NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CHALLENGES OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN BORNO STATE

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Abstract

One of the fundamental issues affecting the youth in Borno state, Northeast Nigeria is the lack of empowerment among the ruling population, and the attempts to provide these needs have often met with some challenges. The main objective of this paper is to examine the challenges faced by non-governmental organizations in their attempt to empower the youth in Borno State. Using empowerment theory with an emphasis on the psychological empowerment influence and qualitative method of data collection relevant questions were asked from the selected informants drawn from concerned shareholders to achieve the objective of the paper. Challenges Faced by the NGOs in Youth Empowerment in Borno State IDPs. The informants were particularly critical about the challenges the NGOs faced during the cause of providing empowerment services to the youth in the IDP camp in Borno State. Concerns were expressed about the needed financial requirements to meet the needs of the youth population in the camp. Also, very particularly critical to the challenges faced by the NGOs towards youth empowerment is the issue of limited resources. The paper concludes that the challenges the NGOs faced during the cause of carrying out their empowerment duties were mainly limited resources. Thus, the paper recommends that the government should assist the NGOs through the provision of financial and material resources towards their quest for youth empowerment in Borno state.

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Keywords: Empowerment; Borno state; IDPs; NGOs; Youth.

Introduction

One key setback to successful youth empowerment is the endemic challenges in the socio-political system of the country. Empowerment is a new way of life and of course, approach to youth development and social growth across societies, including the rich and poor, developed and developing countries, as well as the preservation of the environment through viable and efficient management of the young mind may not achieve its aim if the challenges confronting it are not well managed. The negative consequence of the activities of the insurgency group for example undermines youth empowerment and sustainable development in Nigeria. Activities such as acceptance of gratification, embezzlement of the fund, inducements, influence peddling, padding of budget, extortion, falsification of financial records, bribery, conflict of interest, misappropriation, and fraud, perpetrated by some public office holders are inimical to the implementation of any developmental goals as it regards the youth (Aina & ICPC, 2014).

According to Adewale (2016), the challenges faced by the IDPs to be tackled using empowerment through the NGOs require government support. Sukarieh & Tannock (2017), revealed that youth empowerment is challenged, and this has escalated to the frontage of local and international funding bodies. According to Oladeji (2015), youth and women IDPs have endured serious challenges of mental distress as a result of painful events of human rights violations such as murders, and sexual violence. The NGOs are strongly encouraged to advance the rehabilitation of the IDPs toward empowerment. To Nikkhah & Redzuan (2017) to achieve empowerment the NGOs serve as a competent bridge that supports the community in realizing it. NGOs help individuals gain employment, and get personal income to achieve economic goals, in this process, individuals get empowered economically. Furthermore, the NGOs build the capacity of the community through the acquisition of skills, and knowledge, gaining

assets as well as influencing the community to be part and parcel of all the projects to add value to themselves.

Consequently, Olaleye, (2010) established that government and NGOs are said to be the principals in advancing youth empowerment and participatory community development, in coordinating and organizing youth empowerment programs intended at assimilating them into the realm of community development. In a related development (Gana & Aishatu, 2018) established that empowering youth IDPs will create trust and self-esteem, as well as enhance the services and entrepreneurial abilities of the IDPs and create an avenue for the betterment of their broken homes. Usman (2014) advocated that to achieve self-sustenance in national development the youth should be empowered to avoid over-dependency on the government in empowerment provision and this could be possible in promoting empowerment and youth sustainability in several fields of commerce. Fayemi (2012) established that youth empowerment strategy is the greatest approach for alleviating poverty among young people as it was suggested that, the state should engage young people in the development and execution of strategies directed at ameliorating the suffering of the youth. Ojo, Abayomi & Odozi (2014), evaluated methods for the acquisition of empowerment abilities, including agricultural learning exercises, workshops, and excursions which will support the empowerment of young people and, subsequently, the eradication of poverty and severe hunger. Usman (2014) in perspective on youth empowerment in Nigeria, examines the distinct skills and procurement programs developed by previous and current governments in Nigeria to guarantee the empowerment of youth.

The main thrust of the paper is to investigate the challenges faced by non-governmental organizations in their attempt to empower the youth in Borno state.

Conceptual Framework

Non-Governmental Organizations: NGO is characterized as an autonomous voluntary association of individuals with a common purpose, are free of any government's direct control, and are not to be organized as political parties, which should be non-profit making, and not a criminal or violent group as stipulated by United Nations (Willets, 1996). For this paper, the NGOs are relief organizations that provide emergency to improvised youth of the IDP camps in Borno State Nigeria in their voluntary capacity toward bringing succour to the IDPs economically, socially and psychologically. The 3 NGOs at the Dalori camp and Teachers village camp represent the NGOs used in the research work, and importantly, their names are not mentioned here because of the safety of the staff working there.

Youth Empowerment: According to Henze (2015) youth is a period of life childhood and adulthood where experimentation with roles and identities is found amongst the young once, this period is still void of the burden of social norms and obligations, yet slowly preparing the youngsters for their lives as full members of the social collective. Youth empowerment is an individual desire and the collective training of the young to achieve economic, social, psychological, social and economic control (Rapport 1987; Zimmerman & Rapport 1988). Youth empowerment relates to the predicted aspect of outcomes arising from the roles of NGOs toward empowering youth taking into account the economic, social and psychological outcomes which the study perceived as the empowerment dimensions.

Literature Review

A large and growing body of literature has investigated issues such as Dolinskaya, Shi, & Smilowitz (2011) who opined that during the 2010 earthquake hospital policies and administrative bureaucracy posed a lot of challenges to American hospitals and the NGOs, because of differences in organizational structure, language barrier and information gap made it very difficult to aid the victims of the disaster. In Ghana, the challenges faced by NGOs were identified as

humanitarian logistics taking into account the NGOs, and the type of disaster. It was further revealed that some of the pressing issues of NGOs in Ghana were the lack of a warehouse to stock the relief materials, no mandate to support the NGOs and there was no legislative backing and qualified staff to manage the NGOs (Spens, 2008).

It was established by Chary & Rohloff (2014: 307–31) that the NGOs introduced visual inspection based in Guatemala in 2014. In the research, a structured interview was used with 36 NGO staff and 20 via a direct service provider. It was found that staff turnover, quality training of staff, accurate supervision and cryotherapy referrals were the main challenges of NGOs in the research. Hence, Batti (2014: 57–64) postulates that, at present in Africa, many local NGOs depend squarely on international donations to run their respective organizations, however, there is a lot of competition among the NGOs on how to get resources, that is why the main challenge of local NGOs in Africa was finance because all project requires resources whether financial or non-financial due high level of poverty in Africa.

Furthermore, Nwaiwu (2013) relates that among the challenges faced by the NGOs was the legitimacy to operate in a given area and also human resources management, this, in essence, focuses on the staff employment, welfare, health and safety of the employee. It was discovered that the NGOs should stay clear of over-politicization or being active in the political process which will further damp their legitimacy in the community. In a related development, Yusuf, Abbas, Hussain & Yusuf (2017) argued in their research that they used a mixed method approach and revealed that the constraints of the NGOs toward poverty alleviation and community development could be related to lack of funds, lack of continuity in project and implementation of such project, and insecurity. Bromideh (2014) classified NGO challenges into internal and external challenges. In internal he sees lack of organization and coordination, inadequate funds and human management as well as employment as the major problems while the external challenges relate to lack of collaboration between the NGOs, the government and other private individuals as well as difficulty in legitimizing the NGOs by the government. The method employed in this research was structured and

semi-structured interviews. Similarly, Ukpong (1993) established that the NGOs are faced with challenges which aggravate community expectations from the public as well as increasingly weaken the confidence of the NGOs. It was found that some challenges could be prevented if not the operational capacity of the NGOs could further deteriorate.

Latham & Prabhakarb (2011: 109-121) found that due to lack of collaboration and coordination between and among the NGOs both at the national, state and local levels resulted in known challenges such as duplication of ideas, lack of coordination and management, overstepping of bounds. Others include lack of participation, concerning volunteering among youth, and absence of target orientation by the NGOs. Ultimately, Jacobs et al. (2017) revealed that the NGOs is experiencing public racism and government interference in Zimbabwe while the respondents on the other hand are faced with several challenges, such as the absence of exposure to resource to scale up initiatives, bad performance of completed products and restricted market access.

Theoretical Framework

Psychological empowerment influence, inspiration, knowledge and skills are related as they are essential to impact the social and political climate and participative actions (Zimmerman, 1995). Psychological empowerment is a dynamic term that could alter its definition, depending on the circumstances (Roesch & Golding, 1980; Zimmerman, 1995). Consequently, empowerment at the personal stage of assessment has been differentiated from psychological empowerment. Precisely, empowerment at the personal level of thought concentrates on the person without considering contextual influences, while psychological empowerment encompasses the mutually beneficial impacts and conglomeration of macro- and micro-level elements affecting the emotional, behavioural, and characteristics of individuals.

According to Zimmerman (1995: 217-221), three fundamental influences on the contextual essence of psychological empowerment exist. Firstly, psychological empowerment requires distinct types for

distinct individuals. In other words, the features of people will affect the system and the significance of psychological empowerment. Secondly, psychological empowerment differs from framework to framework. The situations and environments where individuals reside change the type that empowerment will adopt in those contexts. Thirdly, psychological empowerment is going to differ over the moment. Psychological empowerment isn't just a temporary situation; it is a fluid occurrence. It may rise or decline over a moment and may change drastically at a distinct stage. Psychological empowerment may develop more readily from activities aimed at influencing political decision-making, but participation with others, increased responsibility, and organizational problem-solving are also expected to contribute to one's sense of empowerment.

In this paper, which is compatible with Zimmerman's work, empowerment is seen as the product of the NGO's voluntary position. The psychological empowerment interpretation associated with the literature should help define the aspects of empowered individuals. It will include concepts of dominance and influence, socio-political issues, mobilization of capital and engagement in some way at each stage, as past studies on empowerment have consistently considered such structures as central to the definition of an empowered outcome scale (Zimmerman, 1995: 217-221). From the foregoing, it can be understood that the use of empowerment theory as the major theory of this paper is because it is the most appropriate and relevant theory for the study of youth empowerment among IDPs taking into account the role of the NGOs. The theory will help to interpret the process of economic empowerment, social empowerment and psychological empowerment taking into cognizance the role of the NGOs in trying to liberate and bring an end to the suffering of the marginalized and oppressed internally displaced youth in Borno State, Northeastern Nigeria.

Methodology

This paper took a qualitative case study approach because it helps to understand a complicated social phenomenon and reveals the most important aspects of a problem from the point of view of the study's

core informants (Onimisi, 2020; Onimisi, 2018: 70-79). Purposive testing was utilized in the determination of 24 key interviewees which were drawn from the concerned partners which incorporate youth, both male and female, the NGOs, the Nigeria Military, the Public Crisis Executives Organization (NEMA), State Crisis. The Board Office (SEMA) and Public Commission for Evacuees, Travelers and Inside Uprooted People (NCFRMI). The primary criteria for their selection were that they had the necessary experiences, knowledge, responsibility, skills, ability, and willingness to share their perspective. As a result, they were chosen purposefully. Following this, thematic analysis was used to jointly interpret the data and conduct a discussion. Content analysis, which drew on relevant literature to support the researcher's findings, followed.

Challenges Faced by the NGOs in Youth Empowerment in Borno State IDPs

The objective of this paper was to examine the challenges faced by the NGOs in youth empowerment in Borno state IDPs. Relevant questions were asked from the key and selected informants about these challenges and how they relate to the objective. Important themes that emerged from the key informant interviews conducted for this paper were analysed.

Financial Challenge

The informants were particularly critical of the challenges the NGOs faced during the cause of providing empowerment services to the youth in the IDP camp in Borno state. Concerns were expressed about the needed financial requirements to meet the needs of the youth population in the camp. Financial challenges remain a particularly critical issue affecting the activities of the NGOs in Borno state IDP camps. Talking about this issue of the challenges faced by the NGOs towards youth empowerment in Borno state IDP camp an informant, opined that the inconsistency in the implementation of the programs of the NGOs was greatly due to lack of funds. The informant stated that one of the challenges being faced by the NGOs is the inconsistency in

terms of the implementation of their programs due to lack of funds. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous studies of Hassen and Ouertatani (2021) who associate the financial challenge as one of the issues affecting the NGOs. The rate of financial issues the NGOs affect tends to affect not only their humanitarian efforts but also their empowerment drive for the youth in the IDP camp in Borno state. This study confirms the opinion of Madu and Muhingi (2017), which states that despite, all the training, programs and access to specialist support, finance remains a key to a successful empowerment scheme, thus, the financial issues deter empowerment. The paper found that the NGOs in their quest to empower the youth are often faced with financial challenges which hinder their effectiveness in the IDP camps in Borno state. The paper not only found youth empowerment as a catalyst for achieving self-reliance among the IDPs in Borno state camps it also lines up the challenge expressed by the empowerment theory.

Limited Resources

Also, very particularly critical to the challenges faced by the NGOs towards youth empowerment is the issue of limited resources. One concern expressed regarding the challenges the NGOs faced during the cause of carrying out their empowerment duties was limited resources. An informant faulted the government because they had not lived up to expectations. The informant stated thus: *Yes, somehow the government is its fault because it has not lived up to its expectations as required. Although, we know that limited resource sometimes affects the government and the NGOs*. Thus, limited resource is a big challenge to the activities of the NGOs. Consistent with the literature, this research found that participants who reported using limited resources with Kelly (2021) believed that resources can affect the programs of the NGOs. Secondly, another major challenge is in the area of adequate empowerment as the resources are usually scarce and limited most of the time thereby having to select only a few beneficiaries amongst hundreds to empower because there are very limited sources with a considerably higher number of people to take care of. The paper corroborates the position of

Bashir (2008: 1-6) who believed that empowerment of the youth can fasten economic growth, financial system and, overall economic development of a country is achieved if resources are available. The paper shows that limited resource remains a big challenge to the NGOs in their quest for socio-economic empowerment of the IDP camps in Borno state.

Insecurity

Following the present results, previous studies such as Schetter, Makutu, & Müller-Koné (2022) opined that conservative NGOs have been challenged due to the volatile security situation in the country, the position of these scholars was supported by this current research finding. An informant stated that: *nevertheless, the issue is that insecurity in most parts of the state affects the efforts of the NGOs towards ensuring all youth in the state are adequately empowered. Insecurity is a hindrance to the empowerment program of the NGOs*. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work of Hall & Deinla (2017) which opined that the security situation of an area can affects the activities of the NGOs. Makki & Tahir (2021) opined that NGOs are often faced with various serious challenges at their workplace. Consistent with the literature, this research found that informants reported that the volatile security situation in Borno state IDP camps remains a challenge to the empowerment program of the NGOs in the state. Consistent with the research of Abhijit Das (2001) where the author narrated the economic and socio-political conditions in Northern India where the state despite losing interest in the development and protecting certain groups in which the youth are part, the NGOs have stepped in despite the volatile environment leading to the increase credibility and importance of the NGOs in the development and protecting the rights of the youth. The paper the position of Barrett (2010) in his work "*Measuring food insecurity*", and Fishman (1980) in his work titled "*Conversational Insecurity*" opined that insecurity can affect not only food increase but every activity in the environment.

Psychological Effects of Insurgency on the People

Another critical but important challenge faced by the NGOs in their bit to empower the youth in the IDP camps in Borno state is that trauma and anxiety are other serious issues affecting the inhabitant of Borno state. This finding broadly supports the work of another study such as that of Coombe (2021) also drew the attention of scholars to the negative effects of insurgency on the activities of groups such as NGOs. The paper shows the psychological effects of insurgency on the youth in the camps which negatively affect the NGOs. The ICRC has truly been trying here there are people here in the IDP camp that are under psychological trauma which has been a great challenge for the NGOs, but the ICRC was able to attend to those who have not seen their mothers, fathers or children for years or months, the ICRC has established the family relationship link, through this link, if your child, or mother or any of your love one is missing when you report to them, they will go in search for that missing person or persons, thereby going to places where the victim may be found. This study corroborates the earlier findings of Ford, Jampaklay, and Chamatrithirong (2021) who established the negative consequence of psychological effective insecurity on the activities of NGOs.

The psychological condition of the people has far-reaching effects on youth in the IDP camps the paper's finding shows. An informant stated thus: *the displaced person who has been traumatized are being given the necessary psychological and emotional counselling for them to get out of the horrible situation they have found themselves in, which is seriously affecting them*. The incidence of insurgent attacks on the people of Borno state and rebellious groups, as well as consistent and sustained pressure from different insurgents, has greatly hampered the people negatively which in turn hindered the activities of the NGOs in their empowerment drive.

Lack of Inclusion and Co-Operation

The inclusion challenges faced by the NGOs did not begin from the activities in Borno state, it has been a long or pre-existing issue that the NGOs have to inherit. A common view among interviewees was that a

sense of inclusion was lacking because of the location of the IDP camp. An informant expressed thus: *If you cannot travel to such a location, it means you cannot implement your mandate or programs and once you have a location that you are unable to locate, it makes your work very difficult and those IDPs living there are automatically left out.* Small & Memmo (2004), when found that the youth have been excluded for a long in the scheme of things. The lack of inclusion of the youth in the empowerment scheme of things over the years remains one of the biggest challenges faced by the NGOs operating and granting humanitarian services to the IDPs in Borno state camps. Small & Memmo (2004), further states that the unhealthy development and the lack of integration of the youth in the entire process is a challenge.

Brown (2011), further stated that the knowledge and contributions of the international partners and the complementarities services suffer setbacks with their lack of partnerships, cooperation and trust amongst the local organizations. This confirms the position of the paper which shows that NGOs' quest for youth empowerment in Borno state IDP camps suffers because of lack of trust amongst the population. The types of assistance the humanitarian workers provide require cooperation and understanding, however, this has been made difficult due to the absence of cooperation and trust between the local communities and NGOs, the finding shows.

High Rate of Illiteracy and Communication Issues

Another critical challenge faced by the NGOs was the high rate of illiteracy on the part of the IDPs. The informant on the whole demonstrated that the high rate of illiteracy is a hindrance to successful youth empowerment in IDP camps in Borno state. An informant expressed that the problem of illiteracy among the IDPs affects the skill acquisition program of the NGOs. The informant stated thus: *we often face the problem of illiteracy among those in the IDP camps in Borno state. Because of the high rate of illiteracy in the state and their entire geo-political zone establishing and training people in any form of skills acquisition requires more effort.* This paper confirms that the high rate of illiteracy in Borno state IDPs constitutes a significant challenge to the activities of the

NGOs and this finding is associated with Choudhary (2021: 8945-8952) whose research produced similar findings. Of critical importance is the issue of illiteracy of the IDPs in Borno state which negatively affected the activities of the NGOs in their humanitarian efforts. Similarly, another informant was of the view that the issue of illiteracy of the IDPs in the camp not only affects the empowerment needs of people but equally affects their health. The informant stated thus: *the issue of illiteracy of the IDPs comes into play because, even though sanitary provisions are being provided, they prefer not to use those toilets provided but rather litter the surroundings with human faeces thereby causing diarrhoea and other communicable diseases*. The paper confirms the study carried out by Taylor (2019) which shows that the gap in the educational achievement of developing countries versus those of developed countries is significant, and thus, has a consequence for the development targeted in African countries. This finding is consistent with that of Hariharan (2021) who also opined that illiteracy can be a factor against the working of the NGOs. The findings show that the rate of illiteracy in the Northeast, and especially, the Borno state interrupts the activities of the NGOs towards youth empowerment. This further shows that illiteracy affects the empowerment programs of the NGOs in the quest for the actualization of self-reliance of the youth in the IDP camps. The findings further mirror those of the previous studies of Taylor (2019) and support the empowerment theory which states that developing countries still very much fall behind in the entire education level especially among the youth, thus, have a negative impact on the people. Communication as a vital issue related to challenges faced by the NGOs towards youth empowerment in IDPs in Borno state was not particularly prominent in the interview data. A comparison of the findings with those of other studies by Bouzarjomehri & Javani (2021) confirms that a bridge in communication can affect the works of the NGOs in Borno state IDPs. This finding is consistent with that of Psaki, et al (2021) who also emphasized that communication can be a challenge to the working of the NGOs, thus confirming the findings of this paper. The paper shows that a bridge in communication affects the activities of the NGOs towards providing empowerment for the youth in IDP camps

in Borno state. Mercy Corps study shows that broadcasting in languages such as Hausa and Kanuri by radio, is important to those in IDP camps, however, limited access to communication radio and others who do not understand the language amongst the NGOs affects their humanitarian efforts in the state. The findings also confirm the suggestions of Sule & Bangaje (2017) who postulate that, communication channels are limited and highly regulated which hinders the activities of the NGOs towards providing empowerment for the youth in Borno state IDP camps.

Conclusion

The main thrust of the paper as shown at the beginning of this study, was to investigate the challenges faced by the non-governmental organizations in their attempt to empower the youth in Borno state. Thus, the paper design was aimed at achieving these objectives. The contributions of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to empowering IDP youth in Borno State cannot be overemphasized. The NGOs operating in Borno state IDPs have in no small measure provided financial support to the NGOs at various times over the years, especially in the period of the highest activities of the insurgency in the state. The NGOs also provided access to resources to the youth in the IDPs in Borno state and technical assistance to meet their immediate needs. One important thing done by the NGOs towards youth empowerment was the mobilization of the youth in Borno state for their survival and towards increasing their standard of living in and after their camping experiences. Thus, the paper recommends a total of the government towards the NGOs in other to meet their objectives. The article recognized difficulties faced by empowerment in education, such as the absence of financing, the absence of qualified teachers and the absence of facilities. Government should create a curriculum that will be empowerment-based at all stages of education and all stakeholders which include NGOs and governments should provide an appropriate atmosphere for the growth of empowerment in education required for economic growth and youth empowerment in Nigeria. The current paper recommends, such as the institution of skills procurement

facilities in every corner of the nation to render the program available to young people, the hiring of skilled and seasoned craftsmen and females as teachers to render these programs more feasible and the streamlining of skills procurement programs to render them more efficient benefit and betterment of the youth in Nigeria.

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