

ASSESSMENT OF UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEE (UNHCR) EMPOWERMENT, TRAINING AND LIVELIHOOD OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Internally displaced persons all over the world are often confronted with challenges such as the inability to have access to basic necessities of life due to displacement from their natural habitat thereby requiring support and aid from government and international humanitarian agencies. This study examined the impact of UNHCR empowerment training on the livelihood of IDPs in Benue State. Cosmopolitan theory was used as framework of analysis. The paper adopts cross-section survey design. The sample size for the study was 384 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) while questionnaire and interview were used as instruments for data collection. Data from questionnaire were presented, analysed and interpreted using frequency distribution table and percentage with likert scale forming the basis; while result from interview were analysed thematically. Findings revealed minimal significant positive impact of UNHCR skill acquisition programmes on livelihood of IDPs in Benue State considering the proportion of the beneficiaries' visa viz the number of IDPs in the state. Findings further indicated that the provision of emergency assistance such as food, shelter, WASH and Cash Based Intervention by UNHCR equally had a minimal improvement in the living conditions of the beneficiaries. The study submits that UNHCR needs to expand her empowerment programme to accommodate a reasonable number of IDPs for more impact on their livelihood. The paper recommends among others that UNHCR, Benue State Government as well as critical stakeholders should collaborate in funding the establishment of skills acquisition centres across the state, provide funds and start up kits for trainees for optimal utilization.

Keywords: Benue State, empowerment, internally displace persons, livelihood, skill acquisition, UNHCR,

Introduction

The plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) has attracted global attention due to the increase in the number of displacement cases with implication for livelihoods of IDPs. Report by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) as at May 2021 indicates that the number of people displaced internally reached 55 million by the end of 2020, the highest annual figure recorded in a decade (IDMC, 2021). Similarly, Africa is housing over 12.5million internally displaced persons. In Nigeria, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021) conducted a study in selected States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe reported a total of 2,191,193 IDPs in Nigeria as at June 2021 (IOM, 2021, p.2). This explains the magnitude of displacement crisis in Nigeria.

Internal displacement is caused by two main factors; natural and man-made disasters. These have made victims to flee their homes disrupting their social, political and economic life thereby inflicting on them sudden economic hardship where meeting livelihood needs become more challenging. Shior (2022), Ukase and Jato (2022), Adio-Moses (2023), and Adeleye (2023) all explain the impact of displacement on IDPs to include loss of human life, disruption of their economy and way of life, political backwardness, destruction of

properties due to armed conflict and dismantling of social and cultural ties. They further posited that IDPs lack food, shelter, health care and their children are usually out of school which present an unfavourable situation for the displace persons. It is important to note that even though, government agencies, civil society organisations and some individual philanthropists have been responding swiftly to the plight of the internally displaced persons but it is indeed, a distressing reality that many IDPs are living in overcrowded, unsanitary, and unsafe conditions, lacking access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, adequate shelter, healthcare, and education due to lack of means of livelihood. These challenging circumstances further exacerbate the trauma and hardships that IDPs have already endured due to conflict, natural disasters, or other emergencies, hence empowering the IDPs to acquire different skills to help them become self-reliant becomes imperative. The introduction of UNHCR empowerment training for IDPs in Benue State has been to complement the effort of Nigeria and Benue State Governments in this regard. This is because, the means of livelihood of the IDPs is very crucial for their survival and existence, it can at least help them to cater for their immediate needs and at the same time fend for others. This necessitated the study to assess the impact of the complementary humanitarian

role of UNHCR towards the provision of empowerment training in areas such as baking, tailoring and other handiwork and the extent it enhances the livelihood of IDPs in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

It is acknowledged that over four hundred thousand IDPs in Benue State could hardly sustain themselves economically, while in their make shift camps (Ukase, & Jato, 2022). They tend to grapple with challenges which include that of feeding, shelter, clothing, healthcare and the education of their children. The relief materials provided are rarely sufficient given their teeming population vis-à-vis the resources available. This condition poses huge threat to the livelihood of the people and their survival. However, even though there have been responses from the government to protect and improve the living condition of IDPs across Benue state. These have not adequately addressed the problem since a good number of IDPs are still living in unsafe environment, poor sanitary conditions, as well as inability to access basic necessities of life such as food, clean water, adequate shelter, healthcare, and education requiring support from non-governmental organizations and international humanitarian agencies like UNHCR. The UNHCR sought to complement the effort of Benue State governments by providing

empowerment training for IDPs under the Technical and Vocational Empowerment Training (TVET) to support the vulnerable to generate alternative income that will enable them live healthy and decent lives. Since UNHCR introduced these empowerment interventions in 2015 the outcomes are ripe for an impact evaluation to provide an empirically informed basis for policy review on the livelihood of IDPs in Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The study examined the impact of UNHCR empowerment training on livelihood of IDPs in Benue State. In specific, this study seeks to:

- i. assess the impact of UNHCR skill acquisition programme on the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State
- ii. ascertain the impact of UNHCR emergency assistance towards enhancing the living condition of IDPs in Benue State.

Conceptual Issues

Empowerment

Empowerment is fundamentally about power to redefine possibilities and options and to act on them, the power within individuals that enables people to have the courage to do things they never thought themselves to be capable of, and the power that comes from working alongside

others to claim what is rightfully theirs (Eyben, Kabeer & Cornwall 2008). According to Abraham and Idris (2023) empowerment is to give somebody a greater sense of confidence or self-esteem. That is, it enables one to exhibit some level of confidence and denounce self-doubt. Put differently, empowerment means the act of equipping people with knowledge and skills that help them make informed decisions that will better their lives politically, economically or otherwise. To Batliwala (1993) empowerment should start within, with learning about oneself from many viewpoints and learning to harness one's cognitive and emotional resources to attain desired outcomes. Solomon (1976) sees empowerment as a process whereby individuals are made to engage in activities that aim at reducing the powerlessness that has been created through negative valuation based on membership in a stigmatized group. The empowerment idea suggests solutions for addressing social marginalization and unfairness. It calls for the development of capacity awareness, and skills to enhance the condition of the marginalized. Addressing empowerment from an individual perspective, Mechanic (1991) suggest that it is a process where individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them and a relationship between their efforts and life outcomes. To him

empowerment as an on-going process centred on local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources. Empowerment as used in this context refers to the capacity of civil society groups, international organizations and well-meaning individuals attempt to assist vulnerable people whose means of livelihood are threatened, or destroyed in its entirety. They are taught how to developed different skills base on their area of interest which can be used to generate income to enable them live a meaningful life.

Livelihood

Livelihood is conceived variously by both scholars and institutions. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) cited in Niehof and Price (2001) (WCED) defines livelihood as, adequate reserves and supplies of food and cash to meet basic needs. The Commission further explained that, livelihood is assured through a stable employment with adequate remuneration; engagement in productive activities which are ecologically sustainable and economically sound, ownership of or access to resources and their management within their capacity to recover. To Niehof and Price (2001) livelihood

simply refers to the material means whereby one lives. It is bundles of activities that people undertake to provide for their basic needs or surpass them. In order to better understand how people develop and maintain livelihoods, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), building on the works of Chambers and Conway (1992) developed the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). This framework is an analytical tool, useful for understanding the many factors that affect a person's livelihood and how those factors interact with each other. The SLF views livelihoods as systems and provides a way to understand:

- i. The assets people draw upon
- ii. The strategies they develop to make a living
- iii. The context within which a livelihood is developed, and
- iv. Those factors that make a livelihood more or less vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

Within the context of this paper, Chambers and Conway (1992) description of livelihood is adopted as our working definition. To them livelihood *comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood which is sustainable can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits*

to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term.

Internally Displaced Persons

The concept of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has no specific definition. Like other social sciences concepts, it has been defined differently by different scholars. However, Nwanna and Oparaoha (2018) see internally displaced persons (IDPs) as people who have fled their homes because of conflict and persecution based on religion, race, and nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion but remain within their home countries borders. A comprehensive definition of IDPs is offered by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as quoted by Obikaeze and Onuoha, (2016), 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 in order 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.

From this understanding IDPs can be seen as citizens of a country who involuntarily fled their legal residents or places of work for safety purposes as a result of natural or man-made

disasters such as flooding, Tsunami, earthquake, civil war armed conflict, and terrorism among others but still remain within their country's borders. The definition above made some clear points, one is that IDPs are not people or groups of people who left their previous habitats willingly to search for greener pasture or economic comfortability elsewhere but are people or groups of people who left their previous habitats involuntarily or against their will and found themselves suddenly in a strange environment full of challenges. However, IDPs are displaced within national borders but do not benefit from the legal status of refugees and their associated protections, and they fall outside of the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Hence, IDPs are to enjoy similar protections afforded to other citizens and inhabitants of their respective countries. While states retain primary responsibility for protecting their populations, the international community has a responsibility to assist and support them.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts cosmopolitan theory as its framework of analysis. Cosmopolitanism is a theoretical construct that promotes global responsibility among all nations to address global issues. The cosmopolitan theory is fundamentally applied to this research since it

broadens the scope of its investigation beyond limits of sovereign states and makes the assumption that "everyone matters" regardless of national boundaries. This suggests that the phenomenon of internal displacement should be viewed as a worldwide communal duty rather than only the responsibility of the afflicted State (Wieske, 2018). Cosmopolitan theory is mostly associated with modern academics such as Martha Nussbaum, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Peter Kemp, Daniel Archibugi, Immanuel Kant and David Held, not to mention a number of other thinkers who incorporate cosmopolitan assumptions into their theorization (Wieske, 2018).

Cosmopolitanism promotes the idea that people should engage with a strong sense of companionship throughout the globe and makes the assumption that all people are members of a single community due to their shared humanity (Kleingeld & Brown, 2014). Cosmopolitan ideology really promotes "universal hospitality." Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is consistent with cosmopolitanism assumptions. They interpret sovereignty in this way to include accountability and the need to defend the rights of individuals. In cases where there are abuses of human rights, they support outside intervention. The theorists support universal justice for all people, irrespective of their social or political connections.

Applying the theory to the study, the paper argued that since IDPs are also human and shared the same human companionship need to be protected and supported to earn a decent living hence Government could not adequately provide for their needs. Therefore, UNHCR with a cosmopolitan responsibility for universal justice swung into action to support and provide humanitarian interventions for enhanced capacity building so as to enable IDPs make inform decisions that would improve their livelihood.

Review of Empirical Studies

UNHCR Skill Acquisition Programme and the Living Conditions of IDPs

Scholars have argued that one of the most important aspects of UNHCR's mission is enabling internally displaced people by offering them livelihood programmes. The organization carries out a number of interventions across the world to improve IDPs' living conditions both within and outside of camps. UNHCR has done that in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria, and other countries. Records that are currently accessible show that approximately 800 internally displaced people in Nigeria completed a livelihood programme in November 2017 that was run by the UNHCR in association with American University of Nigeria (Adeleye & Aremu, 2023). The

beneficiaries gain knowledge and abilities in a variety of fields, including tailoring, agriculture, fishing, blacksmithing, and information technology, though the volatile situation of the area could not allow them to practice their agricultural and fishing skills. The programme, which is now offered in the Nigerian states of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe, has graduated more than 12,000 individuals to far (Adeleye & Aremu, 2023).

Additionally, recipients receive enterprise start-up kits to help them continue operating. To guarantee that the programme reaches as many people as possible, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) constructed four Skills Acquisition Centers in Borno State. This has empowered 426 internally displaced individuals making their way back home, and host community members across 40 cooperative business groups in Yobe in becoming self-sufficient and self-reliant, UNHCR also provided equipment and resources to them upon completion of training (Adeleye & Aremu 2023). In addition, Borno State's five-month birth certificate distribution programme came to a conclusion in November. The programme ran from January to November 2017, in the Local Government Areas of Bama, Banki, Damasak, Gamboru Ngala, and Mungono, where over 102,000 individuals have

been registered and given certificates, increasing the total number of people in these categories to over 112,000 (UNHCR,2017).

Similarly, Aletan, Longe and Zuhumben (2023) examined the impact of vocational training on internally displaced women in Plateau State. Two research questions guided the conduct of the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research method. The target population for the study comprised of all internally displaced women in IDP camps in Plateau State. This research was carried out in Riyom of Plateau State in North Central Nigeria. Sixty respondents were randomly selected as sample for this study but at the end of the exercise, only Fifty-Five (55) were retrieved for data analysis. A structured inventory was constructed and administered on the respondents for data collection. The data obtained were statistically analyzed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study revealed that skill acquisition through beads making had influence on the economic status of women in IDP Camps in Plateau State; also, the acquisition of skill through soap making had influence on the health status of IDP woman in Plateau State. The study therefore recommended that the state in collaboration with civil society and faith based organisation and critical stakeholders should build vocational centers and equip them with basic

amenities that will help with the vocational training educational facilities to improve the IDPs' educational needs.

Aletan, Longe and Zuhumben's study advanced elaborately how skill acquisition in terms of beads and soap making significantly influence the economic and health status of women in Plateau IDP camp thereby making life more viable and sustainable. However, the study failed to call for a periodic review of the assessment of the conditions of the victims for proper documentation and the provision of additional durable remedial actions taking cognizance of IDPs area of skill and interest. Apart from relying on questionnaire alone in a study of this nature which is a major drawback, the authors failed to address the issues of employment and income lost which majority of the IDPs in Plateau State are suffering from. Hence the present study would try as much as possible to show case efforts put in place by United Nations High Commission for Refugees in designing and implementing long terms measure that would address issues of employment and income generation in the camp and after they had been reintegrated into their communities.

Muhammed, Bashir, Umar, and Abdulraazaq (2022) examined the effect of skills acquisition scheme on women empowerment in selected internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in

Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. A sample size of 308 was drawn from a population of 1,326. A multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the samples. Data were collected using questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews. Data were presented, analysed and interpreted using a frequency distribution table, percentage and t-test to test the hypotheses. The study revealed a positive relationship between acquired knitting skills and women's educational status in camps. The study further revealed that soap and detergent-making skills significantly affect women's health status in IDP camps. The study concluded that skill acquisition schemes influenced women's empowerment in Bakassi camp and farm centre. It was recommended, among others, that there is urgent need for the government and concerned stakeholders to erect schools equipped with basic educational facilities that will enhance the educational need of the IDPs.

The strength of Muhammed, Bashir, Umar, and Abdulrazaq's study is that it provides a tremendous analysis on how skills acquisition has improved the plight of women in Maiduguri in IDP camp, in Borno State. One of the major shortfalls of their study is that, it failed to bring to limelight the percentage of the beneficiaries of the skill acquisition knowing fully that not every IDP benefited from the interventions.

This present study closed this gap by identifying the total number of IDPs that actually benefited from UNHCR empowerment intervention thereby helping us to understand and appreciate the percentage of beneficiaries *visa -viz* the total population of the IDPs in the state. This will provide opportunity to advance workable recommendations.

Abdullahi, Yusuf – Sadiq, Yarima, Shittu (2019) evaluated the effective utilization of the skills of internally displaced persons in Nigeria as a way of addressing the challenges of insurgency and economic recession. The objectives were to examine areas of interest of the IDPs in Bauchi and Gombe states in terms of means of livelihood and intervention requirements and how they could be supported. The study adopted descriptive survey method and questionnaire was utilized as major instrument for data collection. 503 respondents representing twenty percent of the IDPs population in 13 LGAs in the two states were selected through random sampling technique and issued with questionnaire. A total of 447 questionnaire were returned, out of which 414 (92.6%) were found suitable and coded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 for the analysis. Upon further observation, 12 (2.7%) cases were found with an issue of unengaged responses with a zero standard deviation. These were deleted. Thus,

402(89.9%) were used as valid responses for the analysis. The study found that most of the IDPs residing in camps and households have skills and only need support to resuscitate their businesses. Those without skills are willing to acquire new one to help themselves. The study recommends that there should be rapid response to the need of IDPs in terms of financial support and rehabilitation to help rebuild their economies.

The strength of Abdullahi, et al 's study is that on one hand, deepens our understanding that IDPs skills if properly harnessed are capable of making them generate alternative income thereby supporting them to become self-reliant and enhance their livelihood. On the other hand, some of the IDPs were without skills but yet eager to learn if the opportunity presents itself since the provision of emergency support like food alone would not guarantee their healthy living. However, the methodology adopted by the previous study could not provide an in-depth explanation of the prevailing situation from the experiences of the victims which relying on questionnaire alone was not appropriate. Hence been a rural population, majority of them lack the intellectual capacity to respond to issues raised in the questionnaire. In attempt to deal with this gap, the present study therefore adopt the mixed method which involves the integration of both primary and

secondary methods of data collection. The implication is that questionnaire and Key Informant Interview will be utilized to ensure that the uneducated are also considered using the language they understand best. Hence information or data that is cross checked, verified and confirmed by more than one source has greater reliability than the one confirmed by only one source (Blumer, 2017).

UNHCR Emergency Assistance (food, shelter, WASH, CBI) and the Living Standard of IDPs

Apparently, the Nigerian state has faced a plethora of security problems that has resulted to the increasing number of IDPs due to attacks from insurgents, farmer-herders conflict, banditry and natural disasters such as flood as witnessed in 2011 and 2022 across different states of the federation. This unwanted situation has continued to create much concern for the state as resources are deployed by both NEMA and SEMA to cushion the effects of this on the affected persons. Yet, this support and aid from the Nigerian government appears to be grossly inadequate owing to the increasing cases of displacement.

To this end, the United Nations through her agencies thought it wise to collaborate with the state in terms of funding and other aids to help reduce the humanitarian crisis suffered by IDPs

in such state. Benue State which is one of the state affected have also collaborated with UN agencies to provide assistance to the IDP in the state. UNHCR for example provided transitory shelter for the IDPs in Duadu II IDP and Gbajimba camps respectively and presented both food and non-food items towards the joint effort to support IDPs in Benue State (UNHCR, 2018). Tens of thousands of vulnerable individuals have been forced to flee their homes as a result of violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in different parts of the country. The UNHCR Regional Representative for West Africa, handed over buckets, sleeping mats, soap, blankets, solar lanterns, cooking pots, jerry cans and insecticide-treated mosquito nets to the Benue State Government House Makurdi worth 1 billion naira (UNHCR, 2018). The UNHCR work in close collaboration with the Benue State government and other humanitarian and relief agencies and partner organizations in finding durable solutions and addressing the welfare needs of IDPs and other persons of concern in the state. In terms of education, United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has created temporary learning spaces, for IDPs and at the same time supplies them with school materials in camps (Adeleye & Osadola, 2022). United Nations agencies and partners have continued to assist with education

requirements, especially in emergency situations. Displaced children have been incorporated into host community schools wherever feasible in order to promote social cohesion. Among the most common difficulties is lack of instructors, big classrooms, problems with retention and teacher capacity building initiatives.

Methodology

This study utilized cross-sectional survey design, collecting data on multiple IDP camps and analysed the impact of UNHCR empowerment training on livelihood of internally displaced persons in Benue State. The use of cross-sectional survey design is justified by two reasons. First, it is compatible and applicable when dealing with large samples and can equally help to determine the characteristics prevalent in a population at a specific point in time. Second, it can provide useful information about the current situation, trends, or patterns of a phenomenon. The population of the study is 483,779 people covering 483 693 IDPs, 28 staff of UNHCR in Benue State as well as 58 staff of SEMA. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used as a scientific method of determining sample size for the study. The sample size for the study was 384 out of which 20 was allocated for interview using the saturation level advanced by Morse (2015). Data for the study was

collected through questionnaire and interview methods. Frequency distribution table and simple percentages were utilized with the aid of Likert scale, while result from interview were analysed thematically to validate or invalidate quantitative data. Therefore out of the 364 questionnaire administered only 340 were filled and returned. Therefore, analysis was done

based on 340 respondents. The details of those interviewed can be found in the appendices.

Result and Discussion

Data Presentation /Analysis

This section presents and analysed data generated from the field and was done in line with the two research objectives of the study.

Table 1: Impact of UNHCR Skill Acquisition Programme on Livelihood of IDPs in Benue State
Frequency and Percentage of Respondents

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Baking and catering has raised the income status of IDPs in Benue State	150	44	87	25	33	10	30	9	40	12
Soap and detergent making skills improved the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State	162	48	74	22	32	9	35	10	37	11
Income generated from tailoring and sewing skills has enhanced the standard of living of IDPs in Benue state	148	44	69	20	40	12	43	13	40	11
Hair dressing and barbing salon enhanced the living standard of IDPs in Benue State	182	54	78	23	30	9	28	8	22	6

Beads and dye clothes making	151	45	97	28	40	12	24	7	26	8
provide alternative income and increase access to basic needs of IDPs in Benue Stat										

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The distribution of the respondents regarding the impact of UNHCR skill acquisition programme on livelihood of IDPs in Benue State as shown in table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents representing 150 (44%) strongly agree that baking and catering has raised the income status of IDPs in Benue State, 87 (25%) agree whereas 33 (10%) were undecided, while 30 (9%) and 40 (12 %) strongly disagree and disagree respectively. This shows that baking and catering skill has raised income status of IDPs in the state. As regards whether soap and detergent making skills improved the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State a significant number of respondents representing 162 (48%) strongly agree, 74 (22%) agree, 32 (9%) were undecided, while 35 (10%) and 37 (11%) percent of the respondents disagree and

strongly disagree respectively. This clearly indicates that soap and detergent making skills improved the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State.

Concerning whether income generated from tailoring and sewing skills has enhanced the standard of living of IDPs in Benue state, majority of the respondent representing 148 (44%) strongly agree that income generated from tailoring and sewing skills enhanced the standard of living of IDPs in Benue State, whereas 69 (20%) agree 40 (12%) were undecided, 43 (13%) strongly disagree, while 40 (11%) disagree. The implication of this to the study is that IDPs that have been trained by UNHCR and are practicing their acquired skills generate income that supports their livelihood. On whether the training IDPs received on hair dressing and barbing skills enhanced their

living condition majority of the respondents representing 182 (54%) strongly agree, 78 (23%) agree, 30 (9%) were undecided, whereas 28 (8%) strongly disagree and 22 (6%) disagree. This is evidently clear that hair dressing and barbing skills enhanced the living standard of IDPs in Benue State.

In terms of ascertaining whether beads and dye clothes making provide alternative income and increase access to basic needs of IDPs in Benue State 151 (45%) strongly agree, 97 (28%) agree, whereas 40 (12%) were undecided, 24 (7%) strongly disagree while 26 (8%) disagree.

This implies that beads and dye clothes making is another area UNHCR have empowered IDPs in camps. It should be noted that some of the participant who received training in beads and dye clothes were majorly housewives with little income from epileptic agriculture production.

The training programme was therefore a step forward in promoting micro-enterprise and strengthening the socio-economic status of displaced people currently residing in temporary shelters across the state.

Interviews held with a cross section of UNHCR officials' revealed that the organization actually offered skill acquisition programme to encourage capacity building and self-reliance amongst beneficiaries in Benue IDP camps. For example, interview held with one of the Protection Officers (UNHCR), Edison Albert in Makurdi on 23rd June, 2024 expressed his views as follows:

Our organization being a humanitarian one with the mandate to protect and provide assistance to support the vulnerable especially refugees/IDPs has been able to organizes outreach to equip IDPs in Benue State with the necessary skills to develop their self-esteem, empower them to take charge of their lives and to guide them make good decisions that would assist fending for themselves and their families. The organization, through the Technical and Vocational Empowerment Training (TVET) provided livelihood empowerment training that enables the IDP to acquire skills that would better their lives. The skill acquisition programme took place in UNHCR shelter in Daudu and Daudu camp 2, Gbajimba camp, Logo camp and Obagaji camps as well as Abagena Camp respectively. The IDPs were trained in the art of tailoring, baking and catering, soap and detergent making, welding and metal fabrication, Shoe making, Beads

and dye clothe and hair dressing and barbing skills. This was done considering IDPs area of specialty and interest. The aim of the programme was to encourage IDP acquire skill and be provided with start-up kits to enable them practice their trade generate resources to provide for their basic necessities rather than embarking on harmful coping strategies (Interview, 2024).

Accordingly, Sally Ineji Okpaje, Protection Officer (UNHCR) interviewed on the 23rd June, 2024 also averred thus:

Yes, we help to build the capacity for refugees/IDPs that are vulnerable and required support to be on their feet. Through the provision of different forms of skill acquisition programme housed under the Technical and Vocational Empowerment Training (TVET), the IDPs have been able to received training in areas such as cake baking, soap and detergent making, weaving and dyeing of cloth, hair dressing and barbing, welding and fabrication, just to mention a few. This was aimed at enhancing the livelihood of IDPs in Benue State (Interview, 2024).

Confirming the above views, interview held with respondents as regard the subject matter did not show any significant difference as majority of those interviewed argued that there is a positive relationship between UNHCR skill

acquisition programme and livelihood of IDPs in Benue State. One of the respondents Solomon Orhenbetyoga interviewed on the 23rd June 2024 in Gbajimba camp bears his mind on the subject matter as follows:

Between 21 February and March 2021 UNHCR came to Gbajimba camp and informed us about their mission which according to them was to help us acquire different skills to improve our means of livelihood. Apart from providing us with food to quench our hunger and malnutrition, the organization has been training us in the art of baking and catering, soap and detergent making, beads and dye of clothes, tailoring, knitting (be it cap or table cloth) etc which was done based on our area of specialty and interest. This has impacted positively on our living condition as some of the beneficiaries upon receiving the training and start- up kit left the camp to search for grainer pasture in semi urban centres to further better their lives. He added further that as a beneficiary involve in barbing of hair, he makes an average of 30,000 naira per months while some even make more, thereby generating more money to support ourselves and fend for our dependents. This has given me the opportunity to cater for my basic needs and even send my children to school (Interview, 2024).

Similarly, Mwuese Aondowase interviewed on 24th of June, 2024 at UNHCR shelter in Daudu camp also support the above position and argue that:

the training I acquired to make soap and hair dressing has actually improved my income. On monthly basis i make an average of 10,000 to 20,000 naira monthly, though, the earning here is not very high. She added that the reason for low earning in soap and detergent making is due to the nature of our environment. People in this part of the state prefer industrially made soap to the locally made ones, hence, those into soap making find it convenient selling to the people within the IDPs, thereby limiting

their market access (Interview, 2024)

The testimony above clearly indicates that UNHCR skill acquisition programmes have improved the living condition of the beneficiaries in Benue State.

Table 2: UNHCR Provision of Emergency Assistance (Food, Shelter, WASH and Cash Based Intervention) Improved the Living Conditions of IDPs in Benue State

Statements	Frequency and Percentage of Respondents									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	Agree						Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The provision of transitory shelter help reduce accommodation problems for IDPs in Benue State	175	51	66	19	29	9	30	9	40	12
UNHCR provision of food items would boost IDPs eating habits and reduced malnutrition among them	170	50	70	21	30	9	35	10	35	10

Providing cash base intervention allows IDPs to meet their specific needs and preferences, such as purchasing essential items	160	47	70	20	30	9	40	12	40	12
The provision of water, sanitation and hygiene by UNHCR to IDPs has increased their personal hygiene and reduce the risk of waterborne disease and enhance healthy sanitary practices	180	53	88	26	19	5	30	9	23	7
By providing food aid and nutritional support, UNHCR helps ensure that IDPs have access to an adequate and balanced diet	148	43.5	100	30	40	12	26	8	24	7

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The data according to the impact of UNHCR provision of emergency assistance (food, shelter, WASH and cash based intervention) on the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State shows that majority of the respondents representing 175 (51%) strongly agree, 66 (19%) agree, 29 (9%) were undecided, while 30 (9%) strongly disagree 43 (12%) disagree. This

shows that provision of transitory shelter help reduced accommodation problems for IDPs in Benue State. On whether UNHCR provision of food items would boost IDPs eating habits and reduced malnutrition among them majority of the respondents 170 (50%) strongly agree, 70 (21%) agree, 30 (9%) undecided, 35 (10%) strongly disagree, while 35 (10%) agree. This

implies that UNHCR provision of food items boost IDPs eating habits and reduced malnutrition among them.

As regards whether the provision of cash base intervention allows IDPs to meet their specific needs and preferences, such as purchasing essential items a significant number of IDPs representing 160 (47%) strongly agree, 70 (20%) agree, 30 (9%) were undecided, while 40 (12%) and 40 (12%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively. This implies that cash base intervention provides the IDPs with the opportunity to purchase items considered essential to them. Moreover, concerning whether the provision of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) by UNHCR to IDPs has increased their personal hygiene and reduce the risk of waterborne disease and enhance healthy sanitary practices in camps majority of the respondents representing 180 (53%) strongly agree, While 88 (26%) agree, 19 (5%) were undecided, 30 (9%) strongly disagree whereas 23 (7%) disagree. The implication of this data to the study is that provision of WASH

infrastructure in IDP camps enhanced healthy sanitary practice and reduces the likelihood of waterborne disease. On whether the provision of food aid and nutritional support by UNHCR helps ensure that IDPs have access to an adequate and balanced diet a significant number of the respondents representing 148 (43%) strongly disagree, whereas 100 (30%) disagree, 40 (12%) were undecided, 24 (8%) agree and (7%) 26 strongly agree. This indicates that through provision of food aid and nutritional support, UNHCR helps ensure that IDPs have access to an adequate and balanced diet.

Juxtaposing the views of the public with key informants there was no significant difference as majority of them argued that UNHCR assistance in the areas of food, shelter, and sanitation, as well as providing cash base assistance, has had a positive impact on the lives of these displaced persons. One of the respondents Dominic Terfa Iorfa interviewed on 27th June, 2024 at Anyiin bears his mind on the subject matter s follows;

On the 30th June 2021 UNHCR officials arrived Anyiin camp to provide food items for us in the camp to help address our immediate needs. They equally made available cash intervention of N 17,500. To them, the idea was to enable us make choices and provides flexibility to meet diverse needs that may not be covered by standardized aid packages (Interview, 2024).

In another development, Mrs Magdalene Owoicho who was interviewed on 28th June, 2024 at Obagaji camp argued that

UNHCR provisions of emergency assistance like food and shelter to us have improved our lives in terms of meeting basic needs, ensuring survival and maintaining health standard. It equally promotes self-reliance especially through Cash Base Interventions, we have been able to help ourselves from engaging in harmful coping practices like child labour or giving our underage female children for marriage (Interview, 2024).

This position clearly shows that UNHCR provision of shelter, food and cash base intervention has greatly supported their lives in camp hence the need for it sustenance. It can therefore be argued that even though this empowerment training from UNHCR has proven to be effective. Very few IDPs benefited from these interventions compared to the total

number of IDPs in the state hence the need to expand to cover more IDPs so that the impact would more generic.

Research Findings

This paper examined UNHCR empowerment, training and the livelihood of IDPs in Benue State. The paper found out that UNHCR empowered Benue IDPs through the provision of Technical and vocational Empowerment Training in areas such as tailoring, hair dressing, barbing salon, soap and detergent making, baking and catering which has minimally improved the living condition of the IDPs in the State. Findings further indicates that the UNHCR equally supported the IDPs by providing emergency assistance making available food, transitory shelter, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) as well as the cash base intervention so to enable them purchase items not covered by the standardized package. This was able to assist the IDPs to take care of their immediate hunger and malnutrition needs.

Discussion of Findings

This section of the study discusses the findings emanating from the study and it is done according to research objectives of the study. In objective one the task of the researcher was to ascertain the impact of UNHCR skill acquisition programme on the livelihood of IDPs in Benue state. Findings revealed a minimal positive impact of UNHCR skills acquisition and livelihood of IDPs in Benue State. This empowerment intervention by UNCHR which cut across areas like baking and catering, tailoring and fashion design, detergent and soap making, beads and clothes dying has greatly supported the IDPs as income generated from these trades have given them the opportunity to provide for their needs and those of their dependents. This is so because those who were trained in baking and catering and other skills testified to the values such economic empowerment programmes added to their livelihood. This finding is in agreement with those of Muhammed, Bashir, Umar, and Abdulrazaq (2022); Abdullahi, Yusuf – Sadiq,

Yarima and Shittu, (2019) who argued that skill acquisition in soap and detergent-making, welding and fabrication, cap and clothe knitting significantly affect IDPs standard of living as it enable them to earn more income from it to meet their basic needs.

In the second objective, the researcher beamed it search light on assessing how UNCHR emergency assistance such as food, shelter, WASH and Cash Based Intervention impacted on the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State. Findings indicate a minimal positive impact of the UNHCR empowerment on the living conditions of IDPs in Benue State. This is because those that benefited from these interventions argued that food supplies for example deal with their immediate hunger and malnutrition needs in the camps. Whereas cash base intervention affords them the opportunity to purchase items not covered by this intervention. The provision of water sanitation and hygiene reduces the risk of waterborne disease and enhance good sanitary practices. The above finding is in consonance with that of

Ukwumonu (2020) who espoused that providing emergency assistance to IDP is very critical to their survival and existence. This is because displacement brings so much uncertainty and anxiety as regards the means of meeting the immediate needs such as food, shelter and access to cash to cater for certain family responsibilities hence empowering the IDP was a major step towards addressing challenges associated with displacement. This shows that the provision of this emergency assistance supports the IDPs to meet certain needs that are considered immediate.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that beneficiaries of UNHCR skill acquisition programmes have testified about the economic values they attached to the skills acquired from the training as this has given them the opportunity to generate income to support themselves and fend for their families. Some beneficiaries earn between 10,000 and 20,000 monthly depending on the line of business and the location. This

shows a minimal impact of these empowerment interventions on the living conditions of IDPs since the proportion of the beneficiaries' visa viz the total number IDP is insignificant. In terms of UNHCR provision of emergency assistance the study submits that IDP who benefited expressed happiness for been selected hence the intervention has solve so many problems especially their immediate need for hunger and malnutrition as well as the flexibility to purchase items not covered by the packages hence the cash provided by the organization help to achieve it. However, it can be argued that 900 out of the 483.693 IDPs benefited from these empowerment interventions representing just two (2) percent of total number of IDPs in the state which is grossly insignificant.

Recommendations

The paper advanced the following recommendations

1. UNHCR need to expand their scope to cover a good number of IDPs in

their next phase of empowerment interventions since knowledge and skill acquired would help them to practice what they have learnt. By so doing, IDP would be more equipped and better positioned to engage in useful ventures that are capable of generating income to better their living condition.

2. UNHCR, Benue State Government, civil society organisation as well as critical stakeholders should collaborates in funding the establishment of skills acquisition centres across the state, provision of funds and start up kits for trainees, make available credit facilities and tax reduction mechanisms to empower IDPs so as to enable them practice their skills and generate income to enhanced their livelihood.
3. The Benue State Government should equally put in place security measures that would guarantee the

safety of UNHCR staff operating in the state for the benefit of the Benue IDP so as to avoid been kidnapped.

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Appendix

Table Showing Sample Size Determination for Finite Population

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

DETAILED OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDERED FOR INTERVIEW

S/N	Name	Designation	Place of Interview	Date
1	Sally Ineji Okpaje	Protection. Officer (UNHCR)	Makurdi	23 rd June, 2024
2	Edisson Albert	Assistant Protection Officer (UNHCR)	Makurdi	23 rd , June 2024
3	Solomon Orhenbetyoga	IDP	Gbajimba Camp	23 rd June 2024

4	Mwuese Aondowase	IDP	UNHCR Shelter Duadu	24 th June, 2024
5	Dominic Terfa Iorfa	IDP	Anyii Camp	27 th June, 2024
6	Magdalene Owoicho	IDP	Obagaji Camp	28 th June, 2024
7	Nongo Moses	SEMA official	SEMA Office	25 th June, 2024
8	Agan A. Anbila	IDP	Abagena Camp	26 th June, 2024
9	Christopher Kwaghga	SEMA official	SEMA office	25 th June, 2024
10	Christopher Makondo	IDP	Abagena	26 th June, 2024



The researcher in an interview session with Mr. Sally Ineji Okpaje Protection Officers UNHCR in his office in Makurdi.



The researcher posed in a picture with Mr Solomon Orhenbetyoga after interview in Gbajimba IDP camp.



The researcher in picture with Shawon Tarbee at UNHCR shelter Daudu after interaction



The researcher in picture with Dominic Terfa Iorfa in Anyin Camp a beneficiary of UNHCR intervention



A cross section of UNHCR beneficiaries in Soap and Detergent making in Gbajimba IDP Camp.