INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA: UNOCHA IN PERSPECTIVE (2016 - 2022)

ABUBAKAR HASSAN AND ADEJOH SUNDAY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA
Email: abubakarhassan523@gmail.com; adejohsunday61@gmail.com;

KEYWORDS
Boko Haram, Humanitarian Response, International Non-governmental Organizations

ABSTRACT
The Boko Haram insurgency in North-East(NE) Nigeria continues into its 12th year. The conflict and insecurity have displaced millions of people, devastated agricultural production and other livelihoods, cut off essential services, and caused a crisis of protection. Since 2016, humanitarian organizations have been working in support of the Government of Nigeria to robustly scale up the life-saving support response to population in crisis. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are increasingly playing vital role in humanitarian response around the world. This perspective emphasizes that enhanced efforts to address the root cause of conflicts are a priority to addressing humanitarian crises through coordinating activities of state and non-state actors. This study, therefore, assess the role of Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in humanitarian response across the North-east Nigeria from 2016 to 2022. The study relied on secondary source of data obtained from OCHA websites. The study adopts the human needs theory as its framework. This theory believes that conflict is a tragic expression of unmet human needs which implies that all actions undertaken by human beings are attempts to satisfy their needs and means of livelihood. The findings of the study highlight the key role of OCHA in humanitarian information management, coordination, advocacy, policy and financing has contributed tremendously to the life-saving programming effort to help the people affected by the Boko Haram conflict in NE Nigeria to recover and regain their dignity. The paper recommends that the humanitarian actors in NE Nigeria should establish robust information database for excellent impact assessment, evidence-based policy and better value for money programming.

Introduction

The humanitarian crisis in North-East Nigeria is one of the most serious in the world today. The conflict has generated a largescale humanitarian and protection crisis that shows no sign of abating in 2018, it was roughly computed that there is about 10.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance across six affected states in Nigeria, which are: Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, Taraba, and Gombe. Out of this number, 52% are women and girls, while 48% are men and boys. Children constitute 63% of those in need of humanitarian support. Over 2 million people have been forced to flee their homes due to persistent violence and remain internally displaced. There are nearly 1.5 million returnees who lack essential services and livelihoods, and 4.8 million people in host communities or communities that have otherwise been affected by the conflict. Estimates for people residing in extremely hard-to-reach areas (with little or no access to people in need) range from 1 to 2.1 million (United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2022; UNOCHA, 2023). The role of the state as the principal actor in crisis response is widely recognised all over the world. This was also made clear by Resolution 46/182 of the UN General Assembly of 1991, that provided the newly established OCHA a pivotal role in international humanitarian affairs coordination (Adekola & Bamiloye, 2022).

There is increased recognition of the vital role of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in humanitarian settings. This perspective emphasizes that enhanced efforts to address the root cause of conflicts are a priority to addressing humanitarian crises through coordinating activities of state and non-state actors. Since the declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (BAY) states in May 2013 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, people affected by the insurgency have been receiving different kinds of life-saving support aid in form of humanitarian assistance from donor agencies through United Nation (UN) agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) both National and International as well as multinational companies and individual philanthropists(Ada & Abdullahi, 2022; Adekola & Bamiloye, 2022).It was against this background that development partners like the United Nations, United State Agency for International Development (USAID), local NGOs and other International Non-

Governmental Organizations began to show commitment in helping the Nigerian government

in addressing the challenges of insecurity in the North-eastern region of the country (Momoh, 2018).

There are several academic research studies conducted to examine the role of state and non-state actorsin delivery of humanitarian aids to affected population around the world. However, only few studies have paidattention to role of international non-governmental organizations in humanitarian response inNorth-east Nigeria. To bridge this gap, this study sets to examine the contributions of

OCHA to humanitarian assistance in North-East Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Humanitarian response is defined as the impartial, independent, and neutral provision of relief to those in immediate danger of harm. It is also considered as efforts to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in crisis who are at risk of becoming affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or epidemic. There are four basic principles that govern humanitarian response which are: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (UNOCHA, 2023).

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are viewed as non-profit and task-oriented voluntary groups that are organized on a local, national, and international level to achieve a common selfless interest. NGOs focus their attention on providing selfless services to the society, creating developmental initiatives, and providing humanitarian assistance to the needy, poor, and oppressed members of a given society. They function independently of the government to provide

development projects that contribute to the areas of education, training, healthcare services,

shelter, and cooperative project (Mohammed, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This research paper adopts the Human Needs Theory (HNT) as proposed by scholars which include Abraham Maslow, John Burton, Marshall Rosenberg, and Manfred Max-Neef. But, for this paper emphasis will be given to John Burton's perspective of the Human Needs Theory. Human Needs Theory believes that humans need certain essentials to live and attain well-being. Human needs theorists argue that conflicts are caused by unmet human needs. Violence is a tragic expression of unmet human needs, implying that all actions undertaken by human beings are attempts to satisfy their needs.

Indeed, this theory justifies the conflict in NE Nigeria by Boko Haram and the humanitarian crisis is a product of unmet needs. This theory insists that violence is a tragic expression of unmet human needs, implying that all actions undertaken by human beings are attempts to satisfy their needs. Using this paradigm to explain the humanitarian crisis and the conflict in the NE Nigeria caused by Boko Haram insurgency.

Empirical Review

A research study by (Ada & Abdullahi, 2022) assessed the impact of humanitarian aids on development of Borno after the conflict with a view of identifying the opportunities in humanitarian aid that can foster development of the state. The study adopted a combination of disaster relief, missionary and Oxfam model of humanitarian and development assistance and uses the mixed method of research. The data collected for this study were drawn largely from primary source and secondary data which were analysed using quantitative analysis tool and qualitative content descriptive analysis. The study established that the impact of the protracted insurgency on the development of the state manifest across both human capital and infrastructural indicators. The study reveals that humanitarian aid being provided cut across all the developmental indices and is highly connected to the development. Hence, should consider as a foundation for post conflict development. Therefore, it was recommended that government should take the lead in coordination of humanitarian aid in line with its development agenda.

Research paper by (Adekola & Bamiloye, 2022) his paper seeks to investigate the challenges beyond collaboration and coordination between humanitarian actors in the INGOs' quest in managing the humanitarian crisis in North-East Nigeria. Keywords seeks to investigate the challenges beyond collaboration and coordination between humanitarian actors in the INGOs' quest in managing the humanitarian crisis in North-East Nigeria.

Another academic work by (Mohammed, 2023) assessed the restorative effort of Borno state Government and Non-governmental organizations in development of selected local government area. The results show that the extent to which healthcare facilities are provided in restoring development to the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in selected local government is satisfactory, the extent to which educational facilities are provided is fairly satisfied whereas the provision of shelter for restoration of development in selected a Local Government was satisfactory. Therefore, the study concludes that the restorative efforts of Borno State Government and NGOs in the development of selected Local Government through the provision of healthcare facilities, educational facilities, and shelter is fairly satisfied. The study recommends that there should be an assessment and supervisory team to be established with full autonomy of operation that comprises Government representatives in collaborations with NGOs, community leaders and target beneficiaries' representatives to verify the list of beneficiaries and publicly display, the provided items for distribution to ensure transparency in an effort to restore development in Bama local government.

Research by authors in (Oluwafunke Adeola Adeleye & Oluwaseun Samuel Osadola, 2022) examined the interventions of United Nations in the management of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. It made use ofboth primary and secondary sources of data. The research found out that the United Nations, through its specialised agencies has been playing significant roles in all facets of protection, relief and development of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The United Nations interventions were observed in the provision of basic healthcare, education, shelter, security, food and non-food items, orientation, durable solution and psychosocial support. The research concludes that, international aid, especially from the United Nations has been strategic to the

management of the humanitarian crisis in Nigeria. But despite the volume of the interventions, the high population of the IDPs continue to overshadow it.

In a research thesis by (Simon, 2021) that focused on the humanitarian response to women and children in IDP camps in North-Eastern Nigeria. In the thesis, the authors intended to explore the unique roles of different actors in curbing the challenges of women and children in IDP camps and analyzed why the needs of the women and children are not fully met. Furthermore, they examined the role of the stakeholders who contribute to the development and functioning of available IDP camps. These include the Nigerian government, the executors of the projects designed to provide aid to the women and children in the camps, the international community, NGOs, and grass root organizations. The study analysed the stakeholders' different perspectives on the limitations of addressing the issues of women and children in IDP camps.

Authors in (Kehinde Okunade & Ogunnubi, 2021) investigated the various efforts of local and international actors towards addressing the humanitarian crisis within the region and the impact of these actions on women and children. Accordingly, the qualitative research model was adopted using a phenomenological case study approach. The findings from the study reveal the neglect of the inhabitants of border communities and the poor state of IDPs in the various camps as a direct result of the uncoordinated stakeholders' responses and the Nigerian government's inability to fulfil its role as the main actor responsible for providing relief support and coordinating the needed humanitarian solutions to the crisis. To address this problem, the paper identified corruption as a major bane which needs to be tackled so that the government agencies responsible for coordinating humanitarian responses can effectively carry out their function. Secondly, the UN agencies and NGOs stakeholders have a responsibility of putting away their differences and evolving a common approach for sustainable response and solutions.

Reseachers in (Onyemaechi et al., 2020) examined the major challenges which have militated against effective management of IDPs by National Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA). The theoretical framework adopted in the article is Structural Functional theory. The survey (personal interview) and documentary methods of data collection were adopted in the study. Data were analysed using content analysis method. The study found that poor record keeping by NEMA on the progressive increase in the number of displaced persons in Northeast Nigeria accounted for acute accommodation deficits in the IDP camps in the area. The study also found that lack of proper coordination of the delivery and distribution of relief materials from different aid agencies by NEMA accounted for food scarcity and poor health conditions in IDP camps in northeast Nigeria. To this end, the study recommends that the Nigeria government through NEMA should enhance its data tracking mechanisms for IDPs in the Northeast Nigeria to ensure the availability of dependable statistics of IDPs in camps and host communities. NEMA and other aid agencies should also effectively profile all IDPs, and conduct needs assessment for them before procurement and distribution of relief materials. The government should enforce existing legal framework and policy of oversight to ensure effective coordination of all interventions that would make for equity in distribution of relief materials.

Authors in (Sambo & Sule, 2020) examined the role of international humanitarian aid in alleviating the human suffering in North-eastern Nigeria and the level of successes and challenges encountered in the process. The study used both the primary and secondary sources of data for the research. The primary data was the use of an in-depth interview where selected informants from the stakeholders in the area of study were identified and consulted for the interview. The secondary sources consist of books, journal articles, newspapers and internet sources. The data obtained were discussed, analysed and interpreted using content analysis in which themes were identified and discussed. The research discovered that humanitarian aid from international donors succeeded in averting many disasters in Northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe despite the fact that there is still a large number that is in critical need of assistance but not accessible due to the security situation. The research recommends among others that all stakeholders must cooperate in harmonising the common cause for effective delivery of aid services to the affected victims.

Researcher in (Momoh, 2018) assessed the impact of lack of harmonization of humanitarian assistance by development partners on the reconstruction of North-Eastern Nigeria. This study is situated within the mixed method of research, drawing from both qualitative and

quantitative design supplemented by historical and descriptive analysis. The data for this study were drawn largely from secondary sources including books, journals, official publications, newspapers, magazines and other internet sources. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis together with quantities tools such as tables, graphs and percentage analysis. This study is situated within the context of the Oxfam model of development assistance. We discovered that lack of harmonization of humanitarian assistance by development partners has led to fragmentation of development partners' support which in turn affect it success. Moreover, we suggest that a joint donor basket like the Joint Donor Basket (JDB) of the Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) Project should be established so as to allow for proper coordination of development partners support and enhance it effective implementation in order to achieve it desired impact.

Authors in (Chidume et al., 2018) examined the role of NEMA and UNICEF in supporting the victims of Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, particularly in providing them with food items, non-food items and in the education sector. The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative method which uses primary and secondary sources, which are critically analyzed. However, this paper reveals information regarding Boko Haram attacks on some communities in Borno State, when they received intervention from the humanitarian agencies under discussion and the nature of interventions within the period under review.

Location of the Study

The North-East geo-political zone in Nigeria consists of six states: Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, and Taraba. In 2011, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) projected the North-East zone population to be 23,558,674, which is 13.5% of Nigeria's total population which is 173,905,439. The major tribes in the zone are Hausa and Fulani and they are largely Muslim. The region covers 280,419 km^2 which is close to a third of the total land area of Nigeria that is 909, 890km^2. The Northeast shares international boundaries with three states: to the North – Niger Republic, to the Northeast- Republic of Chad, and to the East – Republic of Cameroon (Adekola & Bamiloye, 2022)

UNOCHA and Humanitarian Response in NE Nigeria

Coordination

OCHA coordinated humanitarian response to expand the reach of humanitarian action, improve prioritization and reduce duplication, ensuring that assistance and protection reach the people who need it most. Through critical situational and gender-responsive analysis, OCHA provided a comprehensive picture of overall needs and helped a diverse set of actors achieve a common understanding of the humanitarian context and a collective plan for the response. By doing so, OCHA influenced timely decision-making to support more effective humanitarian response and emergency preparedness. OCHA's key role in other functional areas, such as humanitarian financing, helped to enhance its coordination role. Humanitarian coordination seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership.

Advocacy

OCHA's public and private advocacy raised awareness of forgotten crises, promoted respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), brought the voices of crisis-affected people to the forefront, and helped people obtain access to humanitarian assistance.

OCHA did promote the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality, and respect for international law. OCHA also did support field-based public advocacy, working with country teams to leverage and amplify their content so that it reaches broader audiences and inspires action. As OCHA is judged on its response to crises, its promotion of and adherence to the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and the value of impact of the public funds it manages.

Policy

through leadership in developing humanitarian policy, OCHA helped set the agenda for humanitarian sector reform and effectiveness in response to a shifting global landscape, new global frameworks, and increased capacities of national Governments

and local actors. OCHA also did promote and advance the normative framework for international humanitarian action while developing, strengthening and advancing this framework. Policy development aims to support effective and principled humanitarian action, saving lives and reducing suffering,

OCHA set an evidence-based and forward-looking humanitarian policy agenda to identify emerging trends and develop common or harmonized policy and advocacy positions among relief organizations. This is based on humanitarian principles, human rights and public international law. OCHA provided policy guidance and clarity on pressing issues to humanitarian practitioners and policymakers, to help strengthen effective and timely response OCHA identifies best practices and lessons learned through the evaluation of

humanitarian action to enhance effectiveness and the accountability of those involved.

Humanitarian Financing

OCHA did mobilize and engage the full range of financing instruments, mechanisms and partners to ensure that growing humanitarian needs are met, humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms are promoted at the country level, and the large array of global humanitarian financing mechanisms are complementary among themselves and coherent with development funding.

OCHA worked with humanitarian partners in NE Nigeria to identify the most critical humanitarian needs, plan responses and determine the budgets needed to address them. OCHA helped partners to build common strategies and implementation plans and to appeal for funds as a group. This ensures that resource mobilization and financing are handled collectively and are based on a thorough needs evaluation, making aid more effective, efficient and predictable.

Information Management

OCHA provided information management services to the humanitarian community to inform a rapid, effective, and principled response. It gathered, shared, and used data and information, underpinning coordination, decision-making, and advocacy. OCHA's information products include maps, graphics, situation reports, humanitarian bulletins and websites. OCHA is also the steward of several humanitarian tools and services that help our partners make better-informed decisions and ensure a more predictable approach to preparedness, early recovery and response. These include Relief Web—an award-winning website providing 24-hour coverage of disasters, conflicts and crises for the international aid community, as well as a humanitarianresponse.info an operational platform as well as a resource repository for humanitarians, and data sharing platform.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of OCHA in humanitarian response programming across NE Nigeria. In more than 13 years of conflict, people affected in north-east Nigeria have experienced violence, repeated displacement, loss of and/or separation from family members, destruction of property and livelihood assets and a deterioration in living conditions. As a result, non-profit, charitable organizations fan out to deliver humanitarian aid to the victims of insurgency via delivery of relief aid, building capacity, reducing poverty and ensuring that the voices of the most marginalized are heard. Indeed, this had tremendously succeeded in providing massive livelihood supports to the IDPs in the first phase of transitioning from heightened conflict to low intensity conflict or the so-called post-crisis early recovery and stabilization era. There is a long history of international efforts to help the victims of armed conflict and disasters areas. Also, there is increased recognition of the vital role of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in humanitarian settings.

From the analysis and summary of the findings of this study and, in line with the stated objective, it was concluded that in the first place, OCHA has contributed tremendously to the effort of humanitarian response in NE Nigeria by coordinating the activities of all humanitarian actors in the region to provide lifesaving interventions to people in crisis. The OCHA should provide robust response database of actors in the humanitarian sector in order to support evidence-based research and impact evaluations for better aid delivery and sustainable programming.

References

Ada, J. E., & Abdullahi, M. (2022). The impact of humanitarian aid on post conflict development in Borno State. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, *13*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPDS2021.0409

Adekola, O., & Bamiloye, O. (2022). International Non-governmental Organizations and the Management of Humanitarian Crisis in the North-East of Nigeria. *Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa*.

Chidume, C. G., Phd, Nwosumba, V. C., &Osisioma, U. S. (2018). The Humanitarian Response To The Victims Of Boko Haram Insurgency In Borno State, Nigeria: A Case Of The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) And United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2014-2015. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS*, *23*(8), PP. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2308020108

KehindeOkunade, S., &Ogunnubi, O. (2021). *HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA: RESPONSES AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS*.

Mala Mustapha. (2018). Unpacking the Activities of INGOs in North-East of Nigeria. *ROAPE*.

Mohammed, B. (n.d.). Assessment of the Restorative Efforts of Borno State Government and Non-Governmental Organizations in the Development of Some Selected Local Government Areas, Borno State Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. http://arcnjournals.org

Momoh, Z. (2018). DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND QUEST FOR RE-CONSTRUCTION OF NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, *8*(2), 2276–8645. www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org

Oluwafunke Adeola Adeleye, & Oluwaseun Samuel Osadola. (2022). International Aid in Managing IDPs: The Case of United Nations in Nigeria. *SIASAT*, *7*(3), 235–246. https://doi.org/10.33258/siasat.v7i3.127

Onyemaechi, G., Ezeani, P., Emmanuel, O., & Chinedu, H. (2020). The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Challenge of Effective Management of Internally Displaced Persons in North Eastern Nigeria. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS*, *25*, 14–27. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2505071427

Sambo, U., & Sule, B. (2020). International Donor Agencies and Humanitarian Aid in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States of Northeastern Nigeria. *Journal of Administrative Science*, *17*, 186–209.

Simon, A. (2021). *Humanitarian Response for Internally Displaced Women and Children in North-East, Nigeria* [Chapman University]. https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000259

United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2022). *HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN NIGERIA HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE 2022 ISSUED FEBRUARY 2022*. www.unocha.org/nigeria

UNOCHA. (2023). *HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN NIGERIA HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE 2023 ISSUED FEBRUARY 2023*. https://fts.unocha.org/