



Non-Governmental Organization and Humanitarian Intervention on Education in Communities Affected By Boko Haram Crises in Adamawa State

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the impact of the Nongovernmental organization's humanitarian intervention on education in communities affected by the Boko Haram crisis in Adamawa State, focusing on out-of-school children. The resultant effect of the Boko Haram crisis has multiplied the number of out-of-school children in Adamawa State. The crises had a grave impact on education; schools were either destroyed by the Insurgents or were used as IDP camps or shelters for security officials. The paper adopted the obligation theory to analyze the humanitarian intervention needs and approaches to addressing them related to the educational needs of out-of-school children. The qualitative research method was adopted using a phenomenological approach. Data was collected from secondary and primary sources and were thereby analyzed thematically. The paper finds that the Boko Haram crisis had a multiplier effect on education; increasing the number of out-of-school children in Adamawa State, and efforts in addressing this are largely left to Nongovernmental organizations. have been engaged with strong policy towards addressing the educational needs of affected children, etc. consequently, the paper recommends that; the government should intensify effort to ensure security of schools and the entire environment. NGOs require more funding for education and reintegration of the out of school children. The government should provide camps for IDPs, not necessary schools, etc.

Keywords: NGO, Humanitarian Intervention, Education, Boko Haram crises, out of school

I. Introduction

Education is one of the most affected of the more than thirteen years of Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria, having more impact on the northeastern part and Borno, Adamawa and Yobe State (BAY) mostly hit. It was recorded that, the Boko haram

conflict has affected the entire northeast Nigeria with a population of 24.5 million people across Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe which are considered to be affected indirectly, (UN, OCHA, 2018). The states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) are directly affected by the Boko Haram Crisis. The United Nations Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) estimated that there are eight (8) million people in need of humanitarian intervention in the BAY states, (UN OCHA, 2022). And in Adamawa State, it is estimated that there are over 2.5 million people in dire need of humanitarian intervention, including education (UN OCHA, (2019), IRC 2021b). UNICEF (2017) reported that over 450,000 children in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe State are unable to attend school due to the Boko Haram insurgency.

Studies have recognized and linked NGOs with humanitarian interventions globally, (Blind, 2019). Humanitarian crises have been a major threat to health (medical services), education, economic well-being, the safety of the community, and a large group of individuals, affecting large span of space, (UN, 2022 Bloxham, 2022, Macalister-Smith, 1985). Arsdale & Nockerts, (2018) see humanitarian assistance as sharing the burden of affected communities anchored on personal responsibility, institutional accountability, sympathy, compassion, and non-neutrality. Worthy of note also, is the effort of international organizations, who from history have played major roles in conflict areas that are faced with humanitarian crises, (Okunade & Ogunnubi, 2020). Notable international organizations active in northeast Nigeria and Adamawa state particularly providing humanitarian intervention to communities affected by the Boko Haram conflict are the World Bank, UNICEF, INGOs; International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Danish (DRC), etc.

The Boko Haram crisis has had a significant impact on education in Adamawa State. Affecting schools; with a direct impact on children who are



unable to attend school. This is because the crises have disrupted the learning environment and caused many children to be displaced or unable to access education. Consequently, given the above, it is explicitly clear that this study is very timely and relevant within the study of humanitarian intervention in northeast Nigeria and Adamawa State particularly, with the rising number of out-of-school children. The foregoing makes an investigation into humanitarian assistance in relations to NGOs effort in addressing education problems in the affected area imperative.

Efforts made to attract out-of-school children were employed through different strategies and programs in an attempt to address educational challenges particularly out-of-school children. These programs were targeted at providing psychosocial support to: teachers, primary school pupils, and their communities; with the harmonized in-service program by the Cambridge education and 'Ta'RL' etc, were all targeted to improve literacy and numeracy at the school level in these communities, and the Accelerated Basic Education Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria (ABEP) aimed at addressing the out-of-school dilemma, in the state. The study examines the humanitarian intervention efforts of NGOs regarding education in communities affected by the Boko Haram crisis in Adamawa state particularly that of the International Rescue Committee's Opportunity to Learn (OTL) program with the following objectives in view are to; first identify educational intervention needs in communities affected by Boko Haram crisis in Adamawa State. Secondly, examine the impact of educational programs designed to address the educational needs implemented in the affected communities in Adamawa State, and thirdly, evaluate challenges encountered in the course of meeting the educational needs of the affected communities.

II. Methodology

The paper adopted a qualitative research method, where data was collected through interviews and desk study methods. This entails the use of both primary and secondary data. The population of the study is Adamawa state in northeast Nigeria, concerning; Gombi, Girei, Yola North, and Yola South Local Governments. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) nongovernmental organization (NGO) is chosen as a case study. The paper adopts the phenomenological research method, this method allows the researcher to explain phenomena from personal experience as well as respondents who

consented to participate in this study. This NGO was selected in line with the phenomenological research method adopted, by this paper, wherein the purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the participants who were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of the Boko haram situation and education humanitarian intervention activities in these communities. The IRC's Opportunity to Learn (OTL) program stirred the passion to embark on this study.

The primary data was collected through interviews with the participants after informed consent had been secured. A total of ten (10) participants were interviewed. These included two (2) NGO workers; IRC in particular, three (3) learning facilitators (LFs) three (2) government officials from the Local Government Education authorities, and three (3) community leaders of communities involved. The secondary data includes publications, reports, and articles by organizations that provide relevant information on the activities of nongovernmental organizations and IRC particularly. Data collected through interviews were transcribed, coded, and subsequently analyzed through the content analysis approach.

Theoretical Review

The paper adopted the obligation theory as a tool of analysis. The obligation theory was advanced by Arsdale & Nockerts, (2018) in their paper published in the journal of humanitarian assistance. This theory of Obligation sees humanitarian intervention as a collective response made towards victims of conflict, who are in dire need of basic essential needs; food, water, clothes, shelter essential services such as; health services, education, and like, provided by humanitarian actors, particularly NGOs. The theory categorized ways of addressing humanitarian needs in affected communities into two components. Which are described as either materially possible or morally possible.

These components; morally possible include; pragmatism, felt needs and network of service providers and associated infrastructure (Arsdale and Nockerts, 2008), and the materially possible; burden sharing, personal responsibility and institutional accountability, sympathy and compassion, and non-neutrality (Arsdale and Nockerts, 2008). These are performed by the obligated action of service providers which are either; the government, NGOs, community, or individuals. There exists a moral that compels us to assist communities faced with crises, which increased the number of out-of-school children.



Based on the assumption of the theory, the challenge of out-of-school children's obligation based on morality and material possibilities is crucial. It is believed that the opportunity that these out-of-school children have to learn must be anchored on the elements of burden sharing, compassion and sympathy, personal responsibility, institutional accountability and neutrality on one hand, and pragmatism, felt needs, and networks of service providers and associated infrastructure. Based on these components, humanitarian actors can meet the obligation of giving these children the opportunity to learn, and the challenge of out-of-school children will be a thing of the past.

Government role/involvement

As a stabilizer of the ecology of humanitarian assistance, the government came up with a policy and program to address the challenge of the increased number of out-of-school children due to conflict and crises in Nigeria. The Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP) was formulated by the Federal government of Nigeria on June 23rd, 2022, aimed at meeting the need of millions of out of school children. For both children and adults who dropped out of school and those who have never been to school at all, the program targets children and youths of 10 to 18 years. IRC found this document appropriate backup from the government as a way of supporting and law providing the necessary support in implementing the OTL

In addition, the government agencies perform oversight functions, they supervise IRC programs in the various communities where humanitarian activities are carried out. The government provides the necessary security, and enabling environment for the smooth implementation of educational programs,

III. Literature Review

Conceptual Review

The study reviewed relevant scholarly works on NGOs and humanitarian interventions in communities affected by armed conflict particularly on education. In this regard, the concepts of NGO and humanitarian intervention will be reviewed. NGO humanitarian intervention program on education in emergencies will also be discussed and the impact of the program/project and challenges encountered by NGOs while providing humanitarian interventions will be discussed.

Bello (2020) sees NGOs as a non-profit organization that operates in the field of world politics in different issue areas, claiming to defend a

vulnerable part or to protect a particularly common or collective good-promising a better future. Gul (2015) defines NGOs as private, voluntary, and non-profit organizations undertaking programs aimed at mitigating poverty, supporting the atmosphere, delivering crucial important social services, or promoting community development based on the values of humanitarianism and the philosophy of voluntarism. (Acharya, 2016).

Stephenson (2010) sees humanitarian intervention to mean the provision of relief to those afflicted by natural or man-made disasters. The sort of relief contemplated includes vigorous and rapid efforts to supply those badly affected by disasters access to adequate water, food, shelter, professional treatment for injuries and diseases, and education.

NGO and humanitarian intervention in Adamawa state

Stoddard (2003) in Irrera (2011), grouped NGOs based on identity and attributes (1) the Wilsonian organization (so named after the idea of the American President, Woodrow Wilson) example is CARE international. (2) The Dunantist organization, named after the founder of the Red Cross and socialist Henry Dunant. Examples are IRC, NRC, DRC, etc (3) The faith-based organizations, act in harmony with religious principles example, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief. NGOs are engaged, directly in the transformation of national, international, and transnational political space, carrying out globalization from below, or new missionaries imposing Western ideas from above (Langhorne, 2006).

Implementing the Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP) in Adamawa state, NGOs and the International Rescue Commission (IRC) have been a very strong partner, through their role as an implementer, catalysts, and partners have carried out different educational programs among which the Opportunity to Learn (OTL), which it is implementing for about two years. And a lot of success has been recorded, through its educational programs in Adamawa State.

Apart from its collaboration with the government in implementing the ABEP curriculum in its OTL program, IRC has engaged in several education projects. These projects include the provision of school equipment such as chairs, and desks, renovation of the classroom, provision of teaching aids, and school uniforms. Another intervention in education is the training of teachers and other stakeholders in education. Sports equipment was also provided as, a safe space, and



psychosocial support activities among others (IRC, 2021c).

Humanitarian crises and vulnerability

The Boko Haram crisis in northeast Nigeria has been accounted by different organizations as one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. The activities of the Boko Haram have affected millions of people most especially, women, girls/children, and children. These groups face the challenge of malnutrition, hunger, diseases, abuse, and rape, used as children fighters (Adesina, & Kanmodi, (2019) and so on. Vulnerability in emergencies is an area that NGOs pay close attention to. In providing humanitarian intervention, NGOs understand the challenges that these groups face and have a key role to play in protecting vulnerable people. In this regard, these humanitarian actors engage various mechanisms to ensure that these vulnerable groups are supported. The group of people that are vulnerable as the result of disaster includes children, girl-child, women, etc.

Children; at an instance of every disaster in every part of the world, be it natural or man-made, are among those affected by the heat of the disaster. Apart from the immediate effect of such disaster, they also suffer the long-term consequences of such disaster (O'Really, Jaraczewska, Jacson & Bell, 2020). During the Boko Haram conflict in Adamawa state, these children face different types of vulnerability such as; Physical vulnerability, Psychological vulnerability, and Educational vulnerability. While their counterparts in other parts of the country are going to school, they are kept out of school due to such conflicts.

Educational intervention in Adamawa State

Education intervention has been one of the humanitarian interventions provided by NGOs, in Adamawa State. NGOs take this as an obligation to support victims of armed conflict by providing educational materials, renovation of schools, and training of teachers and school-based management Committees (SBMC). It is a global consensus that education must continue even in emergencies. Education is at risk in north-east Nigeria Adamawa state, given the specific anti-western ideology of Boko Haram is a direct attack on education posing a threat of fear to children, parents, and the general community on one hand and the fact that many schools are being converted into camps taken over by the IDPs who occupy them as informal camps (IRC, 2021c). Access to education and improvement in the quality of services is a key focus. NGOS

utilizes its expertise and experience in the provision of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in non-formal learning centers to integrate this into the core curricula of formal and non-formal learning centers (IRC, 2021c).

Empirical Review

Different studies conducted to examine diverse aspects of NGOs' humanitarian assistance revealed gaps that needed to be filled. For instance, Okunada & Ogunnubi, (2020) investigate the humanitarian responses of key stakeholders in helping victims in border communities and IDP camps in northeast Nigeria. Yusuf et al., (2017) looked at the contribution of NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development in Gombe state. Momoh (2018) carried out a study on development partners, humanitarian assistance, and the quest for the reconstruction of northeastern Nigeria. Also, Shehu and Abba (2020) looked at humanitarian crises and sustainable development; perspectives and preferences of Internally Displaced Persons. None of these studies focused on the educational needs of victims of the Boko Haram crisis in the communities of Adamawa State, particularly focusing on out-of-school children. This makes this paper different from other papers.

IV. Results and Discussion

Results

The study examined the role of the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) "Opportunity to Learn" (OTL) program in supporting educational access and integration in Adamawa State, specifically in the Boko Haram-affected areas of Gombi, Girei, Yola North, and Yola South Local Governments. Through qualitative interviews and secondary data analysis, the study gathered insights from IRC staff, learning facilitators, local government officials, and community leaders. Data analysis highlighted the number of learners mainstreamed, current enrollment figures, and ongoing challenges faced by the program.

Enrollment and Mainstreaming Data

The IRC's OTL program has made significant progress in mainstreaming students into formal education pathways and enhancing educational access for vulnerable populations in the target communities. A summary of the primary enrollment and mainstreaming data collected is provided in Table 1 below.



Table 1: Enrollment and Mainstreaming Figures for the OTL Program

Metric	Number
Learners to be mainstreamed into Primary 4	2,533
Learners to be mainstreamed into Junior Secondary School (JSS 1)	5,427
Total current year enrollment	60,691
- Girls	35,081
- Boys	25,610
Learners mainstreamed into Primary 4 last year	3,641
- Girls	1,882
- Boys	1,759

Source: IRC, 2024

The data indicates a substantial enrollment of 60,691 learners in the current year, with a gender distribution showing that girls (35,081) slightly outnumber boys (25,610). This highlights the program's impact on enhancing girls' access to education, which is critical in conflict-affected regions where gender-based educational disparities are prevalent. Additionally, the OTL program has set a goal to mainstream 2,533 learners into Primary 4 and 5,427 into Junior Secondary School (JSS 1), signifying an ongoing commitment to transitioning informal learners into the formal education system.

Regional Distribution of Mainstreamed Learners

The distribution of learners mainstreamed into formal schooling varied across the four local governments. Table 2 provides the breakdown for the previous year:

Table 2: Distribution of Learners Mainstreamed into Primary 4 by Local Government

Local Government	Number of Mainstreamed Learners
Girei	48
Gombi	127
Yola South	123
Yola North	65

Source: IRC, 2024

As Table 2 shows, Gombi had the highest number of learners mainstreamed last year (127), while Yola North had the lowest (65). This disparity may be due to varying levels of community engagement, logistical support, and local challenges. Overall, these numbers reflect the IRC's localized approach to addressing educational access in these areas, albeit with varied success levels.

Challenges encountered by IRC in the course of implementation of the OTL Program

In the course of interaction with respondents, the challenges mentioned below were uncovered. The identified challenges had several recurring challenges that impacted the effectiveness and consistency of the OTL program. These challenges fall into logistical, cultural, and socioeconomic categories, as detailed below:

1. **Timing conflicts with Tsangaya (Quranic) Classes:** The scheduling of OTL classes often clashed with Tsangaya (Quranic) classes, creating a challenge for learners who must choose between the two. Given the cultural importance of Quranic education in the region, this clash reduced attendance at OTL sessions.
2. **Open-Air Learning Centers:** Many OTL centers operate in open spaces without adequate shelter, leading to disruptions during the rainy season. Such interruptions particularly affected learner engagement and continuity of education during certain months.
3. **Low Attendance during Farming Season:** Agriculture is a primary occupation in these communities, and attendance at OTL centers decreased significantly during the farming season when children were required to assist their families with farming activities.
4. **Expectations of School Feeding Programs:** In previous initiatives like the Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA), school feeding programs were provided, which increased enrollment and retention. The absence of similar incentives in the OTL program led to decreased cooperation from local Quranic teachers and lower turnout among learners accustomed to school feeding.

V. Discussion



The findings from the IRC's OTL program reveal significant advancements in mainstreaming vulnerable learners into formal education pathways, particularly in conflict-affected regions of Nigeria. The enrollment figures indicate a total of 60,691 learners for the current year, with a notable gender distribution where girls (35,081) surpass boys (25,610). This trend aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of targeted interventions in improving girls' access to education in Nigeria, particularly in areas impacted by conflict (UNICEF, 2018). The program's efforts to enhance educational access for girls are crucial, as research has shown that girls in these regions often face substantial barriers to education, including cultural norms and safety concerns (Fatunmole, 2022).

The goal of mainstreaming 2,533 learners into Primary 4 and 5,427 into Junior Secondary School (JSS 1) demonstrates a commitment to facilitating the transition from informal to formal education. This finding is consistent with the work of other organizations that have reported similar successes in mainstreaming initiatives aimed at increasing educational access for marginalized groups in Nigeria (EiEWG, 2021). Such initiatives are vital in addressing the educational gaps exacerbated by conflict and displacement, thereby fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

Moreover, the regional distribution of mainstreamed learners highlights disparities in educational access across local governments. For instance, Gombi had the highest number of learners mainstreamed last year (127), while Yola North recorded the lowest (65). This variation can be attributed to differing levels of community engagement and logistical support, which has been documented in previous research (Diaz-Granados et al., 2022). The localized approach of the IRC in addressing these disparities reflects a broader strategy seen in other educational programs in Nigeria, where tailored interventions are designed to meet the unique needs of different communities (ACAPS, 2017).

The data also underscores the importance of community involvement in the success of educational programs. The differences in mainstreaming figures across local governments suggest that areas with stronger community engagement may be more successful in integrating learners into formal education systems. This finding resonates with the conclusions of a study by Adesina & Kanmodi, (2019b), which found that community support plays a crucial role in the sustainability and effectiveness of educational initiatives in Nigeria. Therefore, fostering

partnerships with local communities is essential for enhancing educational access and outcomes.

In addition, the substantial enrollment figures reflect the ongoing efforts to improve educational access among vulnerable populations. The current enrollment of 60,691 learners indicates a robust response to the educational needs of displaced and conflict-affected children. This aligns with the findings of the Nigeria Education Sector Analysis (2019), which emphasized the need for continuous efforts to address the educational crisis in the country, particularly in conflict zones. The IRC's commitment to increasing enrollment and mainstreaming demonstrates a proactive approach to mitigating the impact of conflict on education.

Furthermore, the gender distribution in enrollment highlights the program's success in promoting girls' education. The slight predominance of girls in enrollment figures is a positive indicator of progress, as studies have shown that girls' education is often deprioritized in conflict settings (Ariyo et al., 2021). By focusing on girls' access to education, the IRC's program contributes to broader national and international efforts aimed at achieving gender parity in education, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The findings from the OTL program also raise important questions about the sustainability of these educational gains. While the current data shows promising enrollment figures and mainstreaming efforts, it is essential to consider the long-term implications of these initiatives. Research by Bertoni et al., (2019) suggests that without continued support and resources, the progress made in educational access may be at risk, particularly in regions still grappling with the effects of conflict. Therefore, ensuring the sustainability of educational programs is crucial for maintaining and building upon the gains achieved.

The findings from the IRC's OTL program provide valuable insights into the state of educational access for vulnerable populations in Nigeria. The significant enrollment figures, gender distribution, and regional disparities highlight both the successes and challenges faced in mainstreaming learners into formal education pathways. As similar studies have indicated, continued efforts to engage communities, promote girls' education, and ensure the sustainability of educational initiatives will be vital in addressing the ongoing educational crisis in Nigeria (Diaz-Granados et al., 2019). The IRC's approach serves as a model for other organizations working to enhance educational access in conflict-affected regions.



VI. Conclusion

NGO (IRC) Humanitarian intervention; through education with Opportunities to Learn (OTL) program targeting out-of-school children has made significant progress with vulnerable learners, particularly in conflict-affected communities in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The impressive enrollment of out-of-school children and youth; with girls taking the lead reflects a positive shift toward gender-inclusive education, addressing barriers specific to girls in these regions. To this end, the program's goal to mainstream learners from informal settings to formal education, with notable placements in Primary 4 and Junior Secondary School (JSS 1), underscores its commitment to creating sustainable educational pathways. Regional disparities in mainstreaming success suggest the importance of local engagement and support, as communities with higher involvement generally exhibit greater success in transitioning learners into formal education. The OTL program's progress aligns with national and international education goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and highlights the ongoing need for community engagement, gender-focused support, and sustainable resources to ensure long-term educational access for marginalized groups in Nigeria.

VII. Recommendations

The following recommendations were based on the findings of the study.

1. To build on the program's success, it is crucial to deepen community partnerships across regions. Strengthening relationships with local stakeholders, such as community leaders, parents, and local government officials, can enhance the integration of learners into formal education. Regions with high community involvement, like Gombi, have shown more success, suggesting that fostering these partnerships could increase mainstreaming rates in other areas, too.
2. Given the higher enrollment of girls and the unique barriers they face in conflict zones, the program should continue to prioritize gender-sensitive strategies, including scholarships, safety measures, and mentorship programs for girls. Such targeted efforts can help maintain the program's impact on girls' education, ensuring a lasting improvement in gender parity and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. While enrollment and mainstreaming achievements are promising, maintaining these

gains requires consistent support. The IRC should advocate for increased government and donor funding to sustain educational initiatives and consider policy partnerships to integrate the program into national education frameworks

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