
An Assessment of the Performance of United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Borno State of Nigeria

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Abstract

There is few existing literature on the performance of inter-governmental organisations and other non-governmental organisations across crisis prone areas. Hence, the need to assess the performance of United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Borno State of Nigeria, using itemized facts and figures to make necessary policy recommendations. UNICEF being the arm of United Nations Organization has been present in Nigeria at different times of crisis and most recently in Borno State because of the activities of insurgency called Boko-Haram. The study x-rayed within a concise form, the UNICEF activities. Study revealed that, they have been doing well even though a lot yet to be done, which cut across various spheres of life in the state. The basic challenges is the continuous reprisal attack by the terrorist, lack of sufficient funds to carry out set out goals, little or no concrete synergy between UNICEF and Borno State government on project execution and allegation of poor management of resources by UNICEF officials given the complaints of the state government. Therefore, the study concluded that, there is urgent need for stakeholders meetings and collaboration between UNICEF and Borno State Government and a follow up appeal by UNICEF to donor agencies, to fulfill their mandate and most importantly better security surveillance.

Keywords: *Terrorism; Insurgency; IDPs; UNICEF; Borno State & Nigeria*

1.1 Introduction

The Post World War II years witnessed increasing involvement of international Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in the social and economic transfiguration of the Third World nations. Authors like Edwards & Hulme (1995); Kareithi & Flishe (2009); Edwards & Fowler (2002) and Unerman & O'Dwyer (2006) have emphasis on the role of inter-governmental organisations and other non-governmental organisation (NGOs) since 1990s in international development. This has increased, along with massive interest and concern over their performance from NGO practitioners, governments, citizens, donors, policymakers and academics. There are several inter-governmental organisations notably United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) created by United Nations on 11th December 1946, World Food Programme, and others INGOs like International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), Action against Hunger, and International Rescue Committee amongst others. Most of which have been present in the crisis prone area of North East Nigeria due to the insurgency, which has led to the collapse of the socio-economic activities.

United Nations (UN) describes insurgency as any 'act which is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a

population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act'. Insurgency is one objective of organised terrorism, just as terrorism is one of several strategies of insurgency. Both terrorism and insurgency may be used by states in their internal operations. Terrorism and terrorist tactics constitute part of the strategies and tactics of insurgency. The activities of this sect of Jama, atu Ah!is Sunna Lidda, await Wa!- Jihad popularly known as Boko-Haram have brought overwhelming effects on livelihood in Borno State. In addition, this insurgency reached its eighth year in 2017 (dates back to 2009), leading to loss of lives and declined economic activities in various parts of Maiduguri in Borno State.

No government can single handedly, take care of the devastating effect, as such the need for participation of inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in establishing and maintaining essential services like assisting internally displaced populations in areas of health care delivery, education, food supply, empowerment, water supply among others. Although, organizations face alot of challenges in the discharge of their duties often caused by insurgent activities, they are duty bound to maintain neutrality. According to Osueke (2006), impartiality/neutrality is valuable for the long-term operation in Maiduguri, humanitarian aid agencies feel they are forced to compromise these principles in an effort to gain aid access.

In line with this, UNICEF have been engaged in several areas across the 36 states of the federation since then with core mandate summarize thus as meeting the needs of disadvantaged children, interventions in related endemic diseases, combating malnutrition among children, adult and rural education and as well give equal rights to women and girls. Between 2009 and date, it is estimated that there are not less than 1,873,459 million internally displaced persons in camps and host communities in North East comprising of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe State and out of this, 1,075,365 million representing 57.4% are said to be children with the remaining 28% (798,094) been old & younger. Based on INGO Assessment Report (2015), between 3.5 and 4 million IDPs facing difficulty in securing adequate food supplies which further confirmed the report of FAO (2015) that, 60 percent of the IDPs in camps and host communities are not eating adequately nutritious foods. It is on record that 92% of these IDPs live in host communities leaving 8% of IDPs in camps (NEMA & INGOs Article, 2015). Although, UNICEF has been a prominent agency/Inter-governmental organisation responding to these crisis in Nigeria with other programmes which cut across these three states.

The emphasis of this study centers on the activities of UNICEF in Borno State giving the devastating effect resulting from the activities of insurgency. With the liberation of 15 local government areas previously under the Boko Haram control. For instance, in Borno State alone, there are about 63 percent of IDPs representing 1,273,952 million (INGO Forum in Nigeria, 2015) with new cases springing up. UNICEF Consolidated Emergency Report (2016) asserted that thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) need urgent interventions such as the alarming rates of Malnutrition, Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health and Food Aid. In other to meet this needs, UNICEF Report (2016) asserted that, they launched a revised upwards appeal from \$55 million to \$115 although out of this amount, only \$51 million received leaving a funding gap of \$64.4 million representing 56 per cent of total fund.

The study is an assessment on performance of NGO's written statements and report and relatively recent literature. Primarily, the focus will be on UNICEF that have consolidated their role within the child's right protection, health, education, food security among others. It is therefore interesting to explore whether UNICEF have willingly adopted acceptable strategy within the purview of their mandate as a consequence of this new 'turn'

in the humanitarian discourse in meeting the needs of internally displaced persons or less privileged.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Terrorism/Insurgency

Sampson and Onuoha (2011) sees terrorism as “the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts”. Some foreign observers have linked terrorism in Nigeria to a number of factors which include, political conflicts, development that involves horizontal inequalities, religious/ethnic distrust, poor governance linked to leadership failure, and high level corruption (Kufour, 2012; Oluwarotimi, 2012). Since the ushering of fourth republic, Nigeria has witnessed a number of religious riots notably in Plateau and Kaduna State in Northern Nigeria and consequently North East comprising of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe State respectively. In recent times terrorism has assumed a political undertone and is being spearheaded by a faceless Islamic insurgents that has claimed thousands of lives in the North since 2009.

2.1.2 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations General Assembly created UNICEF on 11th December 1946 to provide emergency food and health care to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. UNICEF relies on contributions from governments and private donors. It is estimated that 92 per cent of UNICEF fund is distributed to programme services with presence in over 190 countries. Its major emphasis is on developing community-level services to promote the health and well-being of children. UNICEF programmes focus on the most disadvantaged children, including those living in fragile contexts, those with disabilities, those affected by rapid urbanization and those affected by environmental degradation. Their presence in Nigeria dates back to 1953 with the start-up grant of \$6,600 to take care of maternal health related issues and their activities span up till the period of civil war were they worked closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to fly its emergency aid into the disputed territory of Biafra. Ever since then, it has been in the forefront among other international non-governmental organisations in providing humanitarian assistance to less privileged persons, adult and rural education, community development, nutrition and food production. This is in collaboration with federal/state government, multinational corporations, private sector, and other non-governmental organisations both local and international.

2.1.2.1 UNICEF Partnership with Multinational Corporations in Area of Funding

UNICEF has been at the forefront in providing a number of support to Nigeria government including those living in fragile contexts, child’s protection, girls child education, disease control, environmental degradation, those with disabilities etc. These issues/challenges are addressed in partnership with several multinational corporations, even though their partnership funding spread across the 36 states of the federation. UNICEF and partners assistance most times depends on the urgent need of each region/state. Since 2009, attention has shifted to North East of Nigeria giving the insurgency posed major humanitarian challenges. The following are some notable partners:

- ❖ European Union (EU) = \$70 million covering up to 2018
- ❖ UK Department for International Development (DfiD) launched fund of = \$160 million in 2012 for girls education programme with target of reaching 1 million by 2020 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme = \$130 million covering up to 2018

- ❖ Educate a Child (EAC) = \$35.5 million
- ❖ Children's Investment Funds Foundations (CIFF/UK) = \$80 million covering till 2018
- ❖ US Fund for UNICEF = \$2 million covering up to 2020 for girls child education
- ❖ Bill & Melinda Gate Foundation = \$6.5 million on Polio Eradication
- ❖ Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- ❖ European Commission Humanitarian Office
- ❖ Canadian International Development Agency
- ❖ Government of Japan and Norway
- ❖ World Bank
- ❖ FHI – 360
- ❖ World Health Organisation (WHO)
- ❖ International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- ❖ International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)
- ❖ Action Against Hunger – ACF International

Although several of these partners have area of jurisdiction, some might be in technical expertise, cash-based and services depending on the memorandum of understanding. Most times, the cash-based is for a limited period of time owing to lean resources on the side of partners, which will really yield low results due to excessive economic hardship. On the other hand, there are timelines to partnership ranging from 1-10 years depending on the project on ground.

2.1.2.2 UNICEF Partnership with Federal/State Government & Other Domestic NGOs

There are several partners with UNICEF though with different area of partnership ranging from acute Malnutrition, Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Health Care Delivery, Education for all, Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI), Neo-natal and Maternal Deaths, youth empowerment, ICT equipment, Polio Eradication, Measles Vaccination, Diarrhoea/Cholera & Malaria Control, Open Defecation etc. These partners are as follows:

- Federal Ministry of Health, Education, Environment, Water Resources
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
- National Planning Commission
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- Borno State Ministry of Health
- Borno State Social Development Agency
- Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)
- Nigeria Centre for Disease Control
- WASH & Nutrition Sectors
- Catholic Caritas Foundation
- Borno State Humanitarian Coordination Forum
- Nomadic Centre Community
- BornoState Primary Healthcare Development Agency
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Nigerian Armed Forces
- Nigerian Air Force etc

2.2 Empirical Literature

Department for International Development (DFID) programme in Nigeria second report of session (2016–2017) asserted that there are about 120 million people living below or only just above the poverty line, 10% of the world's mothers who die in childbirth and 16% of the world's out of school children especially with the rise of internal displaced people in North

East due to the insurgency by Boko-Haram sect. The scale and depth of development challenges in Nigeria are significant. Women and girls, particularly in the North, face substantial barriers to empowerment in the form of cultural, social, political and economic disadvantages. Oil wealth has sustained an exclusive political system driven by patronage, and has undermined the accountability of elites to citizens. In accordance with the scale and importance of these challenges, the DFID has significantly increased its allocation to Nigeria in the last 15 years. Funding for 2016–2017 is £266 million, up from £244 million in 2015–2016, £120 million in 2009–2010, £20 million in 2001–2002, making it DFID's second largest programme in Africa and third largest in the world.

Kareithi, Lund (2012) Review of NGO performance research published in academic journals between 1996 and 2008. This study examined the salient characteristics of NGO performance research in terms of, (1) the number of publications, (2) publication outlets (journals and journal cluster), (3) author collaboration (sole or joint authors), (4) author affiliation, (5) study location, (6) study period, (7) study topics and (8) method and sources of information. Findings showed a steady increase in the number of articles, published in a wide array of journals with over half of the articles published in development studies journals. Of the 31 articles, 21 were sole authored. Data were mainly sought from NGO directors, programme staff and donors; comparatively fewer studies collected data from beneficiaries. Studies were mainly conducted in developing countries, whilst most authors were affiliated to institutions in developed countries. Of the 13 authors who conducted studies in Africa only 3 were affiliated to an institution in Africa. This study confirmed the continued need for increased research on factors influencing NGO performance; revealed the low seeking of beneficiaries' perspectives in NGO performance research despite the rhetoric of participatory development; and revealed the low number of published researchers in Africa and minimal collaborative efforts between 'Northern' and 'Southern' researchers in this field.

Uwameiye & Salami (2013) Assessment of the Impact of the UNICEF Supported School Feeding Programme on Attendance of Pupils in Federal Capital Territory. The research design adopted for this study was the expo-facto. A total of 385 pupils under the school feeding programme and 217 pupils under the non-school feeding schools were used for the study. A checklist was used to obtain the data on attendance of pupils from the daily class register. The data were analyzed using percentages and bar charts while the hypothesis was tested using t-test. The researchers found that the implementation of school feeding programme in the selected primary schools brought about increased annual percentage attendance of pupils under the school feeding Schools. Attendance of pupils in school feeding schools was significantly different from the attendance of pupils without the school feeding schools, in favor of the pupils under the school feeding programme. Based on the findings, the authors recommends that Federal Government of Nigeria should promulgate policies that will focus on how the school feeding programme can be effectively implemented in all the states of the country.

3.1 An Assessment of the Performance of UNICEF in Borno State of Nigeria

No doubt, UNICEF has been prominent in providing humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced persons in Nigeria. However, this research will highlight the few notable ones with focus on UNICEF performance within Borno State.

Report shows that there are 2.6 million targeted by humanitarian actors (NGOs) in the North East of Nigeria out of which 1.7 million were IDPs, 1.3 million were vulnerable host communities and 0.28 million were inaccessible population (UNICEF, 2016). Statistics further prove that UNICEF alone achieved 50 per cent of targeted numbers (UNICEF Report, 2016). However, given the level of damage in the North East, the provision of WASH

components to rest population and subsequently sustainability remain a challenge through 2017.

Through UNICEF partnership with various organisations and agencies charged with the responsibility of eradicating polio, UNICEF achieved above 60 percent immunization coverage target in Borno State alone (UNICEF Annual Report 2014).

UNICEF was among the partners supporting government efforts to contain the spread of Ebola in the second half of 2014 through the deployment of social mobilizers to educate the public on the preventive measures.

Based on UNICEF Report (2016), they were able to provide health care service to 4.2 million in the war zone, brought clean water to 745,000, treatment of 160,000 children under 5 for severe acute malnutrition and provided more than 1 million people with hygiene kits and education.

3.2 Challenges Confronting the Implementation of UNICEF Programmes

According to UNICEF's Annual Report (various years), there are number of challenges hindering the successful implementation of UNICEF and other NGOs programmes geared towards meeting the needs of less privileged. Some of these challenges are mention below and subsequently discussed extensively by the researchers:

- Limited partner's capacity and presence: Borno State houses the large chunk of the IDPs because of the intensity of the insurgency in the state. Most NGOs only operate within the Maiduguri metropolis with little or no presence in the interior villages that need necessities of life. Among those that are present, only a few has the capacity to carry out required programmes that could ultimately touch the livelihood of the affected persons in remote communities all over the state.
- Available resources to meeting increasing needs: Resource is the hallmark of project implementation. Nigerian government has been entrenched in recession since the coming of this present Buhari administration, coupled with the fall in the price of crude oil at the international market which serves as the main source of foreign exchange earnings. Owing to this, execution of various projects is sometimes delayed or not well carried out. Bearing in mind the cost of maintaining the existing projects which drains the government's resources and as such may not be properly maintained.
- Limited access to affected areas: Especially in the first half of 2015 and subsequently through 2016, UNICEF has not been able to convey humanitarian assistance to certain areas due to high level of insecurity in those areas, thereby affecting effectiveness of their performance across their core mandate.
- Another major constraint to the full implementation of the UNICEF core mandates in Nigeria is the issue of divergent government policies/programmes of successive administration that often emerged which has frustrating effects on the organizations; programmes. For instance, the sweeping of funds of Ministries, Department & Agencies, including for programme implementation, into the New Treasury Single Account (TSA). This has really hampered the activities of UNICEF to a large extent since most of their programmes are in partnership, and it is expected that the partner(s) redeem own counterpart funding for the take-off of such programme(s).
- Non-remittance of counterpart fund: Funding from partners and agencies is not forthcoming owing to economic downturn leading to lean resources. Those who are willing to remit their counter fund are in piecemeal basis, which sometime may not be sufficient to execute the set out programmes agreed.
- Shortage of skilled health care workers in the liberated areas: There is shortage of health care personnel across the affected areas of Borno State. That notwithstanding, UNICEF

have been able to recruited 72 nurses/midwives and deployment of 10 doctors, trained 1,000 health workers to strengthen health services in the newly accessible area in Borno State between 2015 and 2016 respectively.

- Lack of primary health care services and facilities: Health care facilities were damaged. Roughly about 200 of 450 according to UNICEF report (2016) were destroyed, looted with significant likelihood for increased morbidity and mortality for women and children in the affected areas of the State.
- Deteriorating and volatile security situation: Even with the liberation of the 15 local government areas previously been the strong hold of Boko Haram, the guerilla warfare approach embarked by the terrorists, makes the areas not secured if not accompanied with serious security surveillance and monitoring by various security agents or the use of helicopters to access volatile areas within Borno State which is an additional cost in providing assistance.
- Policies and Procedures: There is a significant difference on the policies and procedures of the UN and the Borno State Government, which may not be suitable for each other's operations. A decision that is easy to take on the side of the state government may not come easy on the side of the organization. This is due to the proper reporting channels and feedback. Also, UNICEF is a global organisation that considers a lot of things in taking decisions to protect its image globally. However, both parties are duty bound to work together in other to achieve a common goal.
- Communication Channels: Unlike the state government, the UNICEF's communication channels are limited and highly regulated which hinders the spread of information to the populace as to what the organization does and what it has achieved, what should be communicated to the people and what should not be communicated to avoid misunderstanding or misuse of information.
- Remuneration: The UNICEF's Salary and allowance is based on the International Civil Service Structure, which cannot be easily tempered with. The recruitment of more staff drains alot of the resources on the overhead expenditure even though the need is established. There may be alot of applicants willing to accept less to work for the organisation, but not much can be done as the decision to lower the salaries and allowance would lead to the loss of experienced human resources in the organisation.

4.1 Summary of Findings

According to UNICEF Consolidated Emergency Report (2016),there is a widespread fear amongst IDPs that their farms and homes are contaminated with explosive devices. The available health facilities have been systematically targeted by insurgent attacks, leading to destruction and damage which is incompatible with the provision of quality health services. Most of the health facilities are constrained with inadequate staff, insufficient supplies and equipment to meet the health needs of the increased population. Report shows that before the conflict, Borno State is characterized by extremely poor health indicators as compared to the national level indicators. Borno Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is as high as 1,500 – 2,000 per 100,000 live births compare to national MMR which is 576 per 100,000 live births while under-five mortality of 160 per 1,000 live births in Borno is above the national average of 126 per 1,000 live births.

Generally, funding in the North East has posed serious challenge due to lack of humanitarian donor funding with a funding gap of 75 per cent as at the end of 2016 (UNICEF, 2016) and also none availability of sufficient partners on-the-ground to scale-up interventions especially in the newly accessible areas.

UNICEF being a leading Inter-governmental organisation present in Borno State uses regular feedback from the affected population to improve the quality and timeliness of

UNICEF's programme. However, a lot need to be done in that area, because of the security threat, staff might not want to go back to the affected areas, thereby limiting detailed report, this may ultimately affect their judgmental conclusion.

Another worrisome areas this study highlight is based on the Borno State Governor Kashim Shettima statement in VOA News (Jan.11, 2017), that aid groups profiting from Boko Haram. He specifically pointed finger at UNICEF of not doing enough in curtailing the mass starvation instead spending the funds more on their staff welfare at the detriment of the displaced persons. This clearly shows lack of communication from the partners which should be improved upon to further harness understanding of work modalities and decision making due to variance in organization's mission, vision, mandate and priorities.

Based on the above, their seems not to be good working relationship between the government of Borno State and inter-governmental organisation and other notable international NGOs within Borno State on their operational budget and what they plan to deliver in aid to the state. Furthermore, external funds accrue to Borno State government from 2011 to 2017 is said to be less than N1 billion naira. This shows that most of the foreign donations come through INGOs, NGOs or Federal Government of Nigeria.

4.2 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Despite the operational challenges caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, UNICEF has continued to deliver both humanitarian aid and other development interventions by remaining flexible and responsive to the changing security situation. However, a lot is still yet to be done in empowering the IDP returnees to be self-reliant and ensuring that displaced children with no parents have access to quality health care and education for all. It is on this note that this study recommends that:

Within the purview of UNICEF, there is need for regular routine check in areas like overhead cost to avoid excessive outlay because tendency exists for manipulation among staffs. Sometime, there is collaboration among staffs to shortchange organisation thereby affecting execution of various programme activities embarked on.

UNICEF as a body should liaise with government of the state on their activities since it is their domain and more aware of the intensity of the devastation across the local governments. In addition, where necessary, there should be joint collaboration on project execution since the state has more manpower and understands the terrain better than UNICEF.

Also, UNICEF is Advised to communicate more with stakeholders and interlocutors in areas of responsibility knowing fully well that the organization knows best what it does, what it has achieved, and how. Not forgetting to consider how it is perceived and accepted in the area.

Lack of adequate funding has continued to pose challenges in project execution by UNICEF, hence, they should do a follow up to some of the donor agencies timely so that they could achieve set target since most of them have timelines.

Unnecessary allegations without properly justified scientific data and benchmarking may smear the image of parties doing their best to provide assistance to vulnerable citizens. Complaints can best be channeled through proper channels rather than going to press. Furthermore, credible organisations may rather quit operations than have their hard-earned reputation tarnished. This can brew public distrust and undermine public confidence on the targeted organization, and in the end the vulnerable people gets to suffer most for this.

The parties should try to understand working modalities of each other, as policies and procedures differ so also priorities. This will help in understanding parties decisions even if communication has not been perfectly efficient.

Both parties are not profit oriented and as such do not generate profit. Non has an obligation to justify its spending to the other.

Finally, the use of overhead cost to determine efficiency of a humanitarian organization is insignificant as there is need for competent and viable human resources with a comfortable working environment especially in emergencies. This is only possible by allocating more resources to administration. It would make more sense to concentrate on the general outcome rather than where the funds are channelled.

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