

Optimizing inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria

Optimizando la educación inclusiva de calidad para los niños internamente desplazados en Nigeria

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Resumen

Este estudio examina la optimización y efectividad de la educación inclusiva para los niños desplazados internos en Nigeria. Con el creciente número de niños viviendo en campamentos de personas desplazadas (PDI), se destaca la urgencia de implementar políticas para ofrecerles educación inclusiva de calidad, en línea con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la ONU. Utilizando un enfoque cualitativo y revisión de fuentes secundarias, como artículos y publicaciones oficiales, el estudio busca optimizar la implementación de esta educación para asegurar un aprendizaje continuo en situaciones humanitarias. La investigación concluye con recomendaciones para que el gobierno y las organizaciones internacionales inviertan y optimicen la educación inclusiva para los niños desplazados, tanto en Nigeria como en el resto del mundo.

Palabras clave: educación inclusiva; entornos humanitarios; niños internamente desplazados; ODS; Nigeria

Abstract

This study explores the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. With the growing number of children in IDP camps, there is an urgent need for action-oriented policies to ensure access to quality education. Aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize equitable access to learning, this study utilizes a qualitative approach, reviewing secondary sources such as articles, journals, and government documents. Effective implementation of inclusive education for IDP children is crucial for their continuous learning and the possibility of building a better future, even under humanitarian conditions. The study concludes with recommendations for governments and international organizations to invest in and optimize inclusive education for displaced children, not only in Nigeria but worldwide.

Keywords: inclusive education; humanitarian settings; internally displaced children; SDGs; Nigeria.

Introduction

In Nigeria, the internal displacement of people has consistently been a problem. Although there are several contributing elements, religious fanaticism and ethnic disputes continue to be the main causes of violent conflicts (Mohammed 2017). Since 2009, Boko Haram's violent attacks have forced nearly two million people to flee their homes. Between 2005 and 2021, conflicts between farmers and herders have claimed the lives of almost 8000 civilians, displacing hundreds of thousands more (Meagher 2014; Kindzeka 2021)

About 60 % of Nigeria's IDP are children (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 2020). 1 in 4 are younger than five years old, and many reside in camps. These children are susceptible to malnourishment, assault, and abuse. In addition, they do not have access to other human rights like safe housing, healthcare, or education (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2019a). Education for displaced children is hampered by a lack of writing supplies, instructional resources, qualified teachers, and organized classrooms. Schools that may offer education in the host community frequently discriminate against children who have been relocated (Global Education Monitoring Report Team and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2020).

Access to inclusive quality education for IDP children in Nigeria is becoming increasingly difficult. Many schools were closed or reduced to rubble due to the activities of armed actors. This includes the fatal loss of children and teachers' lives through violent attacks. Ripples Nigeria (2023) and Onyekwelu (2024) argued that education standards in the southeast region of Nigeria were impaired because of the irregular sit-at-home schooling with the indigenous people of Biafra. This can also be seen in the terror-stricken northern state of Nigeria, where the challenge is to achieve relative normalcy and ensure schools for millions of out-of-school children (Nextier SPD 2022).

To continue, it is vital to define what inclusive education entails. Inclusive education is generally seen as a multidimensional concept. It includes appreciation and respect for differences as well as diversity. This also considers human rights, and thus issues related to social justice and equality. Finally, inclusive education focuses on a social model of disability and a model of socio-political education. It also includes the school transformation process and focuses on children's rights and access to education (Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller 2011). Inclusive education's main goal is to ensure that all children have access to quality education regardless of their situation. Salend (2011) extracts four key principles from the inclusive education literature. It should firstly, provide all learners with a general education curriculum that is challenging, engaging, and flexible; second, embrace diversity and respond to individual strengths and challenges; third, with reflective and differentiated practices instruction; and fourth, create a community based on collaboration between children, teachers, families, other professionals, and community institutions.

The exact number of children staying in internal displacement worldwide is not known. However, it is calculated that more than 17 million worldwide are affected by conflict and violence, with millions more endangered due to natural disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2019b). Historically many refugee children have grown up without an education and the long-term opportunities that come with it. Access to quality inclusive education results in significant economic, social, and health benefits to refugees and host communities. Despite their great vulnerability, internally displaced and migrant children are often excluded from national education policies and humanitarian response plans (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2019). This makes their social insertion even more difficult.

Internally displaced individuals face enormous challenges in exercising their right to education. These challenges range from infrastructure, capacity, and resource constraints to persistent insecurity, social tensions, and discrimination. Children also face their own set of

obstacles. According to Save the Children (2021), states' efforts to guarantee that IDP's rights legislation, inclusion in national services, and participation in decision-making have been accoladed due to internal standards such as the Guiding Principles (United Nations [UN] 1998).

These Guiding Principles address the specific needs of internally displaced persons worldwide. They identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement, and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration. (International Review of the Red Cross [ICRC] 1998, 1)

International stakeholders who back the creation of IDP policies, like the UN, the ICRC, UNICEF, etc., are willing to maintain their support throughout time by working to guarantee that governments' capacities are reinforced. Therefore, to achieve a better learning opportunity for children, investment and funding in education are essential.

For instance, according to Ezera and Oghenede (2021), the formal education system must be strengthened through government funding and humanitarian help to ensure that internally displaced children have access to education. The continued exclusion of many Nigerian IDP children from educational opportunities due to violence will limit their access to economic opportunities and exacerbate human resource deficits (Emelife 2023). Inclusive quality education aims to equip displaced children with the understanding, skills, and behavior they need to achieve as much independence and success as possible after school (Human Rights Watch 2016). Furthermore, the focus is on optimizing and enhancing the effectiveness of their capacity and engagement with their communities in the realization of inclusive quality education for IDP children (Hornby 2015). Also, displaced children should have access to adequately funded learning opportunities to ensure their optimal socio-economic development, whether they are in public schools or their communities.

Based on studies, IDP children need more attention, to ensure that they can learn and improve. For instance, Nemine and Zalacro (2019) ascertained that these internally displaced children must be educated in a conducive atmosphere that promotes the child's overall development. More importantly, good care and education should be emphasized in early childhood (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 1999). Therefore, this study examined the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria.

The specific aim of this study is to examine the implication of optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. The study will discuss the challenges and proffer recommendations for improving inclusive education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study engaged with the

following research questions: What are the implications and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria? What are the challenges of optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria? What are the recommendations for improving inclusive education for internally displaced children in Nigeria?

The study's contributions to the body of knowledge include prioritizing children's education in emergencies and providing a better context for the holistic delivery of quality education. Also, the study indicated the proper channeling of effective policy and appropriate actions by government and stakeholders in education programming during and after humanitarian situations.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative methodology. By asking participants about their experiences, perceptions, and understanding of a specific situation, qualitative research is defined as a style of research that offers a thorough knowledge of the topic (Tenny, Brannan and Brannan, 2022). Qualitative research methods aim to collect frequently inexpressible data in non-numerical form. The researcher further engaged in the use of desk research design in gathering data and analyzing literature on the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. Also, the study utilizes secondary sources, such as articles, journals, government publications, and the internet, to derive data that understand the contemporary subject. The use of various secondary sources will enhance the possibility of bridging the gaps in delivering quality education to children living in IDP camps across Nigeria. The purposive sampling of literature is used to enable proper data gathering. This sampling technique involved judgmental decisions made by the researcher in selecting academic journals, articles, and other secondary sources that are believed to contribute to the various themes of the study. The reason for adopting purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to intentionally apply the various secondary sources to answer the gaps in the study. The platform or sources include online libraries, government reports, and academic papers. To ensure that the right secondary sources are used, the research engages in appropriate collation, which entails the validity and reliability of sources from articles that discuss the research theme. Also, the study involved proper analysis of texts and reports were done to prevent misconceptions and empirical data from being used.

Conceptual Discourse

Inclusive Quality Education

First, it is necessary to state that “inclusive quality education means that all children, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic abilities, learn and participate equally and effectively, in safety and free from gender bias” (Plan International 2020, 2). This means that instruction in regular education centers must be provided to students or children in a manner that prevents discrimination and exclusion. This also holds true for instruction in special education classrooms or dual education models in differentiated education centers (Álvarez, Díaz and Molina 2021). It is important to note that optimizing quality education states that protecting everyone's rights is vital to ensure that children's rights to education are fully realized, regardless of their functional differences.

Additionally, the optimization of education can help protect everyone's rights, especially those of children who need to study, regardless of their functional differences. According to Molina (2017), being surrounded by genuine social diversity is a crucial learning experience for students. As such true inclusive quality education should provide contextualized education for students living in IDP camps. The author Salend (2011) defines inclusive education as follows:

1. An idea of acceptance and belonging to society.
2. The philosophy of cooperation between students, families, teachers, and the community.
3. Celebrating the diversity and dignity of all students.
4. Assessing student education in quality schools.
5. Assessing the learning success of students along with their peers.
6. Assessing student learning in general classes.
7. Assessing student learning outcomes at schools in the local community.

Children in the IDP camps should have equitable access to education and learning opportunities. These varied interactions are beneficial for students, particularly those with special needs, for they enhance children's social skills by exposing them to new environments and interactions. These social competencies are vital for their future life success. The inclusion of children in education is paramount at all levels. However, four essential components are consistently mentioned in the Ainscow and Miles (2009, 2-9) studies:

1. Being inclusive is a method. Inclusion needs to be viewed as an ongoing quest for improved methods for handling diversity. The goal is to accept diversity and benefit from it. In that sense, differences can be perceived as a catalyst for learning.
2. Inclusion's focus is to identify and then remove obstacles. Consequently, it is necessary to design policies and put these into practice, since change entails gathering, compiling, and assessing data from a wide range of sources. It involves utilizing a variety of evidence types to foster creativity and problem-solving abilities.
3. The essence of inclusion is to ensure that every child is present, participating in, and achieving their educational goals. Here, "presence" refers to the educational setting and the regularity and punctuality of the children's attendance. "Participation" refers to the nature of their experiences with an emphasis on students' self-perception; and "achievement" refers to the learning outcomes across the curriculum, not just test or examination scores.
4. Learners who are in danger of marginalization, exclusion, or underachievement are given special attention. There is a moral obligation to make sure that the statistically most vulnerable groups are closely monitored and, when required, measures are implemented to guarantee their presence, engagement, and success in the educational system.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivist Learning Theory

The current article borrows the concept of constructivist learning to explain how students learn and apply knowledge and abilities. According to constructivism, knowledge is best acquired via active mental construction and reflection (Mascolo and Fischer 2005). Learners do not just absorb information; instead, they process it through reflection, build mental images, and add new information to existing schemas. This encourages deeper comprehension and learning.

According to Elliott et al. (2000), constructivism is "an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their knowledge and that the experiences of the learner

determine reality" (256). It is crucial to remember that constructivism is a theory that explains how learning happens regardless of the learning environment. It is not a particular technique. Nonetheless, constructivism is frequently linked to instructional strategies that encourage active learning or learning by doing. Furthermore, Arends (1998) states that meaning and learning are mediated by personal experiences. According to constructivism, meaning is shaped by the interplay of added information with existing knowledge.

Internally Displaced People

IDP are individuals who have been compelled to flee their homes or regular places of residence due to conflict, violence, breaches of human rights, or natural catastrophes. These individuals have not crossed an international border but have nonetheless been forcefully relocated to (United Nations [UN] 1998). IDP are not included in the data gathered at border crossings, making them significantly less visible than asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. Authorities may register them if they obtain public assistance or take refuge in a camp for displaced people or a communal shelter. On the other hand, those who take sanctuary in host communities or unofficial colonies are seldom ever documented by authorities. In Syria and Iraq, the percentage of IDP living in camps is only 20 % and 15 %, respectively (Cazabat and Yasukawa 2021).

Children and their families may be forced to leave their homes for various reasons. Although less deadly than international migration, internal displacement is twice as common. At the end of 2018 alone, 41 million people were displaced worldwide due to conflict or violence (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2019c).

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] (2015) estimates that the global number of IDP is around 26 million people, of which 13.5 million are children. This number grows when considering who are forced to relocate due to environmental disasters. Children are among the most vulnerable groups during displacement scenarios. Displacement not only increases poverty but often results in the dissolution of family and community institutions. In such scenarios, children are more vulnerable to being forced into labor, forced into marriage at a young age, experiencing domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups (Nemine and Zalakro 2019). Another challenge children face is the lack of access to basic needs, like food, shelter, and IDP children's education; these are generally interrupted or stopped entirely.

Components of Inclusive and Quality Education for IDP Children

The inclusive quality education system is made up of three key components: academic, extracurricular, and school extracurricular fields (Foster 2020). However, these components, as well as the system as a whole, should always be focused on IDP children:

1. Academic areas with traditional classrooms, social support, and children's intervention environments.
2. Non-academic areas, which include leadership support, ludic activities, and playgrounds.
3. School extracurricular fields, such as those related to school-sponsored sports or clubs.

“Integration” or “mainstreaming” education is not the same as inclusive education. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2020), mainstreaming refers to the "inclusion of learners with special needs into general educational settings or regular schools" (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE] n.d., 1). All children's needs should be met in mainstream classrooms, and any obstacles preventing them from participating should be taken down. Accordingly, inclusive mainstream settings ought to offer accessible and inclusive educational resources, teaching and learning materials, and school infrastructure (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2019). This differentiation has historically raised concerns.

Nigeria places great value on respecting and ensuring children's social, civil, and educational rights regardless of disabilities. Feeling included encompasses the complete spectrum of human diversity in terms of aptitude, language, culture, gender, age, other human distinctions, and disabilities of the body and mind (Inclusive Design Research Centre n.d.). Inclusion encompasses all aspects of an individual or group identity.

However, as noted by Davies (2004) and Oduol (2014), guidelines limit teachers' adaptability, that is, they can no longer design their classes based on their own priorities and their reality (Wanjiru 2018). Additionally, despite several studies showing that conflict-affected students may benefit from diverse types of learning, they can still have restricted cognitive competencies (Winthrop and Kirk 2008). In that sense, when it comes to children who live in IDP camps, their development is hindered by witnessing traumatic events.

Inclusion aims to remove firmly ingrained beliefs regarding diversity (Ainscow and Miles 2009). These misconceptions frequently influence whether “others” are accepted or alienated. In addition to their novel socially stigmatizing designations (such as IDP), children affected by conflict may endure non-normative and sometimes exclusionary social-cultural experiences when they are relocated to a new environment. According to Dryden-Peterson (2011), physical integration without social integration is frequently dangerous. Children should understand their environment and the culture and norms of the host communities.

Strategies to Promote Inclusive Quality Education in IDP Classrooms

The literature describes several strategies for improving educational integration and quality. According to Nicolai (2003), specific strategies that provide support for children in IDP camps include team teaching classrooms. First, it is important to schedule children with challenges, so they are included in all the school programs. Also, they can participate in shared classroom activities, as well as in sports.

Children and young people need psychological care and opportunities for socioemotional learning to cope with the stress and trauma they have endured. The goal is also to help them develop the necessary resilience to adjust to their new environment. IDP programs should not only support children and their families by addressing well-recognized issues such as gender-based violence, stigmatization, and discrimination. These programs should also promote wellness. Wellness promotion includes socio-emotional learning activities and connecting youngsters to youth-friendly, easily available referral mechanisms. In this sense, early learning programs are essential for fostering development and resilience. This internal resource will make IDP children successful in the future.

The relocation experience is different for every child. Intersectionality plays a key role in molding the unique hazards and demands children will face. While most policies include provisions addressing the unique needs of females or children with disabilities, they lack precise standards and fail to consider the intersections of vulnerability. Some factors include age, gender, and diversity. These must be recognized and considered in a cross-functional manner while planning and executing any humanitarian or development program.

Mental health is a crucial concern for IDP youth. Children who witness conflict in their environment are considerably more likely to experience psychological effects from trauma (Adeniran and Castradori 2020). Such experiences can seriously impair their understanding,

productivity, interest in learning, and trust. These children are at high risk of leading a violent and criminal lifestyle.

Discussion

General considerations for quality education for IDP children

Nigerian IDP children face several obstacles when trying to access education; examples of this are natural disasters, as well as sectarian and ethno-religious/communal conflicts. Because of this, children, especially girls– drop out of school, since parents might not have the money to cover school expenses during these situations (Abduljabbar and Dauda 2022), or there can also be other kinds of problems, like those related to psychological disabilities.

For this investigation, inclusive quality education is conceived as a mindset, where the goal is to design a creative system for the participation of IDP children. Therefore, a valuable, inclusive education reflects our hope that children will be valued and accepted throughout life. Furthermore, Ezera and Oghenede (2021) proposed the following characteristics for children's education at Nigerian IDP camps:

1. All IDP children learn and engage in various educational activities.
2. All IDP children have the opportunity to attend general age-appropriate classes at their learning centers in the camp.
3. All IDP children should receive appropriate educational programs that include socio-emotional learning opportunities.
4. All IDP children receive a curriculum tailored to their needs, as it will reflect empathy amid conflict.
5. All IDP children participate in extracurricular and extracurricular activities in the camp.
6. All IDP children benefit from teamwork together at home, at school, and in the IDP community.

In that sense, it can be said that the main challenges inclusive education faces in Nigerian IDP camps are overcrowding and overpopulation. International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2024), a total of 1 092 196 IDPs were registered in 183 437 homes throughout the states of Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Nasarawa, Plateau, Sokoto, and Zamfara as of December 2023. In December 2023, data was gathered at 1,646 locations across eight north-central and northwestern Nigeria states. The IDP population consisted of 895 694 people, or 82

%, living in host communities and 196 502 people, or 18 %, living in camps and camp-like settings. This represents 16 303 more IDPs than in September 2023, that is, a 1.5 % increase.

As will be shown in the corresponding section ahead, some possible solutions for this are, first, the use of computer-mediated instruction in conjunction with blended learning. Second, as students can study at their own pace and level, the issue of class placement will also be resolved; this will address problems resulting from multi-grading at the IDP camp schools. Third, by bringing specialists online, the blended learning environment's e-learning resources can be developed for these children in the camp; this will link students with colleagues who are specialists both within and outside of the classroom, and it will provide instant access to knowledge for quick response.

IDP communities worldwide value education. In the study conducted by the UN High-level Panel on Internal Displacement youth and children have placed education as their priority (UNICEF Data, 2022). For many internally displaced parents, the success of their integration depends on their children's access to education. Education is a crucial component of long-term solutions for prolonged internal displacement; this is because quality of education increases children's likelihood of earning a higher income and leading a healthier and more prosperous life. Solutions also include safety, livelihoods, and a stable home environment. To incorporate internally displaced children in national education systems, it is necessary to offer a variety of adaptable and recognized courses like vocational studies, and peace education (Save the Children 2021). Therefore, there should be integral solutions for IDP children.

Coordination is key for ensuring quality education for IDP youth. To provide teachers with appropriate support, educators from various government –and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)– run programs operating in similar environments must improve the coordination of training initiatives (Mendenhall, Gomez and Varni 2018). In displacement situations, this coordination remains a significant challenge, often leading to negative consequences for both teachers and implementing organizations (Burns and Lawrie 2015). However, when general and special educators collaborate in teaching, they can impart knowledge more effectively to the children. The most important priority is fostering mutual support, whether as general educators or specialists, in addressing the educational needs of all children.

Challenges for Inclusive Quality Education in Nigeria

Despite having funding available, the Nigerian federal and state administrations have consistently ignored the millions of IDP and children (Punch Editorial Board 2023). According to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in 2022 over 3.3 million Nigerians abandoned their homes due to conflicts and natural catastrophes. They also depend on humanitarian aid to survive (Olugbode 2022; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA] 2022). IDP are entitled to care from all levels of government to enable their ultimate safe return to their homes.

The International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2023) stated that the North-East Nigeria region is home to half of all displaced people, with over 2000 locations and over 304 camps. According to Akpan (2021), Nigeria also takes in over 73 000 refugees from 23 other nations; meanwhile, more than 500 000 Nigerians are waiting to be repatriated from Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Mali, Libya, and other nations.

The aforementioned challenges are added to the list of obstacles, stumbling blocks, and hurdles on the road to the successful optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for IDP children in Nigeria, which include:

1. Lack of professional development training for teachers and volunteers.
2. Poor policy implementation.
3. Security issues across the region which has been affected by conflicts.

Other challenges arise from the structure of the Nigerian educational system. The Nigerian system places more emphasis on literacy management than on inclusive education. Public education facilities have very high teacher-student ratios (over one hundred). Stigma against displaced individuals is also present in teaching staff and students. Many teachers lack professionalization in teaching methods, recognition, and acceptance of diversity (cognitive, cultural, physical) (Suleiman 2022). All these challenges severely affect the quality of education for IDP. Additional challenges include:

1. Lack of accurate data on children living in IDP camps.
2. Knowledge and understanding of educational tools.
3. Insufficient training and retraining on inclusive quality education.
4. Insufficient funding.

Furthermore, a study by Onukwufor and Martins (2017) indicated the various challenges of emergency education settings such as inadequate infrastructure, inadequately skilled workers, irregular educators' training, insecurity, and inadequate teaching/learning

materials. Therefore, what follows is a deeper look at the main educational barriers IDP children face.

Economic Struggles

Funding is always a challenge in Nigeria. Teacher payment is a long-term cost that remains a problem for inclusion, since funds are already low and humanitarian partners have short-term emergency funding cycles (Mulkeen, Ratteree and Voss-Lengnik 2017). Likewise, the number of structured classrooms and suitable teachers is not enough, and study materials are not appropriate. All of this hinders the education of neglected children (Nicolai 2016).

Challenges do not end there. Families often struggle to make ends meet. Schools in host communities often discriminate against IDP children (Adelakun 2021). According to a report from Valenti (2022), a significant obstacle is the need for more funds. This is particularly true for displaced households in Northern Nigeria, where their finances are stretched. According to the literature, most IDP children attending school after displacement did not get any financial support (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2019; Ezera and Oghenede 2021). This leaves children and families in a state of increased vulnerability.

State Abandonment

Many IDP children constantly face the lack of quality educational design across Nigeria. There is a lack of accurate and detailed education data across the IDP camp in the country regarding projected teacher recruitment, building schools, literacy materials, and professional development needs. This development needs should be based on teacher profiles; however, such information is not available in IDP camps or is not consistently used as the basis for education planning or humanitarian assistance plans (Cazabat and Yasukawa 2021). The reduction in the number of educators in Nigerian IDP camps is rarely documented, yet it is a crucial indicator for estimating teacher shortages and evaluating the quality of teacher management.

Additionally, years after bandits forced local communities in the Northern region from their villages and towns, thousands of IDP, including children in Zamfara State, have reportedly become scavengers and beggars. This sad reality highlights victims' maltreatment and the government's inability to provide for them. In Gusau, the state capital, many people seek refuge

in unfinished public buildings, parking lots, and marketplaces (Altime 2024). Furthermore, according to Duru (2024), due to the government's failure to establish a suitable camp, other communities in Benue State have been forcibly relocated by militant Fulani herdsmen since 2010. They also live in dehumanizing conditions.

In Nigeria, as of June 2015, there were neither formal nor informal educational facilities available in 23 of the 42 refugee camps spread over six states (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] 2016, 6). Children who are internally displaced and live outside the camps typically have very limited access to schooling. Children who are displaced to unsafe rural areas may find it difficult to learn there due to restricted access to humanitarian aid. In certain states, there are no educational resources in rural areas with sparse populations.

Violence

Another challenge the IDP community faces is violence. Because of security concerns at most camps, the host government and even NGOs may be reluctant to invest in the necessary equipment to improve the learning process for practical application. Some programs provide supplies for teachers and students. One example is UNICEF's School-in-a-Box program, which provides up to 80 supply kits per teacher (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 2016).

According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] (2019), many internally displaced children are unable to access education due to ongoing insecurity in areas of conflict and violence. Some of the threats youth face are the recruitment and utilization by terrorist groups like Boko haram, bandits, or other criminal groups, as well as other human rights abuses against parents and children. As frontlines and factions change, those escaping violence can end up in new war zones. In certain humanitarian contexts, it has been noted that the spread of weapons and the formation of new armed organizations force IDP into repeated displacement. In times of conflict, schools are frequently destroyed or severely damaged, and educators are targeted and abused more than other individuals.

Gender disparities are also exacerbated in displacement scenarios. Women earn lower salaries. They usually have less financial support. According to a study, girls from low-income homes in Nigeria drop out of school between the ages of 16 and 18, because their families are unable to pay for their education. The early marriage of their daughters is one of these households' maladaptive coping mechanisms (Human Rights Watch 2017). Early marriages are

problematic because they constitute a form of gender-based violence (GBV) and a violation of human rights. These prevent children from fully participating in the political, social, and economic spheres, so they interfere with their education and their ability to make life decisions (Save the Children 2021). Save the Children (2021) stated that, in Nigeria's North West and North East, 48 % of girls were married by the age of 15 and 78 % by the age of 18. Also, 44 % of girls get married before turning 18, so the nation has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world.

Lack of Visibility

Internally displaced children are mostly absent from national and international data sets (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] 2019, 4). It is challenging to comprehend the scope and effects of internal displacement on children due to a lack of disaggregated data on IDP and a failure to use a displacement lens while gathering child-specific data. This makes it difficult to offer tailored assistance. A report from the International Committee of the Red Cross (2017) indicated that prolonged relocation brought on by the violent conflict has made several million people, including children, in Northeastern Nigeria more vulnerable and dependent on humanitarian aid. This has negatively impacted access to quality education in the region. According to The Conversation (2021), education for displaced children is hampered by a lack of writing supplies, instructional resources, qualified teachers, and organized classrooms. Schools that may offer education in the host community frequently discriminate against children who have been relocated. Children who are displaced must pay greater fees to the schools. As such, many displaced youngsters are forced to miss school. This occurs even though the Universal Basic Education Commission has a dedicated project section tasked with educating kids in dire circumstances, like internal relocation.

Recommendations

The critical need for inclusive quality education is to equip children with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they require. In the following paragraphs, there are several suggestions for protecting and achieving inclusive quality education for children living in IDP camps across Nigeria:

1. The government and key stakeholders (United Nations, private organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations) must prioritize optimizing and improving the effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in camps while collaborating with relevant stakeholders in Nigeria. Collaboration and evidence-based approaches are essential strategies for promoting inclusivity and improving these processes.
2. Education in emergency (EiE) action should be implemented for the various IDP camps, with strong monitoring to ensure the inclusion of displaced children in all planning processes.
3. Enhance education systems that accept and meet the unique requirements of displaced children and offer high-quality learning opportunities to host community children. The system must tackle operational difficulties, including teacher compensation, infrastructural problems, data administration, quality assurance, and creating curricula, techniques, and resources to assist kids in overcoming linguistic and cultural hurdles.
4. Security in IDP camps should be strengthened so that NGOs, humanitarian organizations, host governments, and philanthropists can invest in improved education and resources without fear of harassment.
5. IDP camps should recruit monitoring personnel to support the implementation of computer-assisted learning, while parents and guardians in camps should be trained to support their children's learning process.
6. Child-friendly teachers must be prepared in advance for IDP camps.
7. The government should prioritize the safety of children by improving security around the communities where IDP camps are situated.
8. All teachers and children in Nigerian IDP camps should have access to e-learning to broaden their knowledge in different classes. Training should include partnerships with educational experts and other professionals in child development.
9. The availability of de-identified data and intersectional analysis is necessary for improved planning and budgeting for gender-sensitive, context-specific educational solutions in Northern Nigeria.
10. Provision for all children living in the IDP camp is vital in Nigeria. Children should be protected from recruitment by terrorists and other criminal groups in Nigeria.
11. Internally displaced children must have access to the national education system, as provided by Nigeria's Ministry of Education. This ensures all displaced children are

accepted without discrimination in educational institutions and alternative learning programs, in line with their rights as citizens or long-term residents.

Conclusions

This study examined the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive, quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. In conclusion, the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria remains a pressing issue. Despite the Nigerian government and nongovernmental organizations having made official commitments to support IDP children, hundreds remain outside the education system. Therefore, much remains to be done to support and optimize inclusive quality education for children living in the various IDP camps across the country. An intersectional approach should be used to assess how internal displacement affects access to high-quality education for children living in IDP camps in Nigeria.

Nigeria has a strong legal framework for child protection, but, because of the multiple ways laws are domesticated, it can be difficult to implement the rules. Child welfare and protection should be added to the exclusive list –or the list of topics on which the Nigerian government enacts uniform laws– to adequately safeguard the displaced children in Nigeria. As a result, child protection legislation would become consistent and national in application. Making children's rights a constitutional issue under the Nigerian constitution's fundamental human rights clause is also crucial. Educating IDP requires significant funding and ongoing support from governments and donors. All too frequently, these soft sectors need to be met. Early intervention that is more successful can lower long-term expenses.

Acknowledge Limitations

The study only adopted secondary data, which is limited to the empirical literature, as it is connected with the optimization and effectiveness of inclusive quality education for internally displaced children in Nigeria. Also, there should be more access to the funds in undertaking field trips to the various IDP camps in Nigeria.

Future Research Directions

The study looks forward to working on EiE financing that will allow children and other young people living in displacement settings to access quality education. Also, the study on

programming will afford an easy methodological approach to safeguarding learning opportunities in IDP or refugee settings.

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