Peace Studies and Practice
Journal of the Society of Peace Studies and Practice

2024 Edition, Vol. 13, No. 3
Pp 106 - 120

Navigating Hardships: Addressing The Challenges Of Internally Displaced Persons In Benue State Through Community Engagement

John Tor Tsuwa
Centre for Peace and Development Studies,
Benue State University, Makurdi
and
Janet Nguamo Akegh
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
National Open University of Nigeria.

Abstract
The ever-increasing menace of armed conflicts and other natural disasters has caused high levels of displacement with devastating challenges to the livelihood of both the IDPs and their host Communities. This paper examines the challenges of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Benue state. The paper employs qualitative design and collected data through both primary and secondary sources. This data is analyzed using the arguments of the critical theory of community relations. Findings from this study reveal that the herders' invasion of Benue communities has led to massive displacement of people from their ancestral land. The paper also discovered that this forceful displacement comes with excruciating challenges that have exacerbated the poverty of shelter, health, feeding, sanitation, water, and security among the IDPs. It discovered that these challenges have also made the IDPs vulnerable to more violence, exploitation, and abuse. The paper also discovered that, despite efforts by government and non-governmental organizations to provide succor for the IDPs, the efforts have not been impactful as a result of lack of community engagement in implementing the intervention programmes. The paper recommends that the state government and all partners in the process should engage the IDP and their host communities in designing and implementing interventions aimed at alleviating the hardships faced by the IDPs. There should also be a collaborative strategy to develop a need assessment peculiar to each IDP community and a monitoring and Evaluating mechanism to track the implementation of the programmes.

Key Words: Displacement, Conflict, Internally Displaced Persons, Community Engagement

Introduction

According to Tsion Tadesse (2018), Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. The rate of increase in the number of internally

displaced persons globally, Africa, Nigeria and the North Central region of Nigeria is caused by acts of terror, climate change, insurgency, herders invasion of farming communities, communal conflicts, and natural events such as fire and flooding.

In most cases, these displaced persons live in makeshift facilities or camps designated by the government and in a few cases donor agencies. In some cases, they live with friends and other relatives in nearby communities without proper documentation and facilities outside those already owned by their new host. The menace of displacement is global with global implications and the challenges of displaced persons have always attracted the attention of both government and non-governmental organisations. Globally, the menace of refugees was considered and the United Nations General Assembly established the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Resolution 319 (IV) on December 3, 1949. The resolution called for the establishment of the office to begin on January 1, 1951. The UNHCR is anchored on four core pillars. Pillar 1: Global refugee programme. Pillar 2: Global stateless programme. Pillar 3: Global reintegration projects. Pillar 4: Global IDP projects.

Based on these pillars, we can conclude that the primary purpose of UNHCR is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, stateless people, and asylum seekers. Its responsibilities include but is not limited to; protection and ensuring that refugees have access to asylum and protection from persecution or harm, offering humanitarian assistance through the provision of shelter, food, water, healthcare, and other necessities and promoting durable solutions: Facilitating voluntary repatriation to their home countries, local integration in host countries, or resettlement in a third country.

In Africa, The African Union (AU) through the Kampala Convention, established the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) which was adopted in 2009 but became legal in 2012. The major purposes of the convention are the Protection of Rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa, ensuring they are not subjected to discrimination, violence, or exploitation, preventing displacement, protecting IDPs, and assisting them with national governments, with AU member states legally required to implement measures at the national level, ensuring voluntary return, local integration, or resettlement of displaced persons, and ensuring they have access to basic services like housing, education, and healthcare.

Nigeria has not adopted an official architecture to handle issues of IDPs, however, it has established the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). NEMA is saddled with the responsibility for coordinating disaster response and management, including assistance to IDPs. This includes providing humanitarian aid, such as food, shelter, and medical care to displaced persons. This structure is replicated at the state level through the State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA). Apart from these efforts, non-governmental organisations such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) / Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, Action Against Hunger, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Nigeria's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), ActionAid, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Caritas Internationalis among others have carried out and are still carrying several intervention amongst displaced persons and host communities to ensure that IDPs are not only secured but their livelihood is assured and their resettlement strategy implemented.

Despite these mechanisms, Internally Displaced Persons according to Ibenegbu (2018) still face great challenges that

undermine their health, education, finances and expose them to danger, violence and exploitation. These challenges have resulted in breeding more inequalities which in turn reinforces conflicts and further displacement. This is why this paper seeks to examine the hardships faced by IDPs, particularly in Benue state and how these could be alleviated through community engagement.

Conceptualizing Displacement

Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) defined displacement as a situation in which people are forced or obliged to flee or to leave their home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or to avoid, the effect of armed conflict, situation of generalized violence, violation of human rights or disaster. Ladan, (2012) defined displaced persons as those who as a result of violence, conflict and situations of severe natural disasters are forced to flee and leave their home of residence. According to him, displacement is the most significant humanitarian challenge all over the world.

Fitzpatrick (1996), defined a displaced person as someone who has been forced to flee his or her environment because of persecution, war or violence. A Displaced has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. Displaced peoples are people who must leave their home area for their own safety or survival. A Displaced home area could be a country, state, community, or region. People become displaced for many reasons, including war, oppression, natural disasters, communal, political or religious conflict and climate change. Displacement of people can be caused by conflict and violence, terrorism, persecution and human rights violations. It can also be caused by natural disasters. In some cases, it can be caused by internal armed conflicts, situations of general violence, communal or ethnic conflicts, and political violence, among others. According to Deng (2001), displaced communities can be described as groups of people whose houses, properties, sources of livelihood, and belongings have been destroyed, and who thus have no option but to relocate to other communities for safety, resettlement, or both or are settled in Internally Displaced persons 'camps. Deng's opinion of displaced communities does not adequately express the topic of the study as it is silent on the aftermath effect of displacement.

The definition of Ladan (2012) is most relevant to this study as it dwells not only on the causes of displacement but also on the humanitarian challenges that displacements pose to Internally Displaced Persons and the host communities.

Conceptualizing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

An Internally Displaced Person refers to someone who has been displaced due to conflict or persecution, without the immediate prospect of return to his/her home. Internally displaced people (IDP) are those forced from their homes by conflict or disaster but who seek safety in the same country rather than by crossing borders. Tsion Tadesse (2018) defined Internally displaced persons as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

According to Global Protection Cluster Working Group (2010), internally displaced persons (IDPs) are part of the broader civilian population that needs protection and assistance because of conflict and human rights abuses or due to natural disasters. In their condition of displacement, they lose control of their social,

economic, and political life and even their fundamental human rights become muddled.

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID), defines Internally displaced persons as persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural disasters. On the other hand, Akuto (2017) in an ethnographical study pointed out that Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria encounter multifaceted challenges that unarguably make life very unbearable to them requiring humanitarian intervention which community engagement is key approach. The definition of Akuto (2017), is applicable to this discourse as it highlights the fact that the IDPS faces severe challenges that require interventions, to intervene requires engaging the IDPS and host communities to understand their needs and render the appropriate interventions.

Conceptualizing Conflict

Conflict is inevitable in the course of human interaction, it can either be constructive or destructive depending on the circumstance and it is part of everyday life. It is a disruption caused by differing of ideas or action often related to the selfish pursuit of needs that ends in state of unrest (Tsuwa and Ochoga 2015). It is further referred to as the contradictions inherent in power relations which manifest themselves in individual group interactions with one another with nature in the pursuit of limited resources and opportunities. This definition is relevant to this study due to the fact that the pursuit of limited resources and opportunity engender acute security challenges, resulting in wars, communal conflicts, insurgency, terrorism etc, which engenders internal displacement.

Pruitt and Kimmel (1977) describe conflict as "a social situation in which two or more parties express perceived incompatibilities in their attitudes, beliefs, values, or goals, and interact in ways that cause, maintain, or exacerbate those incompatibilities" (p. 8). Conflict causes breakdown of social order and resultant effect is economic hardship, social disintegration, it brings about emotional and psychological trauma and usually serves to exacerbate insecurity.

In this study, conflict refers to situations characterized by violent, political, or social disputes and tensions within a society or region. It manifests as armed conflicts, civil wars, or even ethnic and communal tensions and often lead to severe disruption of normalcy, displacement, and significant human suffering (UN General Assembly, 2000, p. 6). Pruitt and Kimmel's definition of conflict is relevant to this study as internal displacement is the resultant effect of the perceived incompatibilities in attitudes, beliefs, values, or goals which leads to armed conflicts resulting in security threats causing persons to flee their homes.

Conceptualising Community Engagement

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people. It is a powerful tool for bringing about environmental and behavioural changes that will improve the health of the community and its members, it often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilise resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing (CDC 1997). CDC posits that community engagement is a designed process with which specific ways of working with an identified group of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation to identify and address issues affecting their well-being. The definition of community engagement by CDC (1997) is

relevant to this study as engaging the IDPS promotes and encourages dialogue between IDPS and host communities to develop joint relationships and activities based on common goals and interest, hence fostering peaceful coexistence, helping to rebuild communities, and attracting humanitarian assistance that address both interim and long term challenges of the IDPS. According to Podkalicka &Staley (2009), Community engagement is an approach to addressing health-related issues, preventing ill-being, and taking action on the social determinants of health.

It is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographical proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioural change. It also involves building relationships based on trust and working together to develop more effective health interventions, programs, services, and policies and to empower communities as key actors. Community engagement plays a vital role in ending displacement of persons. Coordinated and persistent outreach, in-reach, and engagement efforts allow communities to bring services directly to people experiencing homelessness who otherwise might not seek out services and to connect them to permanent housing and necessary supports. Many internally displaced persons are disengaged from mainstream society and may be difficult to reach through traditional service delivery models, but community engagement through participatory dialogue, group discussion and communication, carried out by the protection organizations, donor agencies, involving the persons affected as well as their host communities in decision making and policy making concerning them can help build trust in service providers, which can lead to more successful outcomes. Participating in the interventions made to resolve their problems offers the displaced persons a different lens through which to view their challenges and view them positively with hope. The communities can be engage through several methods which include but is not liminted to public meetings, organizing events, Surveys, Focus groups and workshops, Citizen panels as well as the social media.

Methodological and theoretical Framing

Primary sources of Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used. The scope covered three local governments of Gwer West, Guma, and Makurdi Local governments where a total of 8 IDPS camps were considered. 8 FGDs of 10 persons were conducted in each of the eight camps. One official each was selected from camp Coordinators and Managers, IOM data staff and officials of the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BEN-SEMA) and Traditional rulers, Youth leaders, Church leaders, Imams, and women leaders amongst others of the host communities. Secondary data sources were obtained from scholarly textbooks, journals, official gazettes, newspapers, internet sources and other documented sources.

This paper adopts the Critical Theory of Community Relations originates from the broader domain of critical theory, which was developed by the Frankfurt School in the early 20th century. Key figures such as Max Horkheimer (1937-82), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), and later Jürgen Habermas (1971-1982) played significant roles in its development. Critical theory emerged as a critique of society, aiming to uncover and challenge power structures and social injustices (Horkheimer, 1982). In the context of community relations, this theoretical framework is used to analyze and address the dynamics of power, inequality, and social justice within communities.

Although critical theory was pioneered by the Frankfurt School, the Critical Theory of

Community Relations has been further developed by contemporary scholars like Jürgen Habermas. Habermas's work on communicative action and the public sphere is particularly influential. He emphasized the importance of inclusive and rational discourse in achieving mutual understanding and resolving social conflicts (Habermas, 1982). His ideas have been applied to community relations to understand how dialogue and participation can address social issues.

The Critical Theory of Community Relations rests on several key assumptions. First, it assumes that power imbalances and social injustices are inherent in community structures. These imbalances must be identified and challenged to achieve genuine community engagement and development. Second, the theory posits that communication is central to community relations. Effective dialogue can facilitate understanding and cooperation among community members. Third, it assumes that communities are dynamic and shaped by historical, cultural, and social contexts. Therefore, any analysis or intervention must consider these contextual factors (Fay, 1987). For any intervention to be appreciated or meaningful to the targeted beneficiaries, social, cultural and historical factors must be considered in selecting what intervention benefits what place.

One of the main strengths of the Critical Theory of Community Relations is its focus on power dynamics and social justice. By addressing these issues, the theory promotes more equitable and inclusive community engag-ement practices. Additionally, the emphasis on communication and dialogue aligns with participatory approaches, making it suitable for research that involves marginalized groups such as Internally Displaced Persons. The theory also provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complex social, cultural, and historical factors that influence community relations (Bohman, 2016).

However, the Critical Theory of Community Relations also has its weaknesses. Its focus on critique and deconstruction can sometimes lead to a pessimistic outlook, potentially over-shadowing the positive aspects of community relations. Moreover, the theory's emphasis on power and ideology might be perceived as overly theoretical or abstract, making it challenging to apply in practical settings. Additionally, achieving the ideal conditions for communicative action and rational discourse, as proposed by Habermas, can be difficult in real-world contexts where power imbalances and conflicts are deeply entrenched (Geuss, 1981).

Despite the difficult situations the IDPs find themselves in as a result of societal dislocations and natural disasters, they exhibit resilience by adapting to and navigating their challenges by establishing supportive communal relations that strengthen their adaptation, which involves social cohesion, selecting representatives who advocate for their wellbeing, seeking support and fight for their rights (W. Ekezie.2022). Engaging IDPs as well as host communities through peacebuilding dialogue, financial support and training in crafts or entrepreneur-ship and other areas of intervention encourages resilience and helps to promote self-sufficiency and reduce the level of dependency on humanitarian aid, it enables them to devise alternative means of income, social cohesion, protection and health management.

The IDPs and the Dilemma of Hardship in Benue State

As earlier stated, the causality factors of displacement are numerous with diverse consequences, some of these challenges and consequences are peculiar to the pull forces and environment and the nature of intergroup relations surrounding the persons affected and their prospective host community as well as the viability of the host community. The state apparatus and their response to the displacement in line with the legal provisions in

handling issues of displacement is also another angle in understanding the hardship or otherwise of the IDPs.

The Global Protection Cluster Working Group (2010) summarized the challenges faced by IDPs in terms of deprivation and risk. To them, the IDPs as a result of their condition are deprived through a wide range of areas such as loss of shelter and livelihood and often face heightened tension and risks from more danger as they move towards unknown territories. We may therefore argue that these risks may include armed attacks and abuse while fleeing in search of safety, family separation, an increase in the number of separated and unaccompanied children; heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, mostly affecting women and children, lack of financial support, intolerance, insecurity, lack of medical supplies, vulnerability to violence. Also increase in crime rate, vulnerable to more violence attacks, exploitation and abuse, poor or no access to education, Epidemic outbreaks and malnutrition exposure to environmental hazards and a host of other problems arbitrary deprivation of land, homes and other properties; and displacement into inhospitable environments, where they suffer stigma and marginalization, discrimination or harassment and so on.

The core of the hardship faced by the IDPs particularly in Benue state is analyse from the data presented below;

Table 1: Demographic Presentation of Respondent

Local government/ origin	**Camp**	**No. of females**	**No. of males**	**Total pop**	**Age distribution (females)**	**Age distribution (males)**
Makurdi	Abagena	1772	1253	3025	0-10:262 11-20:553 21-30:628 31-40:172 41-50:127 51+:29	0-10:212 11-20: 500 21-30:321 31-40: 38 41-50:130 51+:52
	ICHWA /Tse Yandev	2159	1366	3525	0-10: 268 11-20: 750 21-30: 840 31-40: 178 41-50: 100, 51+ :21	0-10: 300 11-20: 601 21-30: 323 31-40: 103 41-50: 28 51+:11

NEPA	1075	728	1803	0-10: 0, 11-20: 0 21-30: 2 31-40: 4 41-50: 5, 51+: 5	0-10: 0 11-20: 1 21-30: 1 31-40: 2 41-50: 1 51+:1
ORTESE	8185	5385	13570	0-10: 158 11-20:2105 21-30: 3102 31-40:597 41-50: 551 51+: 672	0-10: 1172 11-20: 2100 21-30: 1057 31-40: 202 41-50: 626 51+: 201
St. Xavier Primary School	1448	237	1685	0-10: 2, 11-20: 3, 21-30: 44 31-40: 71 41-50: 45, 51+: 72	0-10: 98 11-20: 512 21-30: 384 31-40: 206 41-50: 132, 51+: 116
UPE IDP CAMP NAKA	3225	406	3631	0-10: 1, 11-20: 6, 21-30: 120 31-40: 11 41-50: 55 51+: 70	0-10: 126 11-20: 853 21-30: 981 31-40: 601 41-50: 38 51+: 350

Table 1 provides detailed demographics for IDP camps in Makurdi, Guma and Gwer West local government. This is because these are the local governments that have officially approved camps by the Benue state government irrespective of the fact that local governments such as Kwande and Logo also have camps. The demographic data covers age and gender distributions of the IDPs. In Makurdi local government, Abagena IDP Camp has a population 3025 individuals, with 1772 females and 1253 males. The Ichwa/Tsee Yandev IDP Camp has 3525 individuals, with a higher proportion of females 2157 compared to males 1366, and a varied age distribution. NEPA has a total of 1075 females and 728 males and a varied age distribution.

In Guma local government, the Ortese IDP Camp has 13570 persons with 8,185 females and 5,358 males with varied age distributions. In Gwer West local government, St. Xavier Primary School camp has a population of 1685, with a significant number of both females 1448 and males 237. The age distribution shows a high concentration of young people. The UPE IDP Camp Naka, with 3631 individuals, has a predominant number of females 3225 compared to males 406, with a broad age range and a significant number of young adults. The demographics show that the number of women and children constitute the highest population in the camps. Further investigation shows that men are usually left behind to either protect their communities from destruction, save the few properties left after destruction and move them if possible, or stay outside the camps with relations to hustle for means of survival.

The above statistics shows that, large numbers of IDPs are in camps and scramble to survive with few basic infrastructure, amenities and consumables. As they scramble for survival and scavenge around their new environment, they are confronted with more dangers of livelihood such rape, sexually abused or abduction, drugs, forced labour, conscription into criminal gangs, health challenge, illiteracy, some parents marry out their underage daughters in order to secure support. These challenges are enormous with severe consequences on the psychological, social, cultural, religious and physical existence of the IDPs.

It is wont to note that both state and non- state actors, local and international have continued to map, streamline and develop programmes to intervene in alleviating the hardship faced by IDPs globally and also in Benue state. Table two below shows the efforts by the state and non-state actors in providing support to alleviate the hardship of the IDPs in Benue state.

Table 2: Donor Agencies and their Engagements in IDPs Camps in Benue State

Amenity	Donor	Camp	Number	Scope
Health	MSF, IOM	Ortese	2	Mosquito nets, mosquito repellants, provision of healthcare services. Construction of toilets, construction and rehabilitation of boreholes, Latrines and handwashing stations, tents.

Education	UNICEF,		2	Trainings on sanitation and hygiene providing basic education to the IDPS, Washing hands stations.
	IOM			Books and instructional materials. Engaging instructors.
Water and sanitation	IOM, SEMA		2	Drilling of boreholes, wells, trainings on hygiene practices. Construction of boreholes and wells, toilets.
Housing	IOM, UNCHR		2	Temporary tent classroom block, Temporary shelters. Tarpaulins, blankets
Health	MSF,	Abaagena, Agan	2	Health care, psychological support, mosquito nets
Education	UNCHR IOM			Giving basic education instructions, sponsoring IDPS in neighbouring schools. Educational materials, training of teachers/instructors
Water and sanitation	SEMA IOM		2	Construction of boreholes and wells, toilets. Drilling of boreholes, wells, trainings on hygiene practices
Housing	IOM SEMA UNCHR		3	Tents, tarpaulins, blankets Tents, Tents, tarpaulins, blankets

Health	UNFPA	Ichwa/Tse yandev	1	Primary healthcare
Education	IOM			Basic education. Hygiene and sanitation education. Educational materials
Water and sanitation	SEMA IOM		2	Toilets, wells. Water tanks, wells, Toilets
Housing	IOM,		1	2 rooms block, tarpaulins, blankets, nets, tents
Health	IOM UNFPA	NEPA	2	First aids, primary healthcare Primary healthcare Sanitary materials
Education	UNICEF		1	Basic education, books, school bags
Water and sanitation	IOM		1	Wells, toilets, sanitary materials
Housing	SEMA IOM		2	Tents Shelters, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets
Health	UNFPA ICRC	St. Xavier primary School, Agagbe	2	Primary health care First aids care
Education	UNFPA		2	Basic education, books

Education	UNFPA UNICEF		2	Basic education, books Educational materials, sponsorship in basic education.
Water and sanitation	UNICEF		1	Wells, toilets
Housing	UNICEF SEMA			Tarpaulins, blankets, School classrooms
Health	IOM	UPE, Naka		Primary healthcare
Education	UNICEF			Educational materials, basic education
Water and sanitation	IOM UNICEF			Toilets, borehole Sanitary materials
Housing	IOM			Tents, tarpaulins, blankets.

Source: Benue SEMA and Field Work 2024.

The table above shows that each of the camps in the state has witnessed combined activities of donor agencies. These agencies have contributed in different areas, including health, education, infrastructure, water and sanitation, and consumables. Organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM),the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) amongst others have collaborated with the state government through SEMA to engage the IDPs and host communities in Benue State as part of the broader efforts to address the challenges of hardship faced by the IDPs.

Despite these efforts, the hardships on the IDPs have continued and in some cases aggravated the general challenges of livelihood and survival amongst the IDPs. The IDPs still face higher rates of mortality than the general population in areas of deprivation of basic human rights. They also remain at high risk of physical attack, sexual assault and abduction. As Muhammed (2017) maintained, while some efforts are made by humanitarian organisations and government agencies to address some of the basic needs of IDPs, their vulnerability tends to be increased by barriers to accessing healthcare services, education, employment, economic activities and information for participation in decision making affecting their lives. Another condition that results in hardship to the IDPs is psycho-social trauma. The IDPs are also largely separated from their families especially, unaccompanied children and teenagers, the elderly and sick, the handicapped and pregnant women, whose special needs and privacy are not attended to, due to fragmented and uncoordinated humanitarian response to the needs of IDPs. This has always resulted in

mental and social hardship among the IDPs.

Many reasons are attributed to why despite these efforts, the IDPs have continued to face hardships. One is the deficiency in the amount of support in terms of infrastructure and support in health, education, and general consumables. From the table above, we can see that the number of inmates in the IDP camps far surpasses the number of these interventions. This deficiency of intervention is exacerbated by the politics of poverty alleviation by donor agencies especially the state emergency management agencies who manipulate the figures and the items released to each camp. In most cases, the state agency pads the statistics of the IDPs to get more donations and in turn, release little to the camps. Another challenge confronting the effectiveness of providing for the IDPs is the politics of camp leadership. Each of the camps has a selected leadership amongst the IDPs, evidence from research reveals that the leadership of the camps also manipulates the statistics, favours people of their lineage and even diverts in collaboration with the state agencies donations to the camps.
As pointed out by Akawu, Jideofor and Luka (2023), another of the major challenges facing the IDPs is the challenge of implementing the policies of government designed for the promotion of welfare and assistance of IDPs. To them, these challenges include: (a) Challenge of absence of a national Legal Framework for the Protection of Victims of Internal Displacement. (b) Challenge of Implementing the Kampala Convention for the protection and assistance of IDPs in Nigeria. (c) Challenge of Lack of Effective National Policy with Legal Flavour for Protection of IDPs in Nigeria. (d) Challenge of Institutional Decay, Corruption and perceived State irresponsibility for the protection and assistance of IDPs in Nigeria. We can therefore argue that the lack of these frameworks usually affects coordination and collaboration among the donor agencies hence affecting the impact of support activities on the IDPs.

Conclusion

Benue State has had issues of displacement which has resulted in high levels of IDPs from 15 local government areas out of the 23 local governments in Benue State. However, official government camps are located only in the local governments of Makurdi, Guma and Gwer West. These displacements are majorly as a result of herders' invasion of Benue farming communities. The IDPs have faced severe hardships in areas of psycho-social trauma, education, health care, infrastructure, water and sanitation and consumables. Many international and local donor agencies have continued to make efforts to alleviate the hardship. However, the humanitarian support has not matched the enormous hardship the Internally Displaced Persons are facing.

Many factors account for the persistence in the hardship faced by the IDPs in Benue state. The politics of palliative distribution and leadership structure and behaviour in the camps, the lack of capacity and coordination of the institutional and legal framework created to tackle these hardships, and the lack of community engagement among others have remained fundamental challenges to alleviating the hardship of the IDPs.

Recommendations

Alleviating the hardship of IDPs need to be all encompassing, bringing together the IDPs, donor agencies and the host community. To achieve this, community engagement is key. Community engagement gives the community the sense of belonging and interest in the affairs of the IDPS. It is therefore recommended that the host communities and the displaced persons are in involved in decisions making concerning their wellbeing right from the mapping, design and implementation of the support programs. Engaging the communities will also contribute to understanding and addressing needs appropriately and will also contributed significantly to building resilience, reconciliation and gradual recovery of

displaced populations in Benue State. There should also be concrete efforts of collaboration between state government and donor agencies. This will ensure synergy in the provision of the basic needs of the IDPs and eliminate the politics of manipulation of statistics and corruption in managing the IDPs. Finally, there should be implementation legal frameworks that carry sanctions in the management of the IDPs. This will ensure not transparency in managing the IDPs but will also promote their fundamental human rights as citizens.

References

Akawu, M.E, Jideofor, A and Luka, R. C (2023) Challenges Hindering the Management of Internally Displaced Persons in North-Eastern Nigeria. Journal of Political Discourse Vol 1, No 3.

Akuto, G. W. 2017. Challenges of internally displaced persons (Internally Displaced Persons) in Nigeria: Implications for Counselling and the Role of Key Stakeholders. International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development 5(2), 21-27

Bohman J. (2016). "Critical Theory" in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy. April, 1, 2019 (https://plato.stand.edu/archives/fall2016/gentries/critical.theory).

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (1997) "Principles of Community Engagement; first edition CDC/ATSOR Committee on Community Engagement, 1997.

Dale, S(1990). Controversy in Sociology. A Canadian introduction. Copp. Clark and Pitman, Toronto, 1990, p. 562.

Deng, F. M. (2001). The global challenge Walking of internal displacement. Wash. UJL & Pol'y, 5th edition, p.141.

Ekezie, W.(2022). Internally Displaced Persons(IDP) Camp management leadership Resilience, Self-reliance in Nigeria. Journal of Migration and Health. Volume 6, 2022, p.2

Fay, (1987). Critical practice theories and methodological perspectives.

Fidzpatrick, E.A. (1996). https/pubmrd.ncb.nin.org

Folger J. & M.S,Poole, Walking through Conflict Strategies for Relationships, Groups and Organisations. New York Publishers, 9th edition2004, p.10

Geuss R, (1981). The ideas of critical theory; Habermas and the Franfurt School, Cambridge University Press, Dec. 2023.

Habermas J. (1982). "A Reply to my Critics" pp.219 in Habermas Critical debates. Edited by Thompson J., Held D. London, England.

Hannah, J. (2008). The role of education and training in the empowerment and inclusion of migrants and refugees. Comparative and global pedagogies: Equity, access and democracy in education, 33-48

Head, B. W. (2007). Community engagement: participation on whose terms? Australian journal of political science, 42(3), 441-454.

Ibenegbu, G. 2018, July 7. Problems of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://www.legit.ng/ 1111624-problems-internally-displaced-persons nigeria.html.

Ibenegbu, G. 2018, July 7. Problems of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://www.legit.ng/1111624-problems-internally-displaced-personsnigeria.html.

ICRC 2009. Root causes and prevention of internal displacement: the ICRC perspective. Retrieved from https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/statement/displacement-statement-231009.htm.

ICRC 2009. Root causes and prevention of internal displacement: the ICRC perspective. Retrieved from https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/ documents/statement /displacement -statement-231009.htm.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Displacement report, 2023. httpps//www.internal-displacement ,org.

Inyang, E. B,& Effiong, E. N.(2022) Humanus(2022)Humanitarian intervention in Nigeria: A Case of internally displaced People in Benue State, 2018 - 2021,January 2022 · SSRN Electronic Journal

Kälin, W. 2008. Durable solutions for internally

displaced persons: An essential dimension of. peacebuilding. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/research/durable-solutionsfor-internally-displaced-persons-an-essential-dimension-of-peacebuilding/

Ladan, M. T. 2012. Impact of insecurity in the North on internally displaced people and Migration flows between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, being a paper presented at the forum of European union working group on migration and development, Abuja, May 31, 2012.

Makowiak, J.(2005). The concept of engagement,https://www.researchgate.net, 342.

McMillan DW,Chavis DM, sense of commununity: a definition and theory, Community Psychol. 1986;14:6-23(google scholar)Retrieved from https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/children-face-disease-malnutrition-onbama-idp-camp-266268.html.

Mohammed, F. K. (2017). The Causes and Consequences of Internal Displacement in Nigeria and Related Governance. Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politic (SWP) Working Paper FG 8. Berlin: SWP.

Podkalicka, A., & Staley, J. (2009). YouthWorx Media: Creative media engagement for'at risk'young people. 3CMedia: Journal of Community, Citizen's & Third Sector Media & Communication (5)

Poskitt, A. and Dufranc, M. (2011) "Civil Society Organisations in Situations of Conflict". Open Forum for Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Development Effectiveness. April.

Stanley, et al(2009) Pruit and Kimmel (1997). Https.//www.researchgate.net 232.

Stebbins R. et al ((2000). The Study of Society. Haper and Row: New York , 1987, p. 537

Tsuwa, J. T. & Ochoga, E. O. (2015). The Nigeria Defense Policy and the Challenge of Nigeria

Tsion Tadesse, A. (2018). Ethiopia's refugee response Focus on socio-economic integration and self-reliance'in East Africa Report (Institute for Security Studies).

United Nations Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement. Principle 23, paragraph 2.

HUMANUS DISCOURSE Vol. 2. NO 2. 2022
ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

UNHCR. 2019. Figure at a glance. Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-aglance.htmlEkezie