

Assessing the Effects of Stakeholder Engagement on Wellbeing and Life Aspirations of Internally Displaced Populations in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

Internal displacement in Nigeria is a growing humanitarian issue, largely caused by man-made factors such as armed conflict, ethno-religious violence, and communal clashes. Although natural disasters like flooding also play a role, the primary driver is widespread insecurity, particularly in the northern regions. This research investigates how stakeholder engagement affects the quality of life and shapes the aspirations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the North-Central region of Nigeria. With displacement on the rise due to escalating conflicts, IDPs face profound disruptions in their socio-economic environments, making the role of external support critical to their well-being and future position. Adopting a mixed-methods, cross-sectional research design, data were collected from 260 IDPs in Plateau and Nasarawa states through structured questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation. Findings reveal that basic amenities such as light, water, sanitation, and education are lacking in the camps. While support from government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and private donors provides essential relief, there remains a disconnect between these efforts, the quality of life, and the long-term aspirations of displaced persons in the camps. The study concludes that the quality of life of IDPs in North-Central Nigeria is connected to access to necessities such as clean water, adequate shelter, healthcare services, quality education, and personal safety conditions that are often conceded due to forced displacement. It was also revealed that immediate financial empowerment is a primary concern; sustainable development strategies ought to also include access to education and entrepreneurial opportunities. The paper, therefore, recommends the formulation of integrated policies that embed vocational training, financial literacy, and education into support programmes, ensuring that IDPs are equipped to achieve their desired futures.

Keywords: Aspirations and Development, Amenities, Internally Displaced Persons, Quality of Life

Évaluation des Effets de l'Engagement des Parties Prenantes sur le Bien-Être et les Aspirations des Populations Déplacées à l'intérieur (PDI) au Centre-Nord du Nigeria

Résumé

Les déplacements internes au Nigéria constituent un problème humanitaire croissant, principalement dû à des facteurs anthropiques tels que les conflits armés, les violences ethnoreligieuses et les affrontements communautaires. Bien que les catastrophes naturelles comme les inondations y contribuent également, le principal facteur reste l'insécurité généralisée, particulièrement dans les régions du nord. Cette recherche examine comment l'engagement des parties prenantes influence la qualité de vie et les aspirations des personnes déplacées internes (PDI) dans la région du Centre-Nord du Nigéria. Face à l'augmentation des déplacements liée à l'escalade des conflits, les PDI subissent de profondes perturbations de leur environnement socio-économique, ce qui rend le soutien extérieur essentiel à leur bien-être et à leur avenir. Adoptant une méthodologie mixte et transversale, des données ont été recueillies auprès de 260 personnes déplacées internes (PDI) dans les États de Plateau et de Nasarawa, au moyen de questionnaires structurés, d'entretiens et d'observations directes. Les résultats révèlent un manque criant de services essentiels tels que l'électricité, l'eau, l'assainissement et l'éducation dans les camps. Malgré l'aide apportée par les agences gouvernementales, les organisations non gouvernementales et les donateurs privés, un décalage persiste entre ces efforts, la qualité de vie et les aspirations à long terme des PDI. L'étude conclut que la qualité de vie des PDI du centre-nord du Nigéria est liée à l'accès aux besoins fondamentaux tels que l'eau potable, un abri adéquat, les soins de santé, une éducation de qualité et la sécurité personnelle, souvent compromis par le déplacement forcé. L'étude met également en évidence l'importance cruciale de l'autonomisation financière immédiate ; les stratégies de développement durable devraient également intégrer l'accès à l'éducation et aux opportunités entrepreneuriales. En conséquence, l'article recommande l'élaboration de politiques intégrées qui intègrent la formation professionnelle, l'éducation financière et l'éducation dans les programmes de soutien, afin de permettre aux PDI de construire l'avenir qu'elles souhaitent.

Mots-clés : Aspirations et développement, Aménagements, Personnes déplacées internes, Qualité de vie

INTRODUCTION

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are individuals or groups forced to leave their habitual residence due to conflict, violence, natural or human-made disasters, or human rights violations, without crossing international borders.¹ In contrast, those who cross borders are classified as refugees. North-Central Nigeria, comprising Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory, has experienced increasing displacement due to Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder conflicts, flooding, kidnapping, and ethno-religious crises.

Internal displacement in Nigeria remains a critical humanitarian and development concern, driven largely by inter-ethnic unrest, territorial disputes, terrorism, and other forms of communal violence, particularly in the northern regions.² The Displacement Tracking Matrix (2024) identifies communal clashes as the leading cause of displacement in Plateau and Nasarawa states, which currently host 54,457 and 20,613 internally displaced persons (IDPs), respectively. While natural disasters such as flooding and erosion contribute to global displacement trends, Nigeria's experience is overwhelmingly shaped by man-made factors that force individuals to flee their homes but remain within national borders, where they often face marginalisation, repeated displacement, and limited protection compared with refugees.³ These realities underscore the urgent need to strengthen legal safeguards for IDPs under international, regional, and domestic frameworks, including the African Union's Kampala Convention, introduced in 2012 as the first binding regional treaty to comprehensively protect the rights of IDPs, whose Article 9 emphasises non-discrimination, state accountability, and the pursuit of durable solutions.^{4 5 6 7}

Internal displacement remains one of the most pressing humanitarian and development challenges in contemporary Nigeria, primarily driven by armed conflict, communal

¹ Julius, O. and Ojebisi, T., "The Role of NGOs in Promoting Community Development in Nigeria," *African Journal of Social Development* 18, no. 3 (2022): 589.

² Roberts, O. I. and Lawanson, T., "Patterns and Dynamics of Internal Displacement in Nigeria: An Urban Planning Perspective," *Nigerian Journal of Human Settlements* 12, no. 2 (2023): 6.

³ Displacement Tracking Matrix, *Nigeria Displacement Report: Round 46* (Abuja: International Organization for Migration, 2024), 4.

⁴ African Union, *Kampala Convention: African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2009), <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa>.

⁵ Bilak, A., *Global Report on Internal Displacement* (Geneva: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2016), <https://www.internal-displacement.org/>.

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Protecting Aspirations: Refugee and IDP Education and Livelihood Initiatives* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2025).

⁷ African Union, *Status of Ratification of the Kampala Convention* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2025), <https://au.int/>.

violence, and terrorism. Although natural disasters such as flooding, droughts, and erosion contribute to internal displacement globally, in Nigeria, man-made factors overwhelmingly account for the displacement of millions of individuals, particularly in the northern regions.^{8 9 10} Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those who have been forced to flee their homes due to such disruptions but remain within the borders of their country.^{11 12} Unlike refugees, who benefit from structured international protections, IDPs are often neglected or marginalised within national governance systems, making them more vulnerable to repeated displacement, poverty, and social exclusion.^{13 14 15}

The scale of internal displacement in Nigeria has reached alarming proportions. As of 2023, over 3.5 million people were estimated to be living in displacement across the country, with a large proportion concentrated in the North-Central and North-East zones.^{16 17} Persistent attacks by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram, clashes between herders and farmers, and episodes of banditry have continued to destabilise communities, destroy livelihoods, and overwhelm both formal and informal support systems.^{18 19} These crises have given rise to complex humanitarian emergencies that require coordinated and sustained multi-stakeholder engagement.

Although the Nigerian government bears the primary responsibility for the protection and welfare of IDPs,²⁰ it is evident that state mechanisms alone are insufficient to meet

⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement: Nigeria Profile* (Geneva: IDMC, 2023), <https://www.internal-displacement.org/>.

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Nigeria Fact Sheet – Internally Displaced Persons* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2024), <https://www.unhcr.org/>.

¹⁰ Oduwale, E. O. and Fadeyi, A. O., “Issues and Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria,” *Journal of Sociological Studies* 8, no. 1 (2013): 102–118.

¹¹ Agherario, J. O., “The Legal Status and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* 5, no. 2 (2021): 112–129.

¹² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Nigeria: Humanitarian Needs Overview* (Geneva: UNOCHA, 2023), <https://www.unocha.org/>.

¹³ Acha-Anyi, N. V., *Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: Human Rights and Humanitarian Challenges* (Abuja: Peacefield Press, 2024).

¹⁴ Hendrick, D., Obinna, E., and Thomas, A., “Protecting the Invisible: Challenges of IDP Governance in Nigeria,” *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2020): 45–61.

¹⁵ Ibekwe, C. and Musa, R., “Protracted Displacement and Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: Implications for National Development,” *Nigerian Journal of Conflict and Development Studies* 9, no. 1 (2025): 23–40.

¹⁶ Musoka, B., “The Scale and Drivers of Displacement in West Africa,” *African Migration Review* 5, no. 1 (2023): 19–37.

¹⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Nigeria Factsheet: Internal Displacement* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2022), <https://www.unhcr.org/>.

¹⁸ Adewale, T. A., “Displacement and Psychological Trauma among IDPs in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Social Work and Development* 10, no. 2 (2020): 66–80.

¹⁹ Ibrahim, J. and Igbuzor, O., “Preventing Violent Conflict in Nigeria: The Role of State and Civil Society,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 14, no. 1 (2019): 33–45.

²⁰ Olufadewa, I. I., Adesina, M. A., and Akinyemi, J. O., “Stakeholder Response to Internal Displacement in Nigeria: A Public Health Perspective,” *Global Health Reports* 4, no. 1 (2022): e123.

the diverse needs of displaced populations. Consequently, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society groups, faith-based organisations, and donor agencies have stepped in to support relief, recovery, and reintegration efforts.^{21 22} However, despite the proliferation of humanitarian actors, many IDP camps and host communities continue to experience chronic shortages of necessities such as shelter, potable water, education, healthcare, and psychosocial services.^{11 23} This situation raises critical questions about the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and the accountability mechanisms guiding humanitarian interventions.

The quality of life and future aspirations of IDPs are intricately tied to the support systems available to them. Studies have shown that prolonged displacement without adequate social and economic opportunities can lead to trauma, disempowerment, and a loss of personal agency.^{18 24 25} According to Ray, unfulfilled aspirations among displaced or marginalised populations can lead to frustration, withdrawal, and in extreme cases, susceptibility to crime or radical ideologies.²⁶ Hence, it is important not only to address the immediate needs of IDPs but also to support their long-term aspirations for education, employment, and reintegration.²⁷

The National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria (2012), grounded in the 1999 Constitution, provides a comprehensive framework for protecting and assisting IDPs. It outlines the rights of displaced persons and sets standards for humanitarian response by national and international agencies, while paying special attention to the heightened vulnerabilities of women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.^{28 20} Importantly, the policy not only emphasises the prevention of displacement but also supports durable solutions, such as voluntary return, local integration, and resettlement. It promotes the provision of access to

²¹ Obiyan, A. S. and Aransi, I. O., "Civil Society and Humanitarian Governance in Displacement Contexts: A Study of Nigeria," *Journal of Civil Society Studies* 7, no. 4 (2021): 102–119.

²² Iroanya, R. O., *Human Security and Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2018).

²³ Human Rights Watch, *Nigeria: Displaced Women and Girls at Risk* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/>.

²⁴ Amnesty International, *My Life Is on Hold: The Human Cost of Conflict and Displacement in Nigeria* (London: Amnesty Publications, 2022).

²⁵ Okonkwo, L. and Ibrahim, U., "Social Exclusion and Aspiration Gaps among Nigeria's Displaced Youth," *African Review of Sociology and Development* 11, no. 2 (2025): 15–33.

²⁶ Ray, D., "Aspirations and the Development Agenda," in *Inequality and Growth: Patterns and Policy*, ed. K. Basu and J. Stiglitz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 101–124.

²⁷ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Building Forward: Sustainable Recovery Strategies for Displaced Populations in Nigeria* (New York: UNDP, 2025).

²⁸ National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI). *Implementation Status of the National Policy on IDPs in Nigeria* (Abuja: NCFRMI, 2025).

education, healthcare, psychosocial services, and livelihood opportunities for displaced persons in order to uphold their dignity and enhance their quality of life.

Existing research in Nigeria has explored the socio-economic conditions, health status, and legal rights of IDPs,^{29 30} but few studies have critically evaluated how the interventions of multiple stakeholders influence the quality of life and aspirations of IDPs. This gap is significant, especially given the increasing recognition of displacement as not just a humanitarian crisis but also a developmental concern that demands inclusive and participatory governance strategies.^{31 32 33} There is a need to understand not only what is being done, but also how effectively it is being done, and with what outcomes for IDPs.

Against this backdrop, the study chose to evaluate the impact of stakeholder engagement on the well-being and aspirations of IDPs in North-Central Nigeria. This region has experienced severe displacement in recent years due to escalating violence and communal tensions.³⁴ The study bridges the gap in empirical evidence by assessing how governmental, civil, and international organisations contribute to improving the lives of IDPs and whether such efforts align with the aspirations and dignity of the displaced populations.

The humanitarian crisis faced by IDPs in Nigeria demands the coordinated involvement of various stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, international agencies, faith-based groups, and community leaders. These actors play critical roles in providing essential services such as shelter, food, healthcare, education, and psychosocial support. Given the limited capacity of the state, effective stakeholder engagement is essential to ensure a comprehensive and timely response to the needs of displaced populations.³⁵

²⁹ Adesina, O. S., Omokhodion, F. O., and Olowu, D., "Living Conditions and Mental Health among Internally Displaced Persons in Northern Nigeria," *African Journal of Social Issues* 23, no. 1 (2020): 11–27.

³⁰ Dirikgil, A., "Legal Frameworks and Human Rights Protection for Nigeria's IDPs," *International Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 12, no. 1 (2023): 56–72.

³¹ World Bank, *Social Protection and Assistance to IDPs in Nigeria: Gaps and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021), <https://www.worldbank.org/>.

³² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Displacement and Development: Addressing the Needs of IDPs in West Africa* (New York: UNDP, 2020).

³³ Adebayo, S. T. and Tanko, R. M., "Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Internal Displacement: Evaluating Nigeria's Strategic Framework," *Journal of African Development and Policy Studies* 13, no. 1 (2025): 34–52.

³⁴ Wabi, E. A., Okpala, N. P., and Sulaiman, T., "Understanding Patterns of Displacement in Northern Nigeria: Trends and Policy Responses," *Conflict and Humanitarian Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2022): 44–61.

³⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Nigeria Humanitarian Response Plan 2021* (Geneva: UNOCHA, 2021), <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-humanitarian-response-plan-2021>.

Recent reports highlight that effective management of internal displacement in Nigeria relies on collaboration among international donors, host communities, displaced persons, and government agencies.³⁶ This multi-stakeholder approach improves accountability, community ownership, and cultural relevance, making stakeholder engagement essential not just complementary to humanitarian efforts. However, its success depends on coordination, transparency, and sustained commitment, which together create a shared responsibility framework that addresses both immediate needs and long-term aspirations of IDPs.^{32 17}

Satisfaction with one's life implies contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfilment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of the quality of one's life.³⁷ Quality of life refers to overall well-being and satisfaction, encompassing access to basic amenities like education, healthcare, security, socioeconomic stability, and mental wellness. The World Health Organisation Quality of Life (WHOQOL) tool assesses physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains through 26 self-administered items on a 5-point Likert scale, demonstrating strong reliability and validity.³⁸ Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) focuses on mental, physical, role, and social functioning and satisfaction with treatment, distinct from overall quality of life, which includes factors like housing and income.³⁹ Aspirations refer to individuals' future desires related to education, employment, health, wealth, and social status.⁴⁰ Research links aspirations with poverty, showing how social and cultural contexts influence the development of aspirations; poverty can limit or discourage aspirations, creating a cycle where low hopes and deprivation reinforce each other.⁴¹

Duflo noted that aspirations help explain why some poor individuals miss opportunities or achieve unexpected results from small interventions, such as why

³⁶ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Displacement Tracking Matrix: Round 46 – Nigeria* (Abuja: IOM Nigeria, 2025), <https://dtm.iom.int/nigeria>.

³⁷ Theofilou, P., "Quality of Life: Definition and Measurement," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 9, no. 1 (2013): 151, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v9i1.337>.

³⁸ Skevington, S. M., Lotfy, M., and O'Connell, K. A., "The World Health Organization's WHOQOL-BREF Quality of Life Assessment: Psychometric Properties and Results of the International Field Trial," *Quality of Life Research* 13, no. 2 (2004): 299–310, <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:QURE.0000018486.91360.00>.

³⁹ Theofilou, P., "Quality of Life: Definition and Measurement," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 9, no. 1 (2013): 150–162, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v9i1.337>.

⁴⁰ Ray, D., "Aspirations, Poverty, and Economic Change," in *Understanding Poverty*, ed. A. Banerjee, R. Benabou, and D. Mookherjee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 409–421.

⁴¹ Appadurai, A., "The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition," in *Culture and Public Action*, ed. V. Rao and M. Walton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 59–84.

micro-business owners might avoid saving or innovating.⁴² Measurement of aspirations typically relies on self-reported survey questions, focusing mainly on education and job goals, with some studies including income, wealth, and social status.^{40 43 44} Researchers often combine these into aggregate aspiration indices, but broader, less tangible aspirations like dignity or recognition are difficult to quantify, meaning measurements capture only part of the full picture.⁴⁰

OBJECTIVES

This study evaluates the impact of stakeholders' engagement on the quality of life and aspirations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North-Central Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Assess the intervention programmes provided by stakeholders in various IDP camps in North-Central Nigeria.
2. Examine the impact of intervention programmes provided by stakeholders on living standards among the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria
3. Ascertain the aspired level of education, type of job, and ultimate goal among the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria
4. Establish the impact of intervention programmes provided by stakeholders on the aspirations of the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a Qualitative method of data collection. The sources include oral interviews (Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-depth Interviews (IDI)), and observations for data collection regarding the evaluation of the impact of stakeholders' engagements on quality of life and aspirations of the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria. The researchers randomly selected two states in North-Central Nigeria: Plateau and Nasarawa states. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select participants with direct experience and expertise in displacement issues in Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camps in Nasarawa and Plateau states, respectively. This approach aligns with Guest, Bunce, and Johnson's assertion that reliable qualitative data can be obtained

⁴² Duflo, E., *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012).

⁴³ Guyon, N. and Huillery, E., "The Aspiration–Achievement Gap: Educational Aspirations and Outcomes in Developing Countries," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 103, no. 5 (2021): 945–961.

⁴⁴ Bernard, T. and Taffesse, A. S., "Aspirations: An Approach to Poverty and Well-Being," in *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, ed. D. Clark (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014), 58–64.

when interviews with approximately 12 informed participants reach saturation.⁴⁵ The items specifically focus on the impact of stakeholders’ intervention programmes on the quality of life and aspirations of IDPs in North Central, Nigeria.

Interviews were conducted in English, lasted 30–35 minutes, and were recorded using a mobile phone, a recorder and notes. Participants’ identities and camp locations were anonymised, with camps labelled. As a result, the respondents’ and camp’s names were not disclosed in the study, but the camps were coded as camp 1 & 2. The in-depth interviews and observations were used to analyse thematic content analysis and ethnographic summaries.

Data were transcribed and analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s framework.^{46 47} Responses were coded and grouped into sections and sub-sections, supported by relevant literature. The study was approved by the ethics committee of the National Open University of Nigeria, with the following ethics approval reference number: ETC/2024/NOUN/012/001. Fieldwork bridged for a period of six months, from August 2024 to April 2025.

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANT

SN	PID	Group	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Qualification	Occupation
1.	Participant 1	1	Male	45	Married	Primary	Farming
2.	Participant 2	1	Female	33	Married	Primary	Daily Labour Work
3.	Participant 3	1	Male	35	Married	NCE	-
4.	Participant 4	1	Male	35	Married	NCE	Farming

⁴⁵ Guest, G., Bunce, A., and Johnson, L., “How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability,” *Field Methods* 18, no. 1 (2006): 59–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>.

⁴⁶ Braun, V., Clarke, V., and Weate, P., “Using Thematic Analysis in Sport and Exercise Research,” in *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, ed. B. Smith and A. C. Sparkes (London: Routledge, 2016), 191–205.

⁴⁷ Clarke, V. and Braun, V., “Thematic Analysis,” *Journal of Positive Psychology* 12, no. 3 (2016): 297–298, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>.

5.	Participant 5	1	Female	42	Married	Diploma in Community Health	Medical Personnel
6.	Participant 6	2	Male	38	Married	Graduate	Farming
7.	Participant 7	2	Female	56	Married	Graduate	Farming
8.	Participant 8	2	Male	37	Married	NCE	Farming
9.	Participant 9	2	Female	45	Married	None	Business
10.	Participant 10	2	Female	22	Married	NCE	Teaching
11.	Participant 11	2	Female	60	Married	None	Business
12.	Participant 12	2	Female	54	Married	NCE	Farming
13.	Participant 13	2	Male	72	Married	None	Farming
14.	Participant 14	2	Male	48	Married	None	Farming
15.	Participant 15	2	Male	22	Single	Undergraduate	Student

Challenges Faced in Kadarka and Heipeng IDP Camps

As generated from the participants, across the camp, food insecurity, water, clothing, shelter, etc., are dominant and painful realities; with no sustained support from stakeholders, displaced families are forced to rely on begging, meagre farm plots, or casual labour just to survive.

Displaced persons in the camp expressed overwhelming dissatisfaction rooted in poverty, insecurity, broken promises, withdrawal of aid, and social vulnerability, painting a picture of abandonment, resilience, and the desperate need for meaningful, sustained support.

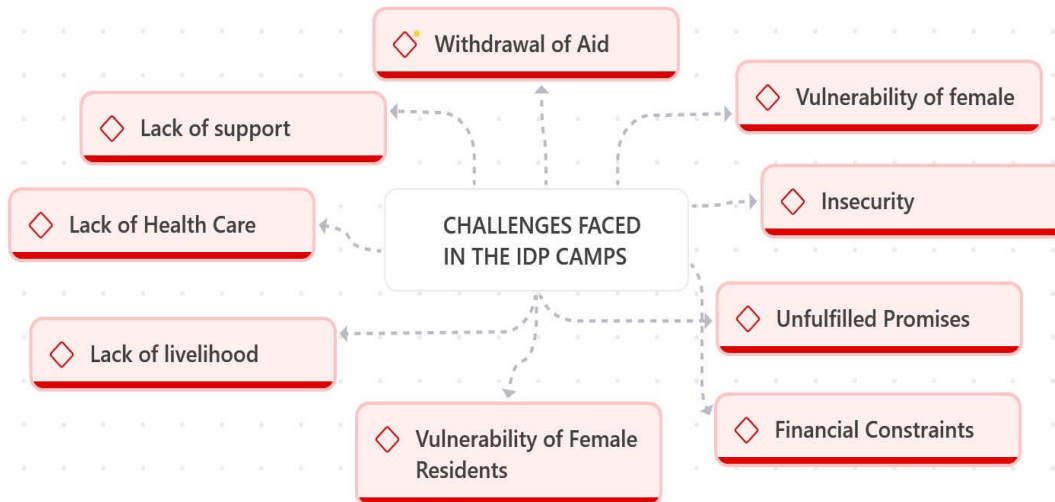


Figure 1: Challenges Faced in the IDP Camps

The results in Figure 1 above highlight the challenges faced by IDPs in North-Central Nigeria.

Financial Constraints

Financial hardship is a major challenge for IDP camp residents, limiting their ability to pursue education, vocational training, or improve their lives. Participants shared stories of giving up on skill acquisition or schooling due to a lack of money, with daily survival needs like food taking priority over long-term aspirations. Participant 5 shared a painful attempt to gain vocational skills but was thwarted by poverty: *“I have make an attempt to leaned salon (hair dresser). So I went to salon if they can trained me, but it didn’t work because... I must paid... and at that time I had no money, so I gave up”* (Kadarka IDP camp). Participant 6 was blunt in stating that the *“major challenge is finance”*(Heipeng IDP camp), while also lamenting, *“there’s no money to follow up we are looking for what to eat”* (Kadarka IDP camp). Education, too, was out of reach due to lack of funds, as Participant 10 admitted, *“I have not taken any step because of money, to get school admission involves money”*(Heipeng IDP camp). For many, daily survival eclipses all other aspirations. A lack of money prevents camp residents from accessing education, vocational training, or basic other necessities.

Insecurity

The trauma of violence and ongoing land displacement remains deeply distressing for many IDPs. Participants recounted horrific attacks by Fulani herdsmen resulting in the

deaths of family members and the loss of farmland, which often remains under the control of the aggressors. This persistent insecurity compounds their suffering and hinders hopes for a peaceful return. Participant 4 recounted the horror of the attack that drove him into displacement: “*Fulani herdsmen came to my village... started shooting and killing people... my wife was pregnant... my senior [brother] was killed*”, while Participant 5 expressed this, sharing: “*They killed my son and my mother... they killed 39 people that day*”(Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp).

Lack of Livelihood

A major concern for IDPs in the camp is the lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities. Many were self-reliant before displacement, with farmland and income sources, but now face severe hardship. Participant 3 recalled owning large farmland before displacement, but in the camp, no farming land exists, making life very difficult. That independence has been stripped away. Participant 3 recalled a time of self-sufficiency before the displacement, “*When I was in my village I have my own land very large land to farm whatever I want. But here in the camp there is no land for farming so life is so difficult for us as a family man*”. (Kadarka IDP camp). For others, the challenges have escalated into life-threatening conditions. As Participant 6 put it bleakly, “*Many people have died here as a result of lack of feeding and money or even go to the hospitals*” (Heipeng IDP camp). The loss of livelihoods, combined with financial hardship and insecurity, leaves many unable to support their families.

Lack of Health Care

Access to healthcare is a critical concern for IDPs in the camp, with no functional medical facilities available. Participant 1 highlighted the danger of emergencies occurring without any hospital nearby, pleading for government intervention. Others, including participant 11, echo that, “*No stakeholder has come here to give us any medication or healthcare treatment; we have been using our money for medications.*” (Kadarka IDP camp). Although a few efforts have been made in the past, the lack of permanent healthcare facilities still leaves displaced families without reliable support, increasing their hardship and vulnerability. The IDPs in the camp face a severe lack of healthcare, with no permanent medical facility, minimal past interventions, and the burden of medical expenses left entirely on already struggling families.

Educational Barriers

A major concern in the Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camps is the disruption of children’s education and the lack of vocational training for adults. Many parents struggle emotionally as their children miss schooling due to no schools, lack of funds, and lack

of training opportunities. These deprivations, no schools, no financial support, and no skill-building opportunities, define the educational reality for many. For Participant 1, the situation is stark: *“No school here for our children... In this camp we sent our children to school by ourselves; there is no provision for that here in the camp... no any vocational training for us nor for the women in the IDP camp.”* Participant 2’s account expressed that *“No school and no any vocational training for us.”* Participant 3, who simply stated: *“No school for our children’s education.”* Beyond access, distance and insecurity complicate matters further: *“The school is very far, and with the issue of insecurity, I think it is not safe for them...”* (Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp). It was noted that food needs to be given priority over education, and no stakeholders have provided vocational training. Although some children attend free schools in Nasarawa, overall, the absence of education and skills programmes perpetuates poverty and despair among IDPs

Lack of Support

A strong feeling of abandonment dominates the camp, with most participants reporting no support from the government or stakeholders. Participant 15 shared, *“I have not received any support... I pay my school fees with the little jobs that I do during break”* (Heipeng IDP camp). This reflects widespread disillusionment, as residents feel neglected and must rely on their efforts to survive.

Quality of food

Food insecurity is a constant and severe challenge for displaced people in the camp, with many struggling daily to feed themselves and their families. Participants consistently expressed frustration over the complete lack of sustained food support from stakeholders, describing hunger not just as discomfort but as a life-threatening issue. Several noted that no food aid has been provided, forcing them to rely on themselves, which has led to feelings of abandonment and despair. Participant 1 captured this hardship plainly: *“My number one challenge I’m facing here is feeding; if one is not well fed, life will be very difficult”* (Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp). These statements reflect a shared frustration and a growing sense of abandonment.

Lack of Electricity

The absence of electricity is a constant source of inconvenience and insecurity. Participant 1 highlighted this bluntly: The lack of power not only affects communication but also adds to the physical and financial burden of living in displacement. This issue is reiterated by participants in the Kadarka and Heipeng IDP Camp. Participant 2, who stated simply, *“No electricity”* Participant 4 provided a

more detailed picture of the effects, *“I don’t like being here because of lack of electricity... we use candles and handset light in night. No light to charge our handsets, we go out of the camp to look for a place to recharge phones in the community, and we pay ₦300.00 to charge phones.”* Electricity is completely lacking in the camp, also affecting safety and the general quality of life for residents.

Unfulfilled Promises

Participants in both camps expressed deep frustration over promises made to provide basic amenities such as water, electricity, etc., but never kept, a situation that has not only left them materially deprived but emotionally wounded. Participant 6 said, *“What I dislike is unfulfilling promises... Many people have come here and make so many promises and refused to fulfill them up till date.”* Participant 8 also reinforced this statement: *“You cannot come and promise us something and not fulfill it making it as if we are the cause of our problem by ourselves”* (Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp). This breach of trust exacerbates feelings of betrayal and alienation, as hopes are continually raised and dashed. Broken promises have left residents feeling used, demoralised, and distrustful of outsiders.

Quality of Water and Sanitation

Water access is a persistent problem in the IDP camp, impacting hygiene and health. Participants reported scarce and poor-quality water, often relying on unsafe streams for drinking water. Despite a borehole dug for a school, it remains dry, forcing residents to fetch water from distant sources. No stakeholders have provided reliable water supplies, highlighting a critical gap in basic services.

Quality of Clothing and Shelter

Participants highlighted a lack of proper clothing support, with many relying on worn-out clothes purchased through limited personal efforts. None of the stakeholders has provided clothing aid, leaving residents vulnerable. Shelter conditions are similarly precarious, as displaced persons take refuge in abandoned public buildings, mainly schools, without formal government or aid agency provision. This reliance on community goodwill rather than structured housing support underscores the informal and insecure nature of shelter in the camp.

Quality of Environmental Conditions

Living conditions in the camp are poor and undignified, marked by environmental challenges such as lack of proper toilets, dilapidated and leaking shelters, and absence of electricity. Participants described the environment as unhygienic, overcrowded, and

unsafe, making daily life difficult and especially harmful for children and vulnerable groups, as Participants explained, *“The roofs of the buildings are leaking, as you can see everywhere is busy. So we need the environment to be well kept for us to enjoy the place”*. Water scarcity compounds the problem. As Participant 2 described, *“There is a water system toilet here, but we only make use of it during the rainy season... the well in the compound always gets dried around February... so they use bush as a means of our toilet here mostly”*. Privacy and safety are also concerns, *“My dislike in the IDP camp is the environment. No privacy, the place is too open and my fear is how my children will grow in this kind of environment that is full of a lot of atrocities and different behaviours and character”*. Participant 7 expressed frustration over water access and its lost economic potential: *“What I dislike is lack of borehole... it will even assist me even if I am going to sell water to get money”* (Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp).

Vulnerability of Female Residents

Displacement has created a vulnerable environment for women and girls, exposing them to increased risks such as unwanted pregnancies and single motherhood. Participant 3 described how many young women face exploitation and lack protection or social support, highlighting the absence of accountability and justice in the camp. This deepens their marginalisation and poverty.

Withdrawal of Aid

Initially, the presence of government and NGOs brought a glimmer of hope, but over time, that support has vanished. What was once a shared humanitarian concern has faded into neglect, leaving residents to fend for themselves in prolonged hardship.

The Intervention Programmes Provided by Stakeholders in various IDP camps in North-Central Nigeria

Stakeholders' interventions have mostly emphasised the provision of necessities, including food, clothing, medical treatment, and safety, based on responses from participants in the Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camps in North-Central Nigeria.

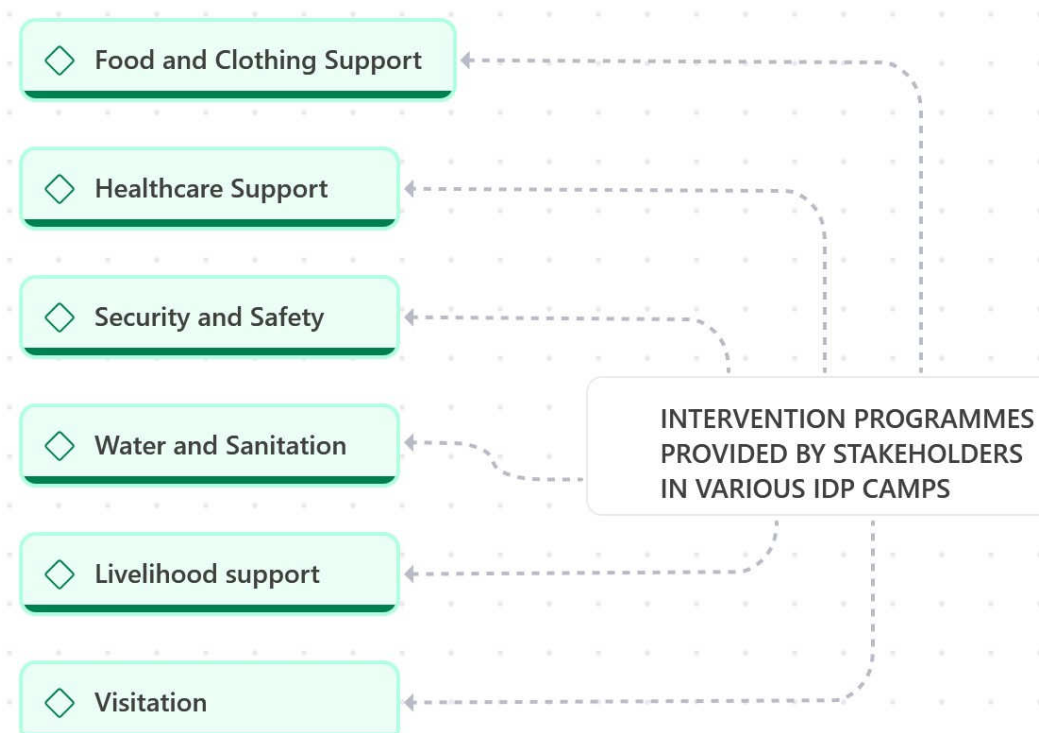


Figure 2: Intervention Programmes Provided by Stakeholders in Various IDP Camps

DISCUSSIONS

These interventions have mostly emphasised the supply of fundamental necessities, including food, clothes, medical treatment, and safety, based on responses generated from participants. The two camps have shown varying consistency and sustainability with these initiatives.

The findings are being analysed here based on the research objectives. The major sections are: *The Impact of Stakeholders' Engagement on the Living Standard/ Quality of Life and Aspirations, and the way forward as well as Aspired Level of Education, types of Job, and Ultimate Goal Among the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria*

The Impacts of these Programmes on Living Standards / Quality of Life in various IDP Camps in North-Central Nigeria

The limited involvement of government agencies has weakened the long-term impact of these interventions. As a result, IDPs continue to face poor living conditions and limited access to basic needs. This aligns with Adebayo and Tanko,³³ who note that unsustainable, uncoordinated interventions reduce long-term effectiveness, and with Adewale,¹⁸ who links irregular support to ongoing vulnerability and distress among displaced persons.

In response to the question on stakeholder intervention programmes in North-Central Nigeria's IDP camps, the findings reveal that food aid, healthcare, and security are the main areas of support. However, these interventions are short-term and unevenly distributed. NGOs and religious groups are the most active providers, while government involvement remains limited. This supports Okon and Ibrahim's observation that faith-based and international NGOs often fill gaps left by underperforming state institutions.⁴⁸

The findings suggest possible variations in satisfaction linked to demographic factors. Women and older IDPs may have unmet specific needs, but without statistical analysis, these differences cannot be confirmed. Thus, aligning with Eze and Bello, who noted that while gender and age may shape service perceptions, further analysis is needed to determine significance.⁴⁹

The intervention programmes provided by stakeholders in IDP camps in North-Central Nigeria have been essential but largely inadequate due to inconsistent government involvement. These statements reflect a shared frustration and a growing sense of abandonment. While satisfaction levels may differ across gender and age lines, there is insufficient evidence to confirm a statistically significant relationship. This points to the need for more inclusive, needs-based, and data-driven intervention strategies that recognise the heterogeneous experiences of IDPs.

The living standards of the people in several IDP camps in North-Central Nigeria run by stakeholders have been affected in diverse ways by the intervention initiatives they offer. Although some initiatives have provided momentary relief and better conditions in specific areas, the absence of continuous support, especially from government

⁴⁸ Okon, E. and Ibrahim, M. A., "Faith-Based and International NGOs in Nigeria's Humanitarian Landscape: Bridging the Gaps," *Journal of Humanitarian Policy and Practice* 6, no. 2 (2023): 88–104.

⁴⁹ Eze, C. J. and Bello, S. A., "Demographic Influences on Perceptions of Humanitarian Aid among Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Social Research* 14, no. 1 (2022): 55–70.

agencies, has left the general living standards unstable. The following revealed the perceived consequences on security, shelter, clothes, water and sanitation, healthcare, and food availability.

Food and Clothing

Food and clothing support in the IDP camps has had a significant but irregular impact. Early aid from NGOs and churches helped ease food insecurity, but infrequent distributions have left many struggling. Participant 5 noted that while aid came initially, it was not consistent, causing ongoing vulnerability. Participant 3 emphasised the importance of such interventions, yet the reliance on irregular support makes daily life uncertain and the assistance temporary and insufficient. Clothing assistance has had some impact but remains limited. Initial donations were appreciated, but the lack of ongoing support leaves many residents struggling with inadequate clothing. Participant 7 reflected this reality, saying, “Nobody has provided clothes to us. I have been managing the little ones that I have.” Perhaps most damning is the failure of sustained support including support for food. Participant 6 lamented, “*No provision of food by any of the stakeholders in this IDP Camp, and because of long stay and the living condition some of our parent have died in camp*” For many, hunger has not just become a routine discomfort, but a cause of death. This feeling of abandonment is repeated throughout the responses. “*Food: Nobody is providing food them here in this IDP Camp*” said Participant 7 Participant 8 simply stated “*There’s no provision of food from anybody in this IDP Camp — we feed ourselves*” This self-reliance, in such a vulnerable context, is both admirable and deeply troubling. Participant 10 succinctly stated, “*Food is very hard to get*” while Participant 11 described relying on a small business for sustenance: “*No food support from any stakeholders. I get money through my small business to feed my family*”. But not everyone is so fortunate. Participant 12 revealed the depths of desperation, “*We go out to beg for food to eat from nearby villages because no any stakeholders have come to render or bring any food support to us in this IDP camp*”. Participants 13 and 14 shared the same reality: “*No food supports have come from any of the existing stakeholders*” and “*No any existing stakeholders have come here with food items*”. These statements reflect a shared frustration and a growing sense of abandonment (Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp). This shortage affects both the physical comfort and dignity of the IDPs, deepening their sense of deprivation.

Healthcare

Healthcare interventions have had limited and inconsistent effects in the Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp. While the initial establishment of a clinic by Nigerian doctors

provided some relief, its closure left the camp without reliable medical services, worsening residents' well-being. Participant 6 shared a common view about the lack of continued healthcare support, saying: *"The healthcare situation is poor... people fall sick, and nobody is around to help. We only had help once, but after that, nobody came back to help us"*.

Water and Sanitation

Water and sanitation remain critical challenges in the IDP camps. Although some boreholes have been provided by local churches, they are insufficient for the entire population. As a result, residents often rely on unsafe water sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and undermining their living conditions and safety.

Shelter

The lack of proper housing has caused overcrowding and vulnerability, especially during bad weather. Prolonged stays in inadequate shelters show stakeholders' failure to provide secure, long-term housing, resulting in unsafe and uncomfortable conditions that hinder residents' ability to achieve stability.

Security

While security interventions, such as the provision of vigilantes for protection, have had a positive impact on safety, these interventions have been limited and are often a reaction to external threats rather than a proactive, sustained strategy. However, the reliance on sporadic vigilante groups rather than a structured security programme means that residents are still exposed to potential dangers, which in turn impacts their overall sense of security and well-being.

Peace in the Camp

Despite their hardships, some residents appreciate the return of relative peace in the camp. Participant 14 expressed hope that this peace continues, reflecting how much residents value peace not just as the absence of violence but as a foundation for safety, hope, and rebuilding their lives.

The study shows that stakeholder interventions, mainly in food, clothing, and basic healthcare, have offered short-term relief but lack sustainability. These efforts are often uncoordinated and insufficient for lasting impact. This supports Adebayo and Tanko, who note that while such interventions provide immediate aid, they fail to support long-term recovery. Likewise, Iroanya and Okolie highlight that most IDP

interventions in Nigeria are reactive, leaving key needs like shelter and water unmet.⁵⁰ The biggest service gaps come from government agencies, whose efforts are often inconsistent and poorly coordinated. Eze and Bello link this to weak planning and underfunding.⁵³ As a result, IDPs continue to face poor living conditions, including food insecurity, limited healthcare, poor sanitation, and lack of clean water. The International Organisation for Migration similarly notes that fragmented support and weak camp management contribute to ongoing vulnerability and multidimensional poverty among IDPs.⁵¹

In response to the question on the impact of intervention programmes, findings show that while short-term relief has been provided, there has been little lasting improvement in IDPs' living standards. NGOs, faith-based groups, and communities have offered vital support, but without strong government involvement and coordination, these efforts lack long-term effectiveness.^{52 52} The findings suggest that while some IDPs appreciate certain support, this satisfaction does not consistently reflect improved living conditions. As Adewale notes, temporary relief does not equate to lasting welfare gains.

The link between support and quality of life remains weak and inconsistent.¹⁸ This underscores the need for a more systematic, sustained, and integrated approach to stakeholder engagement if meaningful improvements in the living standards of IDPs are to be achieved. Long-term interventions should incorporate participatory planning, gender-sensitive programming, and durable solutions such as livelihood support and resettlement options.^{55 53}

Aspired Level of Education, Type of Job, and Ultimate Goal among the IDPs in North-Central Nigeria

The aspirations for education, work, and ultimate goals among IDPs in North-Central Nigeria show a great desire for progress, security, and self-sufficiency despite the trying conditions they encountered. The interviews showed that although displaced persons held diverse educational and employment aspirations, their narratives converged on a shared longing for stability and safety. Across gender, age, and

⁵⁰ Iroanya, R. O. and Okolie, C. U., "Reactive Humanitarianism: Evaluating IDP Interventions in Nigeria," *African Journal of Humanitarian Studies* 7, no. 2 (2021): 77–93.

⁵¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Nigeria Displacement Report: Round 45* (Abuja: IOM Nigeria, 2024), <https://dtm.iom.int/nigeria>.

⁵² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Nigeria Factsheet: Internal Displacement* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/>.

⁵³ Olanrewaju, F. O., Adebayo, A. M., and Alabi, J. O., "Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: A Policy Review," *Journal of Migration and Human Security* 10, no. 1 (2022): 22–39.

displacement histories, respondents highlighted the desire to secure a brighter and more predictable future for themselves and their children, reflecting both immediate needs and long-term aspirations.

Aspired Level of Education

Many IDPs strongly desire quality education for themselves and their children, viewing it as vital for improving future prospects. Despite lacking formal schools and facing financial and infrastructural barriers, they aspire to gain skills and knowledge, recognising education as key to personal development and meaningful societal contribution.

Aspired Type of Job

Many IDPs in Kadarka and Heipeng IDP camp, based on their level of Education, aspire to have stable, well-paying jobs that support their families, with a strong desire for self-sufficiency through farming, trading, or community work. Career goals reflect a deep need for dignity and stability, including aspirations to become teachers, farmers, businesspeople, or medical doctors, despite setbacks caused by displacement according to participants in the two camps. Participant 5 was more frustrated, revealing, *“I want to be fully actualised doing something with my hands and to move on with my life, not just to sit down and be suffering... We are suffering here, it is so painful”*. Teaching was a strong aspiration for Participant 6, who shared, *“I graduate since 2012 till date no job... My overall dream is to become a teacher.”* Meanwhile, Participant 7 was business-minded: *“My aspiration is to do business if any assistance comes to me in terms of money or advice so I can train my children well.”*

Ultimate Goal

IDPs in North-Central Nigeria aspire to build a stable, secure life for their families after displacement, seeking to overcome uncertainty and hardship. Many, like Participant 12, emphasise finding work and providing better opportunities, especially education, for their children, hoping the next generation can achieve what displacement denied them.

Desire for Freedom

Freedom was a recurring and powerful aspiration, closely tied to participants' sense of belonging and security. Participant 2 shared, *“My first desire is to go back to my homeland where I can be free to use my family land and my freedom”* These expressions underline how aspirations are shaped not only by economic need but by

profound displacement and loss of identity. A single but significant response revealed the absence of hope and lack of aspiration.

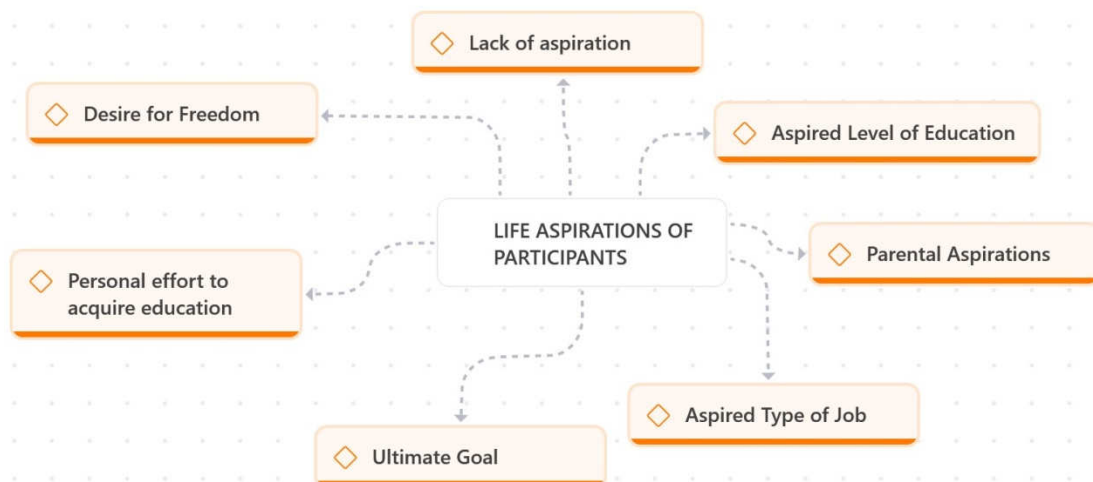


Figure 3: Life Aspirations of Participants

IDPs in North-Central Nigeria express strong aspirations for personal and collective progress, centred on education for their children, stable employment, and long-term safety. These goals reflect efforts to restore dignity and rebuild disrupted lives. As Olanrewaju et al. note, such aspirations are essential markers of recovery and reintegration potential.⁵⁷

The findings show that IDPs in North-Central Nigeria aspire to secure secondary education for their children, gain vocational or skilled employment, and live in peaceful, self-sustaining environments. These goals reflect a belief in education and work as routes to independence, though achieving them depends on sustained stakeholder support. Adebayo and Tanko highlight that failure to meet these future-oriented needs often deepens dependency and frustration.³³

The findings indicate that while IDPs may form aspirations independently, their ability to pursue them is influenced by satisfaction with stakeholder support. Access to vocational training or educational aid, for instance, often strengthens aspirations for skilled jobs or further education. This suggests that well-targeted, effective interventions can reinforce long-term goals. Eze and Bello similarly observe that perceived support quality significantly impacts IDPs' resilience and future planning.⁵³

In summary, IDPs in North-Central Nigeria hold strong aspirations for education, employment, and stability, but achieving these depends on consistent, relevant stakeholder support. A strategic, aspiration-focused approach, especially in education, vocational training, and psychosocial care, could boost satisfaction and help IDPs move from survival toward sustainable recovery.

Suggestion for Improved Livelihood in the IDP Camp

The participants shared a clear and heartfelt call for basic human needs, clean water, education, healthcare, and the means to escape poverty, framed not only as survival necessities but as steps toward restoring dignity and rebuilding their lives.

Access to Clean Water

Access to clean water emerged as a critical and urgent need among IDPs. These responses reflect how fundamental needs like safe drinking water are still unmet, and they underpin nearly every other aspect of wellbeing in the camp. Participants strongly called for boreholes and clean water as a basic but unmet necessity essential to daily survival.

Access to Education

Participants also articulated a deep desire for educational opportunities for their children, driven by both concern for their safety and hope for a better future. Their words convey the heartbreak of watching young lives drift without direction, and the longing to restore hope through education. IDPs expressed urgent concern for their children's education, requesting closer, accessible schooling to secure their future.

Dislike for Poverty

Participants expressed deep frustration with poverty, hunger, and helplessness in the camp, calling for empowerment and urgent government support. As Participant 14 put it, reducing poverty through empowerment is essential, not just to survive, but to live with dignity

Environmental Aesthetics

Participants expressed a strong desire for a clean and tidy environment, recognising that cleanliness contributes to mental well-being and a sense of stability. Even amid displacement, maintaining clean surroundings was seen as essential for restoring dignity and normalcy in the camp.

Health Care Access

The lack of healthcare facilities in the camp was a critical concern, making illnesses and injuries life-threatening due to the lack of medical support or transport. Participants urgently called for clinics to address these pressing health needs.

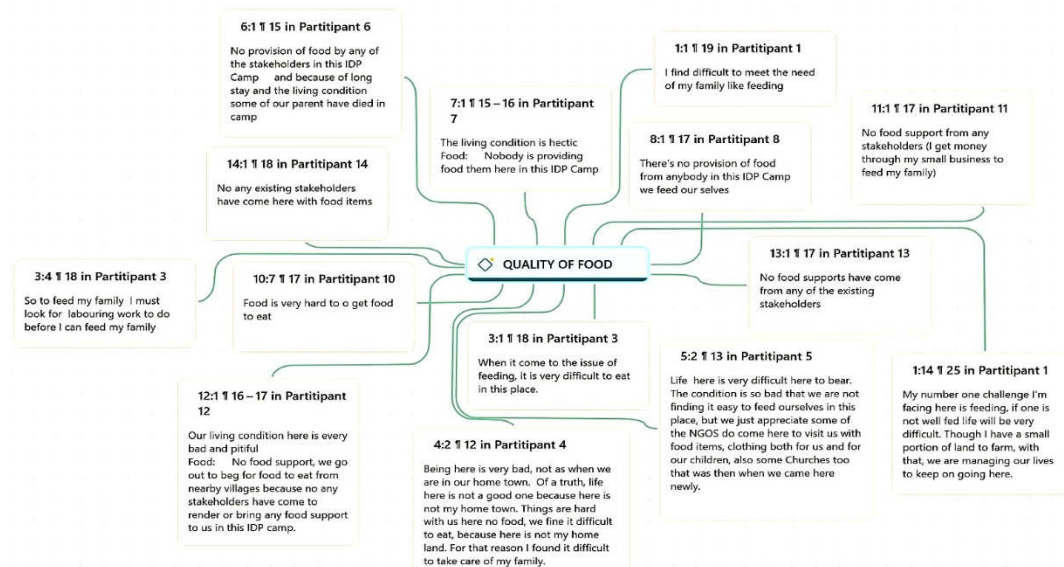


Figure 4: Responses to suggestions for improved livelihood in the IDP camp

The qualitative findings from in-depth interviews among IDPs in North-Central Nigeria reveal a strong perceived link between satisfaction with stakeholder intervention programmes and both their quality of life and aspirations. IDPs consistently expressed that when interventions addressed not only survival needs but also provided opportunities such as education, vocational training, or psychosocial support, their sense of dignity, hope, and future orientation improved significantly.

Conversely, those in camps with irregular or minimal interventions, particularly from government agencies, expressed feelings of neglect, frustration, and despair. Their narratives reflected a lower perceived quality of life and a tendency to suppress or abandon aspirations.

The qualitative data clearly demonstrate that satisfaction with stakeholder programmes is closely tied to both quality of life and the ability to hold and pursue aspirations. Interventions that address only short-term needs (e.g., food, shelter) without complementing them with future-oriented support (e.g., education,

livelihoods, health, security) are seen as insufficient to lift IDPs out of cycles of dependency and psychological distress.

This analysis aligns with Adebayo and Tanko, who observed that while immediate aid sustains life, it is development-focused interventions that give IDPs the ability to rebuild their futures.³³ The participants' testimonies indicate that when stakeholder support is perceived as consistent, targeted, and empowering, IDPs are more likely to report a higher quality of life and articulate clear personal and family goals.

Moreover, this finding resonates with Eze and Bello, who highlight the psychological and emotional dimension of displacement, arguing that satisfaction with stakeholder efforts enhances not just material well-being but also self-worth and motivation.⁵³ For instance, access to education or income-generating tools is not just a means of survival, but a powerful source of restored identity and agency among IDPs.

The absence of such programmes, particularly from state actors, was a recurring theme in participant narratives, reinforcing the perceived gap between governmental promises and lived experiences in displacement contexts. This finding further supports Olanrewaju et al., who advocate for a multi-dimensional, durable solutions approach that integrates human development into humanitarian response.⁵⁷ The level of satisfaction with stakeholder intervention programmes is qualitatively and meaningfully associated with how IDPs experience life in the camps and how they envision their futures.

CONCLUSION

From a qualitative standpoint, this study presents compelling narrative and thematic evidence that challenges Hypothesis H₀₄. The level of satisfaction with stakeholder interventions, particularly those that go beyond immediate relief to include long-term, developmental support, emerges as a critical determinant of both the perceived quality of life and the aspirations of IDPs in North-Central Nigeria. IDPs who reported higher satisfaction levels were also more likely to express hope for a stable future, articulate clear educational and economic goals, and demonstrate a renewed sense of personal dignity and agency.

This finding reinforces the need for stakeholders, governments, NGOs, faith-based groups, and international agencies to design programmes that are not only needs-driven but also aspiration-sensitive. Beyond meeting necessities, these programmes

should intentionally support the empowerment of IDPs, helping them reclaim their autonomy, rebuild disrupted life trajectories, and reintegrate into society with dignity. Viewing the plight of IDPs through a human rights lens reveals critical insights into whether their most fundamental life requirements are being met. As Acha-Anyi emphasises, raising awareness of human rights obligations among displaced communities empowers them to seek redress and demand accountability.⁵⁴ In this context, IDPs are not just passive recipients of aid but are protected by a complex web of international, regional, and national legal frameworks, including the African Union's Kampala Convention, which obligates states to prevent displacement and ensure adequate protection and assistance when it occurs.

However, despite the existence of such legal and policy frameworks, implementation gaps remain stark. Inconsistent enforcement, weak coordination, and insufficient funding continue to hinder meaningful impact on the ground. As the World Bank notes, improvements in data collection mechanisms like the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as well as the integration of IDPs into national social protection systems, could significantly enhance planning, targeting, and service delivery.⁵⁵

In conclusion, Nigeria's internal displacement crisis, particularly in the North-Central states of Benue, Plateau, and Nasarawa, requires more than episodic humanitarian responses. It demands sustained legal, institutional, and developmental engagement anchored in political will, accountability, and a rights-based approach. While national and international instruments offer strong legal protections, their transformative potential will only be realised through collaborative, well-funded, and inclusive interventions that prioritise both immediate survival and the long-term aspirations of displaced individuals and communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutionalise a Coordinated Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability Framework

Establish a Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Platform at state and local government levels under the oversight of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI). This platform should:

⁵⁴ Acha-Anyi, N. *Displacement and Marginalisation in West Africa: Legal Frameworks and Policy Responses*. London: Routledge, 2024.

⁵⁵ World Bank. *Fulfilling Futures: Aspirations and Well-Being in Fragile Contexts*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2025.

- Map all active stakeholders (government agencies, NGOs, religious bodies, philanthropists, etc.).
 - Assign clear roles to avoid duplication.
 - Incorporate stakeholder engagement scorecards to track performance and alignment with IDPs' expressed aspirations. This ensures a rights-based, aspiration-sensitive, and coordinated approach to IDP support.
- 2. Enforce Legal Protections and Mainstream Aspirational Programming**
Domesticate and enforce the Kampala Convention and provide legislative backing to the National Policy on IDPs (2012). In parallel:
- Stakeholders should align their interventions with the long-term goals of IDPs (e.g., education, entrepreneurship, relocation).
 - Conduct participatory needs and aspiration assessments to ensure that programmes empower rather than merely sustain. This dual approach secures both legal rights and personal development trajectories of displaced populations.
- 3. Expand Education, Livelihood, and Mentorship Initiatives**
Scale up transitional education centres, vocational training, and mentorship schemes—especially targeting youth, women, and girls. These programmes should be co-developed with IDPs and aligned with national initiatives such as the FG's IDP learning centres.
- Include digital literacy and entrepreneurship development.
 - Engage successful former IDPs as role models. This restores hope, raises ambitions, and fosters self-reliance.
- 4. Integrate IDPs into National Social Protection and Mental Health Services**
Formally include IDPs in national development and social protection schemes such as:
- N-Power, Conditional Cash Transfers, and National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA).
 - Provide psychosocial support, trauma healing, and aspirational counselling.
 - Use biometric and NIMC-linked registration systems to ensure portability and continuity of services. This safeguard both the physical and psychological well-being of displaced persons, enabling them to plan for the future.

5. Promote Durable, Dignified Solutions through Infrastructure and Peacebuilding

Shift from short-term aid to long-term durable solutions, including:

- Safe return, local integration, or voluntary resettlement.
- Develop land regularisation policies, expand community infrastructure, and invest in peacebuilding initiatives to prevent future displacement. Such strategies must be community-driven and backed by sustainable funding to ensure that IDPs can rebuild their lives in environments conducive to growth and stability.

6. Basic Needs and Empowerment Programme

- Prioritise the installation and maintenance of borehole and water purification systems to ensure reliable access to safe drinking water.
- Establish accessible primary schools and vocational training centres within or near the camp to support children's education and adults' skills development.
- Set up permanent healthcare facilities staffed with qualified personnel to provide essential medical services and emergency care.
- Develop livelihood empowerment initiatives, such as micro-grants, agricultural support, and small business training, enabling residents to generate sustainable income and reduce dependency.
- Promote community-led sanitation and environmental cleanliness programmes to foster dignity, mental well-being, and a healthier living environment.

This multi-sectoral approach ensures that essential services are not only provided but are interconnected to restore dignity, improve well-being, and create sustainable pathways out of poverty for IDPs.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the conduct or publication of this research. The study was conducted by the Academic staff of the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

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