THE EFFECTS OF LOW PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS ON SUDANESE REFUGEES IN EASTERN CHAD

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of refugees was observed to be a disaster affecting populations in developing nations. This study employed qualitative research design and collected data from twelve informants; we analyze the data using Nvivo software. The key aims of our study are to identify the effects of low participation of stakeholders on Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. Results from the study discovered that food crisis, school dropout and disease outbreak were discovered. Finally, this study recommended that stakeholders such as the Chadian government, Non-governmental organizations and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should provide immediate remedies to the difficulties of the victims. The study simultaneously suggested that for future research requires the application of quantitative approach as well as mixed method in order to examine this phenomenon in the study area.

Keywords: Low Participation, Stakeholders, Effects, Sudanese Refugees, Eastern Chad.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of insecurity, economic and political instability in some African states, prevents ordinary people from their normal duties (Powell, 2005). Wars in Africa have contributed to the proliferation of displacement of people in the continent (Zartman, 1985). The inability to provide solutions to these conflicts led to massive refugee crises (Juma, 2000). For instance, conflict in Sudan Darfur region have displaced hundreds of thousands of people and feel to Chad and indeed across continents as well. The situation in Sudan particularly in Darfur deteriorates the repatriation for the Sudanese refugees in the camps across eastern Chad. This situation poses a great challenge for Chadian government and NGOs to provide resettlement and rehabilitation activities. Sudanese refugees arrived Chad in early 2003. The refugee population is categorized by the presence of 58 percent women and 61 percent children under the age of eighteen. However, more than 360,000 Sudanese refugees are now facing acute shortage of food items, and depleted support from the international community. These scenarios mandated the refugees to be wondering for self-sufficient and integration with the hosts locality. Categorically, problems related to school dropout, food crises and the outbreak of diseases were apparent. The aforementioned challenges became difficulty for the government, NGOs and UNHCR to cater for their basic needs (Boyce & Hollingsworth, 2015). This paper is structured into introduction, research questions and objectives. It also contained the methodology used, scope of the study,
literature review, results, discussion, recommendations, conclusion, and references respectively.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of low participation of stakeholders in the study area?
2. What are the ways to improve low participation of stakeholders?

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Thus, the objectives of this study are follows:

1. To identify the effects of low participation of stakeholders.
2. To suggest how to improve participation of stakeholders.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employed qualitative research design and semi-structured face to face interview. Data were collected from twelve informants between 28th of May to 05th of August, 2016. The interviewees were selected from the ministries, commissions, and NGOs in Chad, particularly from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Social Action, Family and National Solidarity, Ministry of Public Security and Immigration, National Commission for Reception, Reintegration of Refugees, and Returnees (CNARR), National and International NGOs and the refugees as well. The informants were purposely selected (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This is due to their experience and involvement in the management of refugees in the study area. The data was systematically analyzed thematically using Nvivo 10 software.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study covered four regions in eastern Chad, which include Ennedi Eest, Wadi Fira, Ouaddai and Silla that where twelve Sudanese refugee’s camps are exist due to the Darfur conflict in western Sudan, the study also covered some NGOs workers, state officials and refugees.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section reviewed related literature on the phenomenon under study.

**Displacement and Humanitarian Challenges in the Region**

The phenomenon of refugees in Africa has considered most African states since independence from 1950s until 1980s. In several nations, the armed conflicts have been the major cause (Rwamatwara, 2005). Deng (1993) classifies ethnic and civil conflicts as the major causes of involuntary movements in Sub-Saharan Africa. Anthony (1999) Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Chad are main countries producing refugee in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa has long history of displacement and migration particularly Sub Saharan region. The high rate of displacement is approximately 65 percent globally, these number of migrants are settled in another state in same region (Shimeles, 2010). The 1951 Geneva Convention
Relating to the refugees Status of 1969 Protocol and as well the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing Specific Aspect of refugee’s issues in the continent (UNHCR, 2011). Previous studies indicated that Chad, Central African Republic (CAR) and Cameroon, shared similar operational weaknesses with life insecurity related to epidemics and natural disasters followed by chronic humanitarian crises. Particularly, the Sahelian regions of Cameroon and Chad are extremely affected by food insecurity due to ecological conditions, poverty and underdevelopment. At the same time, some states such as Sudan, CAR, Democratic republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria are the major contributors to the humanitarian crisis into neighbouring countries with increasing displacement effects over time. Currently, the security and political crisis in CAR has protracted its humanitarian consequences to Cameroon; Chad and escalation of violence in 2013, nearly one million internally displaced and flee thousands to Chad and Cameroon as well as the whole region. Therefore, its required regional approach in the form of humanitarian response. Correspondingly, cross border crime and proliferation refugees from Nigeria across Cameroon and Chad have been intensified in 2014, due to rising of violence by Boko Haram insurgency (Oyewole, 2015).

**Attempts to Solve the Refugee Problems**

Literature indicated that resettlement, repatriation, and local integration were the strategies adopted to provide solutions to the refugees’ issues, hence statistics showed that nearly 6.4 million refugees remained scatter in the various camps globally, attempts were made to settle and provide them with access to local integration. The UNHCR and other countries have made comprehensive developments arrangements to settle the refugees. For instance, the regional inclusive strategy for refugees’ resettlement was established in 2012, categorically, about 50,000 Congolese refugees from (DRC) received intervention settled with local people (UN, 2013).

**Resettlement**

Resettlement is the process of relocating refugees and offer them supportable ways of living. Literature emphasis that nearly 800,000 refugees need resettlement but only 80,000 places were offered in different countries worldwide. As a result of these developments 27 countries provided immediate remedies in the year 2012 alone. These states include Belgium, Spain, Australia, and Germany were the pillars for the resettlement programmes. Furthermore, Canada and USA admitted maximum of resettled refugees in 2012. The statistics displayed that 9,600 refugees and 66,300 people. Accordingly, Australia 5,900, Sweden 1,900 and Norway 1,200 resettled the refugees respectively. Study exposed that the major beneficiaries of these UNHCR development programme is refugees from Myanmar 17,400, Bhutan 16,700, Iraq 13,700, and Somalia 7,000 as well. However, the three highest states for resettlement and asylum for refugees in collaboration with UNHCR include Nepal 16,700, Malaysia 10,500, and Thailand 7,300 (UNHCR, 2013).

**Repatriation**

Repatriation is the process of returning refugees back to their country of origin. It is considered as a durable solution and most preferred to the victims. This could be voluntarily
or by force via the assistance of a body or an agency. Repatriation has been the most preferred option by the UNHCR, and especially by African States. It is believed that refugees would return to their home countries, once the reasons, for which they are recognized as refugees, cease to exist (Mensah, 2009).

**Local Integration**

Local integration is the method of amalgamating the refugees in the immediate locality of refuge. Mensah, (2009) noted that local integration is the third durable solution to the refugee’s crisis. It also refers to migrants who, are facing persecution or other difficulties and threat in their country of origin; it includes strategies such as protection from the country of asylum, naturalization, or issuance of a permanent resident permit.

**Informants Profile**

The informants consist of six refugees, three humanitarian NGOs staffs and three government officials were involved in this study.

**Table 1: Informants Profile**

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<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Government official</td>
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Source: developed from the study.

**FINDINGS**

Based on the interviews conducted with the informants, the effect of low participation of stakeholders on Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad were characterized into three major challenges namely food crisis, school dropout and disease outbreak.

(a) **Food Crisis**

Food crisis is the shortage of balance diet among the refugee, based on the interviews conducted, the informants observed that:

*Due to insufficient supply of food items by stakeholders, especially the international community for instance, the children and the kids are wandering about in the markets, around the camps and these forces them to consume less amount of food. For example, one bag of corn weight of 50 kg used to be distributed among four people but due to the scarcity of food it used to be given to 6 and 12 people per month which affected their daily lives (informant 3).*
Confirming the above statement, thus:

*Low participation has an unusual effect on the refugees’ lives. For instance, foods are distributed at the beginning of every month. However, the food has been reduced which led to consistent complain by the refugees saying they have no sufficient food for their families while the NGOs were saying this was all they could afford* (informant 12).

Informant 18 expressed his view concerning food crisis in the effect of low participation:

*Low participation has a negative effect on the refugees’ disaster management, the refugees lives as well as in the aspect of food security. These entails that the refugee’s food supply have reduced from three square meals a day to only two times a day* (informant 10).

In collaboration with the above statements informants four and seven stated that “low assistance of stakeholders to the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad has worsen the situation because of the desert nature of the surroundings, they found it difficult to cultivate crops for their consumption”

(b) School Drop out

The number of children dropping out of school in the camps increased as result of inadequate teaching, irregular payment of salaries by the actors. The informants stated that:

*In fact, we experience inadequate educational services and we lost some of the vital and fundamental educational services to our children. For example, we have about 60 students who wrote their final examinations this year, but have we found it impossible to placed them into the tertiary institutions or universities to further their studies* (informant 6).

Additionally, the difficulties of acquiring education was also explained:

*At the beginning, it was Sudanese curriculum from kindergarten until secondary schools. But currently the government of Chad has intervened there by changing the syllabus from Sudanese system to Chadian and these led to the separation of learners in the camps regarding their education. Categorically, the first group found it very difficult to cope, the second category was interested on the Sudanese system, and the last group choose the Chadian method of instructions in their various classes. However, this situation the led to the establishment three levels which include Kindergarten, primary and secondary, but kindergarten has been lost for a year leaving only primary and secondary. Therefore, we have educational problems in our camps due to low intervention from the stakeholders* (informant 2).

Furthermore: “poor intervention led to the drop out of children from the school. For instance, most of the children are working in marginal business were all the outcome of poor assistance from stakeholders.”(informants 8 & 9).

(c) Disease Outbreak

Disease outbreak is observed to be a problem, the informants said that:

*As refugees in eastern chad, we are affected directly by the lack of intervention from stakeholder particularly the international community. For example, the problem of clean drinking water is a serious issue as there is lack at least one liter of clean water per person*
leading to the obtaining of water from unhealthy sources which was the major cause of diseases (informant 5).

In line with the above view challenges: “In fact, the effect of low participation has a negative impact on our children’s health, leading to diseases like cholera and malaria resulting to loss of lives in the camps” (Informants 1).

In other view an informant observed and stated his view below.

As a result of the low participation, the women in the camps are now going out of the camps to do some mini jobs like laundry which some time they experience a criminal action like rape which led to the spread of communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS (informant 11).

Previous studies indicated that, poor sanitation, inadequate nutrition and lack of portable drinking water causes diseases such as, malaria and diarrhea which lead to the death of the children in the various refugee camps (Okello, 2004).

**DISCUSSION**

Answering the first research question, the findings revealed that the effect of low participation of stakeholders among Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad has created several problems which contributed to the difficulties on their daily lives. These comprises food crisis, school dropout and disease outbreak. This study exposed that the low participation has created several complications which led to reduction of number of services provided to the refugees in the areas of health, education, food, and shelter. Additionally, the poor climatic condition of the affected area led to food crisis and resulted to the poor management of the refugee crisis. Findings from the study highlighted that there were limited educational services and language barriers as well as curriculum differences. These challenges affected the smooth running of schools at the camps. Because Sudanese school operate in English and Arabic languages nevertheless, the Chadian schools are run in French. Furthermore, the study discovered that the poor intervention from the stakeholders has led to occurrence of diseases like cholera, HIV and malaria as revealed by the informants. Previous studies indicated that refugees are facing the challenges of language barrier in attending schools within the camps. This indicated that the host country should regulate and assist in providing native teachers be utilized in these schools, which would also help in providing occupation and preventing language difficulty (Akkaya, 2017).

Answering the second research question, findings displayed that different ways may be used to improve the problem of low participation of stakeholders. The findings indicated that UNHCR; others humanitarian NGOs and international community must take full responsibilities and provide required funds to enhance rendering of quality services to refugees at the various camps. Correspondingly, provision of adequate educational facilities to enable the victim’s children the opportunity to start learning from Kindergarten. Also, the informants suggested the Prompt payment of teacher’s salaries and incentives to motivate teachers to put in their best at imparting the appropriate knowledge on the victim’s children. Moreover, there is the urgent need for the provision of health care services and well established hospitals at the different camps. Previous studies indicated that provision of health care services to the refugees will be determined based on factors such as presence of
hospitals nearby and the number of refugees in the camp (Akkaya, 2017; Ansar, Johansson, Vásquez, Schulze, & Vaughn, 2017).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, we recommended the following to enhance the participation of stakeholders to Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. This study suggested that stakeholders should improve participation policy into Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad via the provision of food, health care, educational facilities and improve on provision of financial resources in order to alleviate the suffering of the refugees at the camps. Stakeholders should be more effective in assisting the refugees and the actors should increase the services delivered to the vulnerable people. In addition, the establishment of cooperative framework among national stakeholders (host government and local NGOs) and international agencies (UNHCR and international NGOs) shall serve as a platform to cushion the difficulties faced by the refugees. This study suggested that future research should apply mixed method as well as quantitative approach to examine the phenomenon.

REFERENCES


