displacement as ad hoc and underfunded, thus incapable of ensuring durable solutions. The study further recommends the inclusion of the internally displaced persons' affairs at the local government level by establishing offices for the representatives of this community as well as increased funding as measures to address IDP crisis and enhance human security in the region. These findings highlight systemic weaknesses in institutional coordination and long-term planning, which continue to undermine sustainable reintegration efforts.

c) Social Cohesion and Peacebuilding

Arai (2018) and Maidawa, et al. (2020) provide important insights into the psychosocial and communal aspects of reintegration. Arai (2018) explored the repatriation and reconciliation needs of the communities displaced by Boko Haram insurgency and the military operations as well as how to develop practical and sustainable mechanisms of government-civil society collaboration capable of building the trust and security necessary for repatriation and reconciliation. The focus group study revealed that security, shelter, and livelihood are indispensable conditions for IDPs' willingness to return. On the other hand, Maidawa et al. (2020) examined the Post Conflict Reintegration and Challenges of Social Cohesion in North-Eastern Nigeria and established that social cohesion and community trust are essential for sustainable peace in Borno State. Both studies suggest that peacebuilding cannot be achieved through material resettlement alone but requires participatory, community-driven reintegration processes.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Overall, these studies converge on the notion that sustainable resettlement depends on coordinated institutional action, livelihood recovery, and social cohesion. However, empirical analyses directly linking sustainable IDP resettlement and reintegration interventions to peacebuilding outcomes remain limited, especially in the Borno State context. This study, therefore, contributes to closing this gap by assessing how sustained government interventions influence post-conflict peacebuilding among resettled and reintegrated communities.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a combination of Vulnerability Theory and Conflict Transformation Theory as its theoretical framework. The integration of the two theories provides a comprehensive basis for understanding both the vulnerabilities experienced by IDPs and the role of resettlement and reintegration in promoting sustainable peacebuilding in Borno State, Nigeria.

Vulnerability Theory, developed by Martha Fineman, argues that vulnerability is universal, although its impact depends on the ability of institutions and the state to provide protection, support, and resilience (Fineman, 2008). The theory emphasizes that social exclusion, insecurity, and inequality are often consequences of institutional failure. In the context of this study, the Boko Haram insurgency exposed IDPs to loss of livelihoods, displacement, insecurity, and weakened social networks, thereby increasing their vulnerability. The theory therefore explains the need for effective state intervention through resettlement, social protection, livelihood support, and inclusive governance to restore resilience among displaced populations.

However, while Vulnerability Theory adequately explains the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of IDPs, it provides limited explanation regarding how reintegration contributes to long-term peace and stability. Consequently, the study also adopts Conflict Transformation Theory, principally associated with John Paul Lederach and Johan Galtung. The theory argues that sustainable peace requires transforming the structural, relational, and institutional conditions that sustain conflict (Lederach, 1997; Galtung, 1976). It emphasizes reconciliation, social cohesion, dialogue, institutional rebuilding, and community participation as foundations for sustainable peacebuilding.

The relevance of Conflict Transformation Theory to this study lies in its explanation of how the resettlement and reintegration of IDPs can help rebuild trust, restore livelihoods, strengthen community relationships, and reduce grievances capable of triggering renewed conflict. Therefore, the combination of Vulnerability Theory and Conflict Transformation Theory provides a holistic framework for analyzing both the vulnerabilities of IDPs and the contribution of reintegration programmes to sustainable peacebuilding in Borno State.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design using both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with IDPs who had either returned to their original communities or resettled in host communities. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling strategy from three Local Government Areas in Borno State: Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Jere, and Bama with high numbers of IDPs. Six FGDs were conducted, each consisting of eight participants, giving a total of 48 respondents.

Table 1: Sample Structure

Location	Group/Target	FGDs	No. of Participants
MMC	IDPs in Community	1	8
	Returnees/Resettled Persons	1	8
Jere	IDPs in Community	1	8
	Returnees/Resettled Persons	1	8
Bama	IDPs in Community	1	8

	Returnees/Resettled Persons	1	8
Total		6	48

Discussions were conducted in Hausa and Kanuri by trained moderators. Data were translated, transcribed, and analysed thematically based on the study objectives. Ethical considerations were observed, including informed consent and confidentiality of participants.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The findings are organized according to the study's three objectives:

- To examine the impact of IDPs Resettlement and Reintegration interventions in Borno State;
- To assess the sustainability of government interventions on resettlement and reintegration;
- To examine how sustained interventions have promoted peacebuilding in Borno State.

Objective One: Impact of Resettlement and Reintegration Interventions

The analyses here were carried out looking at three key themes related to programme impact. They include improvement in livelihood and welfare, social reintegration and access to services, as well as institutional coordination and implementation effectiveness.

Theme 1: Improvement in Livelihoods and Welfare

Across all FGDs, respondents acknowledged that resettlement and reintegration programmes have improved their economic and social conditions. Many cited the training and empowerment programmes provided by government agencies and NGOs as a major factor that restored their means of livelihood. In Bama, several returnees noted receiving capital and vocational support, while in Jere and MMC, respondents reported small-scale business support. An IDP from in Bama noted as follows:

“Some of us were given capital and skills to start small businesses after we returned.” – FGD, Participant, Bama (Custom community).

Access to housing, education, and business opportunities was repeatedly emphasized in Bama and Jere. Participants reported that they could now “live peacefully, farm, and send children to school, unlike during displacement”. However, they also mentioned that infrastructure remains incomplete, with many resettled communities lacking electricity, clean water, and health centers.

Key finding: Resettlement interventions have partially improved the standard of living of IDPs through empowerment, safety, and education, but basic infrastructure deficits continue to hinder full reintegration.

Theme 2: Social Reintegration and Access to Services

Participants in all communities indicated that resettlement interventions helped them reconnect with host communities and regain social belonging. Respondents in Jere community were unanimous that they now participate in community activities and meetings. A male IDP captured it as follows:

“We now participate in community activities and meetings.” – FGD, Jere.

Government support in getting some of their children to resume school and some minimal health services signified restored belonging for them. However, majority of the respondents in MMC, expressed concerns that not all IDPs were properly documented, which affected their access to relief materials, training and other benefits/support given to displaced persons.

Key finding: Resettlement and reintegration have fostered social inclusion and restored communal interaction. However, unequal access and limited coverage create perceptions of exclusion among some IDPs.

Theme 3: Institutional Coordination and Implementation

While participants recognized the contributions of the Borno State Government, NEDC, and humanitarian partners, there were repeated concerns about implementation gaps and the lack of coordination between agencies responsible for resettlement and reintegration.

Some respondents noted that training was provided without tools, reflecting weak follow-up. An IDP from Bama sounded this clearly as follows:

“They trained us but didn’t give the tools to continue our work.” – FGD, Bama (Custom community)

Key finding: While the interventions are conceptually strong and widely appreciated, implementation inconsistency and weak inter-agency coordination reduce overall effectiveness.

Table 2: Summary of the Impacts of IDPs Resettlement and Reintegration Interventions

Sub-Theme	Bama	Jere	MMC	Overall Interpretation
Livelihood Empowerment	Received training & small capital/ Agric and trading support	Small business support	Training but incomplete coverage	Positive livelihood recovery
Infrastructure	Incomplete housing & water but schools and clinics are available	Basic amenities fair	Lack of electricity, poor roads	Infrastructure remains inadequate
Social Reintegration	Active in local groups/participate in community events	Positive social relations	Limited inclusion of some groups	Social integration improving

Source: Analysis from Data Collected, 2025

Objective Two: Sustainability of Government Interventions

The objective on the sustainability of government interventions was analysed under 3 themes as follows: Funding and continuity, community ownership and participation

Theme 1: Funding and Continuity

Most of the respondents who participated in the FGDs emphasized that most interventions were donor-driven and ceased when external funding ended. Government maintenance structures were perceived as weak, thus threatening continuity. Particularly, those in MMC noted that most interventions were short-term and donor-driven, hence dry up in no time. A respondent in Maiduguri has this to say:

“When NGOs leave, many things stop and we are left stranded.” – FGD Participant, MMC.

Other respondents observed that government-initiated resettlement and reintegration programmes lack maintenance and follow-up and are weak, particularly in infrastructure and livelihood projects.

Key finding: The sustainability of current interventions is fragile, as projects often lack long-term financing and institutional mechanisms for continuity.

Theme 2: Community Ownership and Participation

Respondents stressed that local participation in planning and execution enhances sustainability. Some groups, especially in Bama (Waziriri community) and Jere, reported forming community-based organizations to maintain facilities and manage disputes.

“We formed groups to clean our environment and report problems.” – FGD Participant, Bama (Waziriri community).

However, in Bama (Custom community) and MMC, participants complained that relocation and settlement plans were made without adequate consultation of IDPs hence many of them did not benefit from the plan.

Key Finding: Community participation improves ownership and maintenance, yet top-down planning continues to weaken sustainability.

Table 3: Summary of Sustainability of Interventions

Sub-Theme	Key Findings	Implication
Funding	Projects often end when donor funding ceases	Unsustainable beyond external aid
Community Participation	Local self-help groups active, but not consulted in planning	Weak sense of ownership

Source: Analysis from Data Collected, 2025

Objective Three: Sustained Interventions and Peacebuilding

The third objective on: the sustainability of intervention and peacebuilding was analysed using the following themes: security and stability, social cohesion and reconciliation, and economic reintegration and peace dividends.

Theme 1: Security and Stability

A good number of FGD participants agreed that resettlement and reintegration have contributed to reduced insecurity and enhanced community stability in their communities. Others equally noted improved trust between IDPs and government through continuous dialogue and support from security agencies. An IDP in Jere community has this to say:

“We feel safe now because security officers are always nearby.” – FGD Participant, Jere.

Key Finding: Resettlement has enhanced human security, serving as a foundation for peacebuilding and restoring confidence in state institutions.

Theme 2: Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

Respondents noted that community programmes encouraging coexistence—such as shared schools, joint religious activities, and local mediation committees—have helped reduce tension between IDPs and host communities. They noted that tension often results from the sharing of relief materials and the feeling that they may be left out in the scheme of things, either due to, limited supply of materials or other factors. An IDP in Bama stated as follows:

“We live peacefully now, though sometimes tension arises over relief materials.” – FGD, Bama (Waziriri community)

Key Finding: Sustained reintegration fosters social cohesion and reconciliation, though minor disputes persist

where resources are limited.

Theme 3: Economic Reintegration and Peace Dividend

A number of the respondents consistently linked economic empowerment to peace, noting that livelihood programmes reduced dependency, improved household income, and discouraged criminal behaviour.

“When people have something doing, they don’t think of fighting again.” – FGD Participant, MMC.

Key Findings: Economic stability derived from resettlement interventions directly supports peacebuilding by reducing poverty, frustration, and potential radicalization.

Table 4: Summary of Sustained Interventions and Peacebuilding

Sub-Theme	Observations	Peacebuilding Implication
Security	Safer communities, presence of military	Builds trust and stability
Social Cohesion	Improved relationships, shared community life	Promotes reconciliation
Economic Reintegration	Livelihood support reduces idleness	Reduces risk of conflict relapse

Source: Analysis from Data Collected, 2025

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that internally displaced persons’ (IDPs) resettlement and reintegration interventions in Borno State have contributed significantly to socio-economic recovery, security stabilization, and community rebuilding. However, the sustainability of these interventions remains uncertain due to weak institutional coordination, limited funding continuity, and insufficient community participation.

The results show that livelihood empowerment, improved access to education, and relative safety have restored a measure of dignity and hope among resettled and returned populations. These findings align with Adekola et al. (2022), who reported that the willingness of IDPs in North-East Nigeria to return home was strongly linked to the assurance of livelihood and employment opportunities. Similarly, Adamu, et al. (2019) emphasized that resettlement programmes that fail to integrate socio-economic development elements tend to increase insecurity and marginalization. In this context, the Borno State government’s empowerment and skills acquisition initiatives, though commendable, still require long-term institutional support to consolidate their peacebuilding potential.

The study also found that resettlement programmes have improved social cohesion and interaction between IDPs and host communities through shared community activities and access to services. This resonates with Maidawa, et al. (2020), who found that social cohesion is a crucial condition for sustaining peace and stability in post-conflict communities. However, the persistence of limited inclusion, unequal access to resources, and perceptions of marginalization suggest the need for more participatory approaches that strengthen local ownership of peacebuilding processes.

Furthermore, the results underscore that weak inter-agency coordination and funding gaps which can threaten the long-term viability of resettlement and reintegration initiatives. Participants repeatedly indicated that most projects end when external partners withdraw support—a challenge also identified by Alemu (2015) in the Ethiopian context, where inadequate policy coherence and weak institutional capacity undermined the sustainability of government-led resettlement programmes. These institutional weaknesses reflect the concerns of the Vulnerability Theory (Fineman, 2008), which posits that social structures and state institutions often perpetuate vulnerability by failing to equitably distribute resources and resilience opportunities. Thus, the state bears the responsibility to strengthen its institutional mechanisms to protect vulnerable groups such as IDPs.

The evidence also demonstrates that resettlement interventions have contributed to enhanced human security and reduced, to some extent, the likelihood of conflict relapse. Improved trust in state institutions, the presence of security personnel, and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were identified as stabilizing factors. This corresponds with Arai (2018), who found that IDPs' willingness to return was dependent on security assurances and livelihood opportunities. This paper supports this view by confirming that sustainable peacebuilding is closely linked to the creation of safe, economically viable, and socially cohesive communities.

In summary, while IDPs resettlement and reintegration interventions in Borno State have achieved measurable gains in welfare, safety, and community restoration, the sustainability of these gains is contingent upon government's ability to institutionalize inclusive policies, provide consistent funding, and ensure participatory implementation. This aligns with the central thesis of the Vulnerability Theory, which holds that state institutions must actively mitigate structural vulnerabilities rather than perpetuate them through fragmented interventions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data gathered and analysed, the paper concludes as follows:

- IDPs Resettlement and Reintegration interventions in Borno State have had a notable positive impact on the recovery and well-being of internally displaced persons in Borno State through improved livelihood, safety, and education, thus laying a foundation for stability and peace. However, there are still issues of incomplete infrastructure and limited reach.
- Interventions on the resettlement and reintegration of IDPs in Borno State are marred by weak institutional follow-up, inadequate funding/dependence on donors, and inadequate community participation which could threaten long-term success. Therefore, the sustainability of these interventions remains fragile due to inadequate institutional capacity, insufficient funding, and limited community ownership.
- Sustained IDPs resettlement and reintegration interventions that prioritize economic empowerment, social cohesion, and participatory governance can serve as strong drivers of peacebuilding by reducing vulnerability, rebuilding trust, and fostering resilience among affected populations.

The paper also concludes that sustainable resettlement and reintegration of IDPs goes beyond humanitarian responses to include vital peacebuilding strategies that can consolidate recovery and prevent renewed conflict in post-insurgency Borno State.

Considering the foregoing, the paper recommends the following:

a. Strengthen Coordination, Institutional and Policy Frameworks

- The Federal Government, in collaboration with the Borno State Government and relevant stakeholders, should develop a comprehensive National Framework on IDP Resettlement and Reintegration that clearly defines the responsibilities of agencies such as NEDC, NCFRMI, and MRRR. The framework should include implementation timelines, inter-agency reporting structures, funding arrangements, and monitoring indicators to reduce duplication of responsibilities and improve accountability.
- MRRR should establish an inter-agency coordination platform involving humanitarian organizations, security agencies, local government authorities, and community representatives. Quarterly coordination meetings and shared project databases should be institutionalized to improve information sharing, project tracking, and policy harmonization.
- NEDC and MRRR should adopt a joint planning and budgeting mechanism for resettlement programmes to ensure that infrastructure provision, livelihood support, and peacebuilding interventions are implemented simultaneously rather than in isolation.

b. Promote Community Participation and Ownership

- Community participation should be institutionalized through the creation of Community Resettlement and Reintegration Committees (CRRCs) comprising IDP representatives, traditional rulers, women leaders, youth groups, religious leaders, and local government officials. These committees should participate in needs assessments, project selection, implementation oversight, and dispute resolution processes.
- At least 30–40% representation of women and youth should be guaranteed in such committees to ensure inclusiveness and responsiveness to vulnerable groups.
- Government agencies and development partners should conduct regular town hall meetings and participatory monitoring exercises in resettled communities to obtain feedback from beneficiaries and improve programme responsiveness.
- Community Development Committees (CDCs) should be legally recognized and trained in basic project management, conflict mediation, and maintenance of public facilities to strengthen local ownership and sustainability of interventions.

c. Ensure Livelihood Sustainability and Economic Empowerment

- Resettlement programmes should integrate structured livelihood recovery plans that combine vocational training, agricultural support, start-up grants, and market access initiatives for returnees. Beneficiary selection should prioritize widows, unemployed youth, and female-headed households who are particularly vulnerable to economic exclusion.
- Agencies such as NEDC, NCFRMI, and MRRR should establish community-based microfinance and cooperative schemes that provide low-interest loans and business mentoring services for returnees and host communities.
- Public-private partnership arrangements should be developed to encourage local industries, agricultural enterprises, and construction firms to employ trained returnees through targeted employment quotas and apprenticeship schemes.
- Government and development partners should establish periodic impact assessments to evaluate whether livelihood programmes are improving household income, reducing aid dependency, and minimizing the risk of renewed recruitment into violent groups.

d. Enhance Infrastructure and Basic Services

- NEDC and other government agencies, especially at the state level, should prioritize the provision of clean water, electricity, healthcare, and education facilities in resettled communities to make the environments habitable and reduce secondary displacement.
- Regular maintenance and community-led management of public facilities should be institutionalized to ensure long-term service delivery.

e. Strengthen Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion Initiatives

- Peacebuilding components should be formally integrated into all resettlement and reintegration programmes through the inclusion of peace education, trauma healing, reconciliation workshops, and community dialogue sessions.
- Traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society organizations should be trained and supported as local mediators to facilitate early conflict resolution and reduce tensions between returnees and host communities.

- Joint economic and social initiatives such as agricultural cooperatives, youth empowerment programmes, women's associations, and community markets should be promoted to encourage interaction, trust-building, and shared economic interests between IDPs and host populations.
- Early warning and community conflict-monitoring mechanisms should be established at the local government and community levels to identify emerging tensions and enable timely intervention by relevant authorities.

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