Access to Education for Internally Displaced Children in IDP Camps in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined access to education for internally displaced children in IDP camps in Nigeria. Access to education may be referred to as the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of education. Access to quality education in IDPs camps would serve as a source of IDPs' integration into the local/host community as well as psychological support that may help reduce children's exposure to social vices and bad practices such as armed robbery, prostitution, early child marriage and recruitment into armed groups. The paper further x-rayed the concept of internal displacement (ID), and causes of internal displacement which included; armed conflict/insurgency and natural disaster. The concept of access to education was briefly discussed and the barriers to accessing quality education which included: inadequate infrastructure and qualified teachers, economic responsibilities, and inadequate teaching/learning materials and insecurity. The benefits of access to quality education were also discussed. It was concluded that internal displacement was a phenomenon that would not end any time soon going by the record of the number of displacements in the last decade. Therefore, it was suggested, among others that government should make available all teaching and learning materials such as uniforms, shoes, and other school supplies for the children in the ID camps. Teachers in the IDPs camps should be adequately motivated by ensuring that they have equitable and reliable remuneration to ensure retention. Also, regular trainings and workshops should be made available for teachers in the IDPs camps. The government should introduce free lunch programmes for school children in the IDPs camps. This will motivate them to attend school.

Keywords: Access to education, internally displaced children, IDP Camps

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has been plagued with various economic, political and social challenges. One of these social challenges is the issue of internal displacement.

Wikipedia (2019) defined internal displacement (ID) as a situation whereby a person or groups of persons have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence. This may be particularly because of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters but the displaced people have not crossed an internationally recognized state border

Edwards (2017) noted that the UN Refugee Agency's Annual Global Trends study found that 65.6 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2016. The number was made up of 22.5 million refugees, 40.3 million internally displaced people while 2.8 million people were asylum-seekers. The figures from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) reveals that more than 3 million Nigerians were internally displaced by the end of 2014. Twelve percent (12%) of this figure were displaced by communal clash, 2.4% by natural disaster and 85% by Boko Haram insurgents. It also noted that on a global scale, Nigeria only ranked behind war-torn Syria with 6.5 million IDPs (IDMC, 2014).

UNESCO, 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report, Migration, Displacement and Education stated that the exact number of children living in internal displacement worldwide was unknown, but they were estimated to be over 17 million at the end of 2018. The displacement was due to conflict and violence, and millions more due to disasters. In North-East Nigeria, there are currently 1.9 million people displaced from their homes. Sixty percent of them are children, with 1 in 4 under the age of five. In a recent report by UNICEF(2019), it was estimated that 19 million children lived in displacement within their own countries due to conflict and violence some of which had lasted for years (Aydogan, 2020).

Lenshie and Yenda (2016) opined that the insurgency carried out by Boko Haram in the North Eastern States of Nigeria accounted for over 90 percent of the internal displacements in Nigeria, with less than 10 percent caused by natural disasters and communal clashes, respectively. These displaced persons live in IDP camps scattered across Nigeria. Some of the IDPs live in host communities while others live in camps set up by the government or non-governmental organizations. These camps are mostly situated in the North Eastern States of Nigeria such as Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. Others are situated in Lagos State, Abuja (F.C.T.), and Edo State.

The IDP camp in Edo State is a good example of an IDP camp managed by a non-governmental organization known as the International Christian Centre (ICC). It is situated in Uhogua Community, about 30 kilometres from the centre of Benin City. According to the founder and coordinator, Pastor Folorunsho, ICC is an NGO that was established in 1992 to take care of the needy, orphans, vulnerable children and children from broken homes. The NGO now serves as the present-day IDP camp caring for over 2,500 persons. Initially, the centre had a population of about 400 needy children, but with the security challenge in the North-Eastern part of the country propelled by the Boko Haram insurgents, over 2,421 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mostly children and women, were sent to the centre through the collaborative work between the centre and some pastors in the north-East. Population explosion in the camp occurred in late 2012 and early 2013 when Boko Haram insurgency was at its peak. Today, over 75% of residents in the camp are victims of insurgency (Ekeja & Onovweghware,2017).

Since year 2009, Boko Haram insurgents have continuously deprived children of school age in the North Eastern States of Nigeria the opportunity and liberty to gain access to education. Access to education may be referred to as the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of education. According to Mooney and Colleen (2013), most of the displaced children are of school age but they lack access to education. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2019) reported that 80 per cent of IDPs were women and children, and one in four children was under the age of five.

The United Nations Children Education Fund and the International Organization for Migration (UNICEF/IDMC,2019) opined that in emergency situations, too many internally displaced children grew deprived of education and the long-term opportunities it afforded. Nemine and Zalakro (2019) posited that school was known to provide a degree of stability and normalcy in the traumatized lives of internally displaced children. It can also be a critical source of psychological support and may help reduce children's exposure to social vices such as armed robbery and prostitution. It may also prevent them from being vulnerable to sexual exploitation, early child marriage and recruitment into armed groups. Access to education is also an important element of IDPs' integration into the local/host community. Hence, it is important that in situations of emergency, children do not lose their right to access quality education.

The United Nations Guiding Principles (2003) on internal displacement underscored the responsibility of national authorities to ensure that IDPs received free and compulsory education at the primary level. Additionally, the principles urged authorities to make educational and training facilities available to the internally displaced including adolescents and women whether living in camps or not, as soon as condition permitted. It is very necessary that all children in the IDP camps be given the opportunity to be educated. The opportunity for education should not be a matter of choice but compulsory because education creates a sense of security and hope. Education also teaches self-reliance; it helps create the human social capital needed for development and plays a fundamental role in providing both physical and psychosocial protection for children.

The rising insecurity in the Northeast has disrupted academic activities in the region, and has pushed more children out of school, thus increasing the population of out of school children in Nigeria. This has also contributed to the spike in the number of internally displaced persons in IDPs camps across the nation.
It has been observed that the increase in population has affected the management of the camps financially and this has also affected the education of the children in the camp. Although there has been remarkable progress in education in the camp, however, it seems inadequate. There seems to be some lingering challenges faced in providing education. The challenges include inadequate learning materials, lack of infrastructure, lack of teaching materials, poverty, lack of qualified teachers, paucity of funds and acute hunger among the IDPs. As a result, there is great need to investigate the challenges internally displaced children face in accessing education in the camps and the possible solutions to such challenges. Therefore, it was against this backdrop that this work sought to examine access to education for internally displaced children in IDPs camps in Nigeria, hence, this paper was discussed under the following subheadings.

- Concepts of Internal Displacement
- Causes of Internal Displacement
- Concept of Access to Education
- Barriers to Access to Quality Education for the Internally Displaced Children
- Benefits of Access to Quality Education for the Internally Displaced Children
- Conclusion
- Suggestions

Concepts of Internal Displacement

Internal displacement is a situation whereby persons or groups of persons have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence. This could be in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural disasters. Internally displaced persons remain within their country and have not crossed an internationally recognized border. Mohammed (2017) posited that the highest recorded number of internal displacements in Nigeria in the last decade was due to the insurgency in the Northeast, where over two million people were displaced.

Causes of Internal Displacement

The Nigerian Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), 2018) reported that the reasons for displacement were the Boko Haram ongoing conflict in North-East Nigeria which continued to be the main reason for displacement. Communal clashes and natural disasters followed closely.

Table 1: Percentage of IDPs by reason of displacement

| Causes of Displacement	Percentage of Total
On-going Conflict	91.30%
Communal Clashes	8.20%
Natural Disasters	0.50%
Total	100%

Source: DTM/IOM Nigeria, 2018

Armed conflict/ insurgency

Armed conflict is a situation where populations are likely to be attacked. Such conflicts may arise from insurgent groups such as the ongoing conflict between the Nigerian government and the Boko Haram insurgent in the North Eastern part of the country. The Boko Haram insurgency is recognized as the main cause of internal displacement in Nigeria.

The bar chart in figure 1 below represented the annual conflict displacement figures in Nigeria between years 2009 and 2018.

Figure 1: Annual conflict displacement figures (2009- 2018).
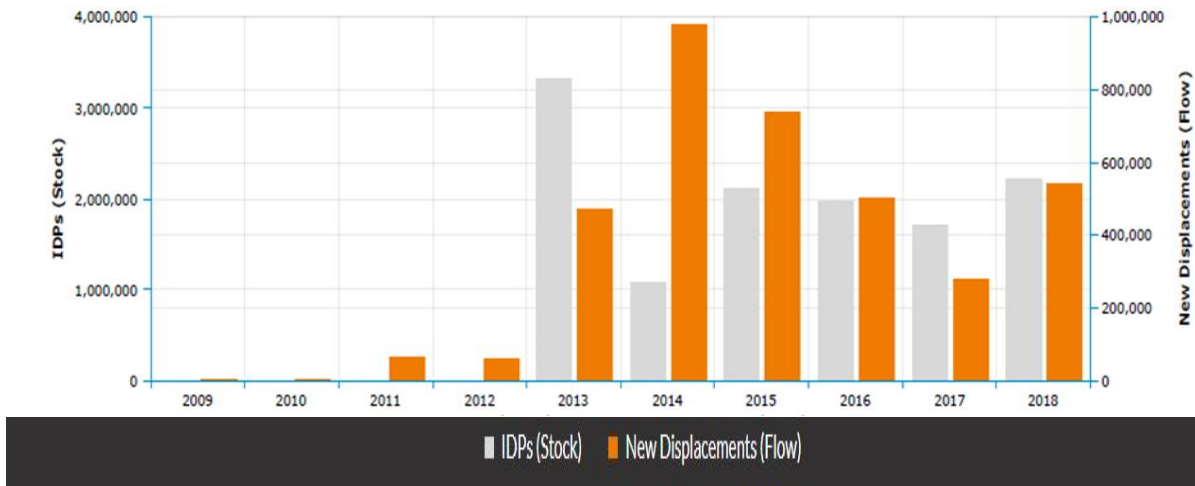
Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2019.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are natural events such as a flood, earthquake, or hurricane which cause great damage or loss of lives. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), 2018), Nigeria was highly exposed to natural hazards and was affected each year by several disasters which triggered displacement. The most common are floods that occur in lowlands and river basins where people live in densely populated informal settlements.
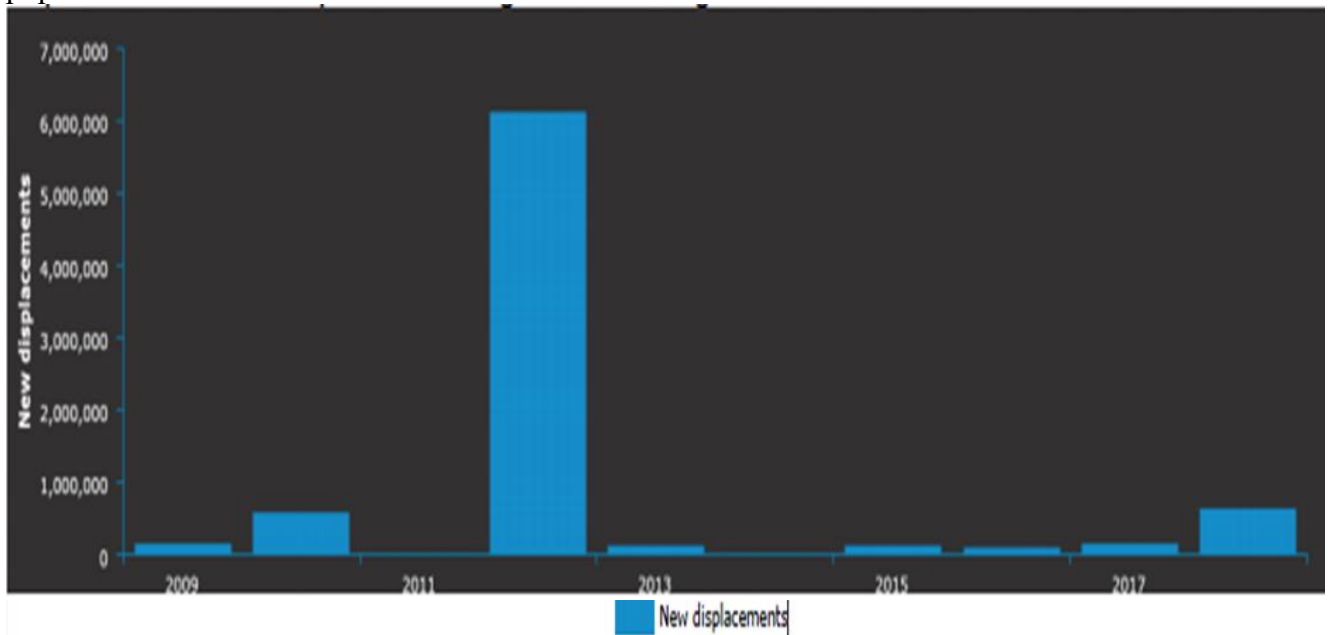

Figure 2: Annual disaster displacement figures
Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2019

Concept of Access to Education

In Education, the term, access, refers to the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure or strive to ensure that students have equal and equitable

opportunities to take full advantage of their education (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Lewin (2015) opined that access to education included on-schedule enrolment and progression at an appropriate age, regular attendance, learning consistent with national achievement norms, a learning environment that was safe enough to allow learning to take place, and opportunities to learn that were equitably distributed. The National Policy on Education (NPE,2014) posited that "Every child has the right to education". In view of this, the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) include:

1. the provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age;
2. reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; and
3. ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The International Committee of Red Cross (2020) stated that around the world, millions of people who were affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence were unable to get education. ICRC opined that education gave children and young people the skills to make reasoned choices in life, to build their resilience and to develop coping mechanisms. However, education may be destroyed, and educational facilities damaged due to fighting and this can make it unsafe for children to get or be in school. This could also lead to frequent, prolonged or permanent school closures and loss of education materials and education personnel. According to them, sometimes this is the result of targeted attacks against education facilities, learners, and education personnel.

Obashoro-John and Oni (2017) posited that Nigeria struggled to provide basic education for her citizens and the emergence of IDPs and their need for education had put a double burden on the nation's educational system. In protracted conflicts, entire generations can remain without education due to economic hardship and poorly resourced and weakened educational systems. This increases social and economic vulnerabilities and raises the risk of exclusion and abuse for many people, particularly girls (ICRC, 2020). Consequently, the guiding principle of internal displacement mandates the national authorities of affected countries to ensure that IDPs received free and compulsory education at the primary level. The guideline further urges authorities to make educational and training facilities available to the internally displaced including adolescents and women, whether they live in camps or not, as soon as conditions permit (United Nations Guiding Principles, 2003).

Mooney and Colleen (2013) opined that in IDPs camps, the availability of educational services was less systematic than in refugee camps. Where schools exist, they are typically makeshift structures, under-resourced, over-crowded and limited to primary education. Some schools established in the IDP camp are organized by the IDPs themselves, so, they lack most basic supplies such as blackboards, chalk, books, etc. UNICEF and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centres Nigeria (IDMC), 2019) reported that 23 out of 42 displacement camps across six states had no formal or informal educational facilities as at June, 2015. Humanitarian interventions and donor attention

tend to focus on camps at the expense of IDPs in other settings, including urban areas where they may face additional financial, administrative and social barriers to schooling (UNICEF/ IDMC, 2019). Internally displaced children are largely invisible in global and national data. Lack of disaggregated data on IDPs and a failure to apply displacement lens when collecting child-specific data make it difficult to understand the scale and impacts of internal displacement on the educational needs of the children in ID camps (UNICEF/ IDMC, 2019). However, the Nigerian Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Round II Report of February 2015 provided the following information on the IDPs population:

- Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe had 1,188,018 IDPS.
- Plateau, Nasarawa, Abuja, Kanu and Kaduna States had 47,276 IDPs which comprised a total of 1,235,294 IDPs identified in Northern Nigeria.

It was further reported by DTM and IOM that:

- Yobe (135, 810 IDPs),
- Adamawa (220,159 IDPs) and,
- Borno (672,714 IDPs) had the highest number of IDPs.

Table 1: Number of IDP children in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States

States	Adamawa	Yobe	Borno
Total IDP Children (3-17 Years) 44% of total population	96,870	59756	295,994
Total IDP Children in the Host Communities (3-17 Years)	84,721	59,756	242,810
Total IDP Children in IDP Camps (3-17 Years)	12,149		53,183

Source: IOM, 2015 in Unicef – Educational Strategy for Internally Displaced (ID) children in Host Communities.

Table 1 showed the total number of ID children in camps and host communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. The Table revealed that a total of ID children population (Between 3-17 ages) were 96870, 59756 and 295,994 for Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States respectively, representing 44% of the total population. Out of these 84,721 were in the host community while 12,149 were in IDPs camps in Adamawa State. Similarly, 242,810 were in the host community while 53,183 were in IDPs camps. Borno State had the highest ID Children (3-17 Years) in both the host community and IDPs camps

Barriers to Access to Quality Education for the Internally Displaced Children
- Lack of infrastructure
  In most conflict affected communities, schools are often destroyed or irreparably damaged. And in some cases, school buildings may be specific targets for attacks are occupied by armed forces or displaced persons. Where schools exist, they are typically makeshift structures, under-resourced, over-crowded and limited to primary education.

- Lack of qualified teachers

UNICEF/IDMC (2019) stated that schools in the IDPs camps lacked qualified teachers. Kirk and Winthrop (2013) stated that teachers in the camps were often people who had never taught before and could lack the requisite training and qualifications. Governments and humanitarian partners with stretched budgets and short-term funding usually have trouble meeting salary costs; this prompts the use of volunteer teachers in the camp.

- Economic responsibilities

Displacement also means the loss of livelihood and income for many IDPs. Many displaced families struggle to cover the cost of school fees and classroom supplies. This may force some internally displaced parents to choose between eating and sending their children to school. This trend is prevalent among ID children from families with women as heads of households (UNICEF, 2015).

- Gender Disparity /Gender-Based Violence

Attrition and dropout rates are high among girls who may be burdened by domestic, child-care, or agricultural responsibilities. Gender based violence and harassment which may occur en route to and from school keep many internally displaced girls at home. Early or forced marriages and pregnancy are also barriers, particularly during humanitarian crises when parents may send their daughters off to be married or cared for by another family (UNICEF/IDMC, 2018).

- Lack of Teaching / Learning Materials

School supplies such as stationery and books as well as uniforms and school shoes are some of the basic requirements that students are expected to provide for themselves when enrolling in a school in Nigeria, aside paying of school fees. These are costs that IDP families who, having lost their usual sources of income, have great difficulty covering. As a result, these may cause significant absenteeism of the ID children from school. In the same vein, teaching materials such as blackboards, chalk, books, etc. are lacking in such displacement settings.

- Insecurity

Persistent insecurity in areas of conflict and violence prevents many internally displaced children access to education. Schools are also often damaged or destroyed during conflicts, and premises and teachers singled out for attack. In the past five, years in total, more than 14,000 attacks on education were reported in 34 countries with a systematic pattern of attacks on education (The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). An education needs assessment carried out in Northeastern Nigeria in early 2019 found that out of 260 school sites, 28 per cent had been damaged by shells, bullets or shrapnel, 20 per cent had been deliberately set on fire, 32 per cent looted and 29 per cent were near areas where armed groups or the military were based (UNESCO, 2019)

Benefits of Access to Quality Education for Internally Displaced Children
The benefits of access to quality education for Internally Displaced Children are as follow:
1. Access to education will empower the ID children to be self-reliant, to take up challenges and responsibility for their own lives. It will also afford them the

opportunity to achieve their personal ambition and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of the nation.

2. Access to quality education will help the internally displaced children to enjoy all the benefits and the long-term opportunities that education offers. It can enable them to break free from the cycle of poverty.

3. Access to education for ID children is a vital source of psychosocial support for the ID children by giving them a level of stability and normalcy.

4. Access to education for ID children can help reduce or eradicate the vulnerability of recruitment of ID children from armed groups and reduce the exposure to threats such as sexual exploitation and child marriage.

5. Access to education for ID children can help reduce the risk of future displacement as it will expose them to leverage on the economic and social benefits education has to offer. It also helps to boost their confidence on how to handle discrimination or stigmatization.

Conclusion

Internal displacement is a phenomenon that may not end any time soon, going by the record of the number of displacements in the last decade. The insurgency in the Northeast, communal clashes, and natural disasters in different parts of the country have displaced millions of people. Those largely affected are children who are of school age. These children have had their childhood forcefully taken away from them and their education disrupted or terminated. Some displacements may last for years and children faced with such situations may grow up without education.

Therefore, in as much as the federal government struggles to provide basic education for her citizens, it is equally necessary that adequate plans are put in place for equitable access to quality education for the children in the IDPs camps. This will go a long way in curbing crime rates, reducing poverty and enhancing peaceful co-existence among the IDPs, their host communities and the nation at large.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were made:

1. Government should make available all teaching and learning materials, such as uniforms, shoes, and other school supplies for the children in the IDPs camps.

2. Teachers in the IDPs camps should be adequately motivated by ensuring that they have equitable and reliable remuneration to ensure retention. Also, regular training and workshops should be made available for teachers in the IDPs camps.

3. The government should Introduce free lunch programmes for school children in the IDPs camps. This will motivate the children to attend school.

4. Adequate data on IDPs and child-specific data should be collected and recorded for a good understanding of the scale and impact of internal displacement of children in schools in the IDPs camps.

5. The Ministry of Education should ensure that instructional evaluation and assessment are be at par with conventional schools.

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