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**« Ce n'est qu'au début du crépuscule que la chouette de Minerve prend son
envol »**

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL

“En tant que groupe social, en tant que totalité, les intellectuels doivent à présent passer de la description de ce qui ne marche pas – du pourquoi et du comment cela ne marche pas – à une réflexion sur la “société dans laquelle nous souhaitons vivre” et sur les moyens de la réaliser”.

CHOMSKY Noam, Qui mène le monde ? Québec, Lux Editeur, 2018.

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GENDER ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE WITHIN THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS IN CAMEROON :

The case of the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan (EHAP) on internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the North West Region

By

MENGNGJO TARDZENYUY Thomas, PhD,

Department of Political Science, The University of Bamenda

Email: *mengnjothomas218@gmail.com*

Violet YIGHA FOKUM, PhD

Department of Political Science, The University of Bamenda

Email: *fokumviolet@gmail.com*

and

NCHOFON MINGOH, M.Sc

Department of Political Science, The University of Bamenda

Email: *mingofrank3@gmail.com*

Abstract : This write-up has focused on the gender analysis of humanitarian assistance provided by the Cameroon government's Emergency Humanitarian Plan (EHAP) to internally displaced persons (IDPs) of the Anglophone Crisis in the North West Region. To realize this objective, the Mixed Research method was adopted to collect and analyze data. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with officials of the EHAP in Bamenda, while 20 IDPs, who are beneficiaries of EHAP's humanitarian assistance, were surveyed. Observations were another instrument for data collection. Information obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.0. Beside this Method, the Instrumentalist Theory to Gender in Humanitarian Aid was equally employed as an analytical instrument to determine the gender dimension of EHAP's humanitarian assistance to IDPs. Based on these, findings have demonstrated that the objectives of EHAP as defined in the decree creating it have not taken into account issues related to gender, especially those relating to the integration of women and girls, who are the highest victims affected during armed conflict, into the main processes of humanitarian assistance. Another significant finding demonstrated that even though these IDPs have benefited from food items and non-food items, such as mattresses, toiletries and money from EHAP, these donations remain unsustainable since most of them are unable to cater for their necessities in the long run. This state of affairs is accounted for by limited funds, administrative bottlenecks, insufficient personnel and insecurity. It is on this basis that for EHAP's humanitarian assistance to be gender representative in its nature there is the urgent need for gender issues to take central stage in all its process from decision making to implementation.

Key Words: Gender Analysis, humanitarian assistance, Anglophone crisis, Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan, internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Résumé : Cet article s'est concentré sur la dimension genre de l'aide humanitaire fournie par le Plan humanitaire d'urgence du gouvernement camerounais aux personnes déplacées internes issues de la crise anglophone dans la région du Nord-Ouest. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les techniques qualitative et quantitative ont été adoptées pour collecter et analyser les données. Les données ont été collectées grâce à des entretiens avec des responsables de Plan humanitaire d'urgence du gouvernement camerounais à Bamenda, tandis que 20 personnes déplacées internes, bénéficiaires de

cette aide humanitaire, ont été interrogées. Les observations étaient un autre instrument de collecte de données. Les informations obtenues ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel statistique pour les sciences sociales version 20.0. Parallèlement à cette technique, la théorie instrumentaliste du genre dans l'aide humanitaire a également été utilisée comme instrument analytique pour déterminer la dimension genre de l'aide humanitaire du gouvernement camerounais aux personnes déplacées interne. Sur cette base, les constats ont démontré que les objectifs du plan d'aide humanitaire d'urgence tels que définis dans le décret qui l'a créé n'ont pas pris en compte les questions liées au genre, notamment celles liées à l'intégration des femmes et des filles, qui sont les plus grandes victimes touchées lors des conflits armés, dans les principaux processus de l'aide humanitaire. Une autre découverte importante a démontré que même si ces personnes déplacées ont bénéficié de produits alimentaires et non alimentaires, tels que des matelas, des articles de toilette et de l'argent issue de ces Plan humanitaire d'urgence, ces dons restent non durables puisque la plupart d'entre eux sont incapables de subvenir à leurs besoins à long terme. Cet état de choses s'explique par des fonds limités, la complexité de procédures administratives, un personnel insuffisant et l'insécurité. C'est sur cette base que, pour que l'aide humanitaire du Plan humanitaire d'urgence soit par nature représentative du genre, il est urgent que les questions de genre occupent une place centrale dans tout son processus, de la prise de décision à la mise en œuvre.

Mots clés : Analyse du genre, Aide Humanitaire, Crise Anglophone, Plan d'aide Humanitaire d'urgence, Personnes Déplacées Interne.

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the 21st Century, issues related to gender equality have taken central stage at the global, regional, national and local levels. At the worldwide stage, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its Goal 5 emphasizes the necessity to ensure gender equality in all facets of human endeavour¹. In this light, SOKEN-HUBERTY Emmaline has been able to argue that ensuring gender equality in all facets of human endeavour is significant for the following reasons². It saves lives, results in better health care delivery, is conducive for business, creates an inclusive economy, leads to better legal protection, better racial equality, reduces poverty, reduces human trafficking, and leads to peace. This thus implies that gender equality is relevant in both peaceful times and during periods of instability, where humanitarian crises have emerged. This depicts that gender equality and inclusivity are relevant considerations in humanitarian efforts to alleviate suffering and preserve dignity in conflicts.³ Armed conflict negatively affects both men and women as it knows no bounds. This justifies why in recent years, there have been efforts to integrate gender issues and promote gender equality in humanitarian actions. This is based on the growing recognition of the gendered impacts of armed conflicts and specific barriers that limit access to humanitarian assistance for women, girls and even marginalized groups⁴. In this light, there have

¹ USAID Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality, 2024 Accessed from <https://www.usaid.gov/sdgs/sdg5>.

² SOKEN-HUBERTY Emmaline, 10 Reasons Why Gender Equality is Important, 2024. Accessed from <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/10-reasons-why-gender-equality-is-important/>.

³ PINNINGTON Rose, Gender, inclusion and humanitarian principles in conflict contexts, 2023. Accessed from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023-12-13-gender-inclusion-humanitarian-principles-pinnington_0.pdf, p. 5.

⁴ PINNINGTON (R), op. cit.

been advocacies for a shift in emphasis to the protection and provision of gender-based violence services, as well as efforts to empower conflict-affected women and support their livelihoods. According to the *Gender in Humanitarian Action Handbook* published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), a forum of the UN System as cited in PINNINGTON, there is a need for gender issues to be integrated across multiple aspects of humanitarian action. Some of these interventions range from cash-based intervention to food security, shelter, education and health⁵.

Armed conflicts lead to humanitarian crises. Some of these humanitarian crises ranged from mass killings, displacement of the population, torture, rape, disruption of schooling to limited access to health care. A glaring example of a conflict which has led to untold humanitarian crises is the ongoing armed conflict in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. This conflict began in 2016 as a peaceful strike action led by common law lawyers and English-speaking teacher's trade unions against what they qualified as the marginalization of the Anglo-Saxon sub-systems of education and judiciary. This has to date metamorphosed into an armed conflict between government forces and non-state armed groups in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. These non-state armed groups have been demanding the separation of the English-speaking regions from Cameroon to form an independent state.⁶ This conflict has led to the killing of more than 6000 civilians by the belligerents, the displacement of more than 650, 000 people, and multiple cases of rape, torture have also been reported⁷. Human Rights Watch in its 2024 report has noted that more than 1.7 million persons need humanitarian aid as a result of this armed conflict⁸.

In response to this humanitarian crisis in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, the Cameroon government, created the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan (EHAP) in 2018. This plan offers assistance to victims of the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions. It targets mostly internally displaced persons, the injured, maimed, handicapped orphans and victims whose properties have been destroyed. The General Coordinator of this plan is the Minister of Territorial Administration, assisted by the Minister in charge of External Relations. For the discharge of its duties; the plan has a Central Unit in Yaounde at the Ministry of Territorial Administration, and two Regional Annexes in the regional headquarters of the North-West and the South-West regions. *Although this plan since its creation in 2018 has been of immense assistance to IDPs, its activities do not reflect Cameroon's commitment to mainstreaming gender in humanitarian*

⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

⁶ MENGNIJO THOMAS Tardzenyuy and FAI EUGENE Ndzegham, "The role of Anglophone Pressure Groups in the identification and setting the Agenda for the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: A Policy Analysis from the Systems Approach", *African Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 12, Number 2, February 2021, pp 47-62.

⁷ Human Rights Watch Report (2024). Cameroon Events of 2023. Accessed from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/cameroon>.

⁸ Ibid.

assistance as stated in the National Action Plan of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). What accounts for this state of affairs ? There is a systematic gender-blind approach, which this plan continues to face in the discharge of its functions. This is the main issue at stake that this write-up sets out to reconcile.

It is from this perspective, that this write-up is dedicated to doing a gender analysis of the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan on IDPs during the Anglophone crisis in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. In this light, it has specifically focused on the following:

1. An assessment of the gender sensitivity of the objectives of EHAP
2. An appraisal of the profile of persons internally displaced by the Anglophone crisis
3. A gender analysis of the benefits of EHAP
4. An examination of the challenges hindering the effective provision of humanitarian assistance by EHAP.

Conceptual Clarifications

To avoid ambiguity, the main concepts related to this write-up, which warrants clarity are gender analysis, humanitarian assistance, Anglophone crisis and Internally Displaced Persons:

- *Gender Analysis*

The concept of gender analysis adopted in this study has been operationalized from the position of the European Institute for Gender Equality⁹. According to this Institute, gender analysis refers to the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets and decision-making powers between women and men in their assigned gender roles. It further notes that gender analysis is to identify and address gender inequalities by highlighting the following criteria:

- Acknowledging differences between and among women and men, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power ;
- Ensuring that the different needs of women and men are identified and addressed at all stages of the policy cycle ;
- Recognizing that policies, programmes and projects can have different effects on women and men ;
- Seeking and articulating the viewpoints of women and men and making their contribution a critical part of developing policies, programmes and projects ;
- Promoting women's participation and engagement in community, political and economic life ;
- Promoting better informed gender-responsive and effective interventions.

⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality (2024). Gender Analysis. Accessed from https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gender-analysis?language_content_entity=en.

Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian Assistance refers to help, protection and advocacy in response to humanitarian needs resulting from natural hazards, armed conflict or other causes, or emergency response preparedness¹⁰. It aims to save lives and reduce suffering in the short term, and in such a way as to preserve people's dignity and open the way to recovery and durable solutions to displacement. Humanitarian assistance is based on the premise that human suffering should be prevented and alleviated wherever it happens. Humanitarian Assistance can take different forms. These can include food, and non-food items, such as shelter, health care, mental health and psycho-social support, water and sanitation, cash transfers, education, child nutrition and protection¹¹. Humanitarian assistance in this write-up is limited to the EHAP, a structure which was created on the hills of the Anglophone crisis to cater for the welfare of persons displaced by the conflict.

Anglophone Crisis

The Anglophone crisis in the North West and South West regions within the study refers to a series of strike actions and demonstrations initiated by the common law lawyers, English-speaking teachers' trade unions, students of the University of Buea and the youths which began in October 2016 in these regions¹². Four main events contributed to the acceleration of this crisis as follows: The first event which led to the crisis was the series of court sessions boycotts which were initiated by the common law lawyers in the two English-speaking regions from the 14th of October 2016. The second event was a youth demonstration at the City Chemist Roundabout in Bamenda on the 21st of November 2016. This protest was led by a Pidgin English Newscaster of Abakwa FM Radio Station, Mr. Mancho Bibixy. The third event that led to this crisis was a sit-in strike action, which was initiated by English-speaking teachers' trade unions in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. This sit-in strike began on November 21st, 2016 by six English-speaking teachers' trade unions. The fourth issue which marked the Anglophone crisis was a series of youthful demonstrations in Bamenda and its environs on the 8th of December 2016. Since 2017, this crisis has taken an armed struggle between government forces, and non-state armed groups demanding secession from Cameroon.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

The concept of internally displaced persons is operationalized from the position of the UN Guiding Principles on International Displacement. According to this principle, internally displaced persons refers to persons or a group of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual

¹⁰ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2015). Introduction To Humanitarian Action: A Brief Guide For Resident Coordinators. Accessed from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2016-04/rc_guide_31_october_2015_webversion_final.pdf.

¹¹ BALL Duncun, 12 Types of Humanitarian Aid, 2024. Accessed from <https://humanitariancareers.com/humanitarian-aid-types/>.

¹² MENGNOJO (T-T), op, cit.

residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border¹³. For the sake of this study, IDPs are limited to persons forcefully displaced by the Anglophone crisis.

Theoretical Considerations: *The Instrumentalist Theory of Gender in Humanitarian Aid*

To have a better understanding of the gender analysis of the works of EHAP, the Instrumentalist Theory of Gender in Humanitarian Aid has been used as an analytical tool. This Theory has been used to demonstrate the gender dimension of the workings of the EHAP on the one hand, as well as the loopholes related to the functioning of the EHAP from a gender perspective. The main proponent of this theory is Elisabeth OLIVIUS. This theory is premised on the assumption that any form of humanitarian aid rests on an understanding of gender as differences between women and men¹⁴. In this light, it argues that women and men are thought to be differently affected by and respond in different ways to, emergencies and displacement.

It notes that existing gender differences should not only be taken into account in program design and implementation but they should also be utilized to achieve humanitarian goals most efficiently. In particular, it highlights that women are assumed to possess gender-specific qualities and capacities that are seen as particularly important to harness. By the reproductive roles women fulfill, they are seen as strategic partners whose active participation facilitates effective and efficient programs.¹⁵ It further notes that aid services distributed during humanitarian crises are items, such as water, food and sanitary items. It is on this basis that the theory has concluded that having women in particular involved in the distribution of food and having women collect food rations is seen as an essential strategy to ensure that food resources are put to the best possible use¹⁶.

This Theory is advantageous in that while noting the significance of men and women in humanitarian assistance, it portrays a positive and active image of women in this endeavour, by describing women as strategic humanitarian partners, important actors and key stakeholders, and their participation in the planning, design and implementation of humanitarian programs should be encouraged.

Methodology of the Study

¹³ UNHCR Handbook (2014). IDP definition. Accessed from <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/legal-framework/idp-definition>.

¹⁴¹⁴ OLIVIUS Elisabeth Three Approaches to Gender in Humanitarian Aid Findings from a Study of Humanitarian Aid to Refugees in Thailand and Bangladesh, Department of Political Science & Umeå Centre for Gender Studies 2014. Accessed from <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:724367/FULLTEXT01.pdf>, p. 9.

¹⁵ OLIVIUS (E), op., cit., p. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

The study employed the mixed-methods approach with the adoption of qualitative and quantitative methods. The convergent parallel design was used for this study. JOHN W. Creswell and VICKY L. PLANO Clark¹⁷ Viewed the convergent parallel design as the process in which the researcher collects and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data during the same phase of the research process, analyses separately and then merges the two sets of findings into an overall interpretation to provide a better understanding of the research problem. For this study, both the quantitative and qualitative research methods occurred concurrently in all phases and the researcher equally prioritised both methods.

Structured and semi-structured interview guides were used to collect data from respondents with IDPs administered structured interview guide and the EHAP office unstructured. As a result of the fluidity and inconsistency in recorded statistics on the number of Internally Displaced Persons, the article adopted what is called the saturation point in acquiring a sample size. In this case, saturation occurred when adding more respondents to the study did not result in additional perspectives or information, especially when the researchers had collected sufficient information valuable for the study. Therefore after interviewing twenty (20) IDPS, the researchers realized valuable information had been acquired as most of the information kept repeating. This was then supported and corroborated by the interview with the key informant.

A triangulation approach was adopted in data processing, analysis and interpretation of results. Before the data processing, the structured interviews that were not properly administered were sorted out. The valid interviews were then attributed codes for easy association with the database for purposes of cross-verification. Due to the huge number of open-ended questions, data analysis comprised a well-demarcated phase, content analysis and pre-coding¹⁸. The exercise produced a code list of the major concepts. For example, an umbrella term was identified from the different perspectives of the respondents on a particular question. These codes were accompanied by their descriptions. All the instances where concepts related to a given code emerged from the data were entered into the database to facilitate counting and integration in other analytical processes. Data from close-ended questions were entered and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.0.

From this method, this write-up is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the profile of IDPs in the North West Region and the gender analysis of the decree creating the EHAP (**Part One**), while the second part on the other hand centers on the gender analysis of the benefits of IDPs from the EHAP and the main challenges faced (**Part Two**).

¹⁷ JOHN W. Creswell and VICKI L. PLANO Clark, *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2011.

¹⁸ SARANTAKOS Sotirious Social Research. 2nd Edition, MacMillan Education Australia, South Melbourne 1998.

I- THE PROFILE OF IDPs IN THE NORTH WEST REGION AND THE GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE DEGREE CREATING THE EHAP

This first part focuses on the profile of IDPs of the Anglophone Crisis (1.1) and a gender analysis of the objectives of the EHAP (1.2.).

A- Profiling Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of the Anglophone Crisis in the North West Regions

This section presents findings on the socio-demographic characteristics of IDPs in the North West Region in terms of sex, age, marital status; number of years in marriage, number of children, number of members in the household, level of education, prior occupation, number of years displaced and town of residence.

a. Sex of Respondents

We had 50% women and 50% men respondents as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by their Sex

Sex	N	%
Female	10	50
Male	10	50
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

An estimated 466500 persons (EHAP, 2024) have been displaced from the North West Region since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis in 2016. As stated by the NW coordinator of the EHAP office, “...the Centre has catered for at least 20,000 IDPs from all over the region with women being more of the beneficiaries...”. The coordinator further explained that “... women are more vulnerable during crisis and tend to be more affected by the outcome of crisis... which explains why there are more of the beneficiaries at the Centre...”

a. Age Range of Respondents

The majority of the beneficiaries interviewed fall between the age range of 31-40 years (50%), followed by beneficiaries within the age range of 41-50 years (25%), 21-30 years (15%) and 51 and above years (10%) as seen on the Table below.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by their Age Range

Age Range	N	%
21-30 years	03	15
31-40years	10	50
41-50years	05	25
51 and above years	02	10
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

A disaggregation of data between the sex and age range of beneficiaries illustrates that both men and women (50% each) fall within the age range of 31-40 years.

Table 3: Disaggregated Data on Sex and Age Range

Sex	Age Range									
	21-30		31-40		41-50		61 and above		Total	
	n	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	02	20	05	50	03	30	00	00	10	100
Male	01	10	05	50	02	20	02	20	10	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

a. Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by their marital status

Marital Status	N	%
Married	10	50
Single	05	25
Widow/Widower	04	20
Separated	01	05
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Most of those who were widows or lost their partners as a result of the crisis and therefore were left with the responsibility of being of being female heads of house. Those (20%) female who qualified themselves as single were married before the crisis but got separated/or their partners abandoned them in the process of displacement for greener pastures and have remained incommunicado as seen in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Disaggregated Data on Sex and Marital Status

Sex	Marital Status									
	Married		Single		Widow/Widower		Separated		Total	
	n	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%
Female	03	30	02	20	04	40	01	10	10	100
Male	07	70	03	30	00	00	00	00	10	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

b. Number of years in marriage

Most of the respondents have been married between 5 to 20 years; 10% each were married between 5-10 years, another between 11-15 years and the last between 16 to 20 years. 15% were married for at least 25 years and more while 5% have been in marriage for less than 5 years

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by number of years in marriage

Years in Marriage	N	%
Less than 5 years	01	05
5-10 years	02	10
11-15 years	02	10
16 Among -20 years	02	10
25 years and above	03	15
Total	10	50

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

c. Number of Children

Among the beneficiaries, a majority (80%) had at least 1 -5 children while 20% had at least 6-10 children as illustrated below.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by number of Children

Number Children	of N	%
1- 5	16	80
6- 10	04	20
Total	20	50

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

d. Members of the household

Even though most of the respondents had just 1-5 children, the household size of the majority (70) of the beneficiaries was between 6-10 members. Ten percent had 11 members and above while 20% had between 1-5 members in their household as seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to number of members in the household

Members of the household	N	%
1-5	04	20
6-10	14	70
11 and above	02	10
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork 2024

The household size of the majority of the beneficiaries was huge because they were either hosting displaced family members from other remote areas or were

relatives who had been displaced and found themselves in town with no shelter. They were therefore obliged to a single room and live for survival.

e. Level of Education

Some (30%) of the beneficiaries had no formal education while 15% each had achieved primary and secondary education. Twenty per cent have been up to high school, 15% post the graduate level and 5% had some form of vocational training as seen below.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to their level of Education

Level of Education	N	%
No formal education	06	30
Primary	03	15
Secondary	03	15
High School	04	20
University/Post Graduate	03	15
Vocational Training	01	05
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The table below shows that women beneficiaries were the least educated while the men were more educated.

Table 9: Disaggregated data by sex and Level of education

Sex	Level of Education												Total	
	no formal education		Primary		Secondary		High School		University/Post Graduate		Vocational Training		N	%
	n		n		n		N		n		n			
Female	5	50	1	10	3	30	0	00	0	00	01	10	10	100
Male	1	10	2	20	0	00	4	40	3	30	00	100	10	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

A majority of the beneficiaries did not have formal employment; 45% were unemployed by another 45% were in petit businesses (informal businesses). Just 10% had formal employment as illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents by their occupation after displacement

Occupation	N	%
unemployed	09	45
Informal employment	09	45
Formal employment	02	10
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

From the disaggregated table below, the majority (80%) of those who were unemployed were women while the majority (70%) of those in informal employment were men.

Table 11: Disaggregation of respondents by their sex and occupation

Sex	Occupation						Total	
	unemployed		Informal employment		Formal Employment			
	N	%	N	%	n	%	N	%It
Female	8	80	2	20	0	00	10	100
Male	1	10	7	70	2	20	10	10

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

It must be noted that most of the women beneficiaries who are now unemployed after displacement previously had a source of livelihood before displacement. A female between the ages of 21-30 years reiterated this by explaining, "... I was a seamstress before the crisis but when the crisis started everything was burnt and I had to run for my life and the family to seek refuge. Now I am just a housewife with no source of income...". Another female, between the ages of 51-60 years added that, "...before displacement I was selling food stuff harvested from my farm... but today since I no longer have access to the farm because it is now occupied by the Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), I am left unemployed...". In addition, a female Muslim between the ages of 31-40 years said, "...in Mbengwi, I had my cows that was supporting me... but after displacement, I now clean people's houses to be able to take care of my children..."

f. Number of Years Displaced.

Most of the beneficiaries were IDPs who were displaced at the beginning of the crisis. Eighty-five per cent of them have been displaced for at least 5-8 years. Given the fact that the crisis is almost eight years, it means they were among the risk zones that were affected and displaced when the crisis started.

Table 12: Number of years displaced

Number of Years displaced	N	%
1 – 4 years	03	15
5 – 8 years	17	85
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

g. Place of Origin

Some (40%) of the respondents are from Mezam, 30% from Ngoketunjia, 25% from Momo and 5% from Bui as seen below.

Table 13: Distribution of respondents by their place of origin

Place of Origin	N	%
Mezam	08	40
Ngoketunjia	06	30
Momo	05	25
Bui	01	05
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

h. Previous place of residence

Most of the beneficiaries were based in their homeland. Thirty per cent were previously in areas in Mezam, another 30% in Ngoketunjia, 15% in Momo, 10% in Boyo and 5% in Menchum. However, with the crisis, they were all displaced to Bamenda 1 in Mezam where it is safer.

Table 14: Distribution of respondents by their previous place of residence

Previous place of residence	N	%
Mezam	6	30
Boyo	2	10
Menchum	1	5.0
Ngoketunjia	6	30
Momo	3	15
Bui	2	10
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Looking at the disaggregated between the number of years displaced and the previous place of residence, we realize that most of those who were in the divisions in the interior and the areas considered very unsafe (red zones) in the other divisions were those who have been displaced for long periods.

Table 15: Disaggregated data of the number of years displaced and Previous residence

Number of years displaced	Previous place of residence										Total	
	Mezam		Boyo		Menchum		Ngoketunjia		Momo		Bui	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1-4	2	66.7	0	00	0	00	0	00	1	33.3	0	00
5-8	4	23.5	2	11.8	1	05.9	6	35.3	2	11.8	2	11.8
											03	100
											17	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

b. Persons with special needs

10% (Ten per cent) of the respondents were persons living with disabilities as seen below:

Table 16: Distribution of respondents according to their special needs

A person with Special needs	N	%
Yes	02	10
No	18	90
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

c. Religion

The majority (65%) of respondents were Christians while 35% were Muslims as illustrated below:

Table 17: Distribution of respondents by their religion

Religion	N	%
Christians	13	65
Muslim	07	35
Total	20	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

A- Gender Analysis of the objectives of the Decree creating the EHAP

A special plan to assist internally Displaced persons (IDPs) and victims of abuses in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon was created as a result of the enormous displacement of people during the Anglophone Crisis. This was an 18-month Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan unveiled in Yaoundé on Wednesday 20 June 2018 by the Prime Minister, Head of government. It was created following the Prime Ministerial Prime Minister Order No. 127/CAB/PM of 22 NOV 2018, by Law No. 86/016 of 6 December 1986 to reorganize civil protection in Cameroon, Decree No. 98/031 of 9 March 1998 to organize emergency management and major risk relief plans in Cameroon. The structure was created following Order N^o. 127/CAB/PM of 22 November 2018 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the Centre for the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance in the North-West and South-West Regions. The Centre was responsible for¹⁹ :

- Coordinating all actions related to assisting victims of the crisis in the North West and South West Regions, especially internally displaced persons, the injured, maimed, and handicapped. Orphans, victims of destruction of property, host communities and Cameroonian Refugees ;

¹⁹ Order No 127/CAP/PM OF 22 November 2018 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the Centre for the coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance in the North West and South West Regions.

- Ensuring a synergy and coordinating the actions of the various national and international stakeholders involved in the implementation of the humanitarian assistance plan ;
- Organizing meetings and coordinating the actions of the various national and international stakeholders involved in the implementation of the humanitarian assistance plan ;
- Ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of the humanitarian assistance plan ;
- Carrying out other duties assigned to it within the framework of its power.

Analyzing the decree creating this Centre and its objectives and Cameroon's National Action Plan for the 1325 Resolution on Women's Peace and Security in Cameroon (2018-2020) along with other documents, we are left with many questions. The 1325 Resolution demonstrates the increased awareness of States on the effects of armed conflicts and humanitarian crises on men/women/girls. Cameroon's analysis of the crisis reveals that women and girls pay the heaviest price in conflict; therefore, they must be stakeholders in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and post-conflict socio-economic, political and cultural reconstruction.

It is also made clear that women and girls who represent about 50% of the people in distress are particularly affected by humanitarian situations in Cameroon. The impact of conflicts on women and girls is often tragic for two reasons; the violation of their physical integrity as noticed in the recurrent crisis areas and most affected areas and the fact that it seriously affects their ability to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

It is also stated in its National Action Plan for Women Peace and Security that by 2020 Cameroon is committed and indebted to among others: integrating gender dimension in emergency aid, during reconstruction in the course of and after armed conflicts as well as the management of conflict, and strengthen institutional mechanisms and the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the consolidation of gender in the domain of peace, security, prevention and resolution of conflict.

From the above and assessing the decree created, you realize that the decree is not only generic but is far from fulfilling its commitment towards mainstreaming gender in emergency aid.

The gender unawareness of the decree is further reinforced by the interview with the representatives of the Centre to understand how gender was integrated into implementation. It should be noted that the items for donations were identified without any consultation with the IDPs concerned. The representative of the Centre stated, *"... It should be noted that the Civil protection service at the Ministry of Territorial and Administration decided on the key items that are required when people are displaced... During a meeting convened by the stakeholder involved, they assessed that when IDPs flee from their homes, there are basic needs they need..."*

In addition, the representative stated that *"...the Centre assist needs of IDPs with no specificities on women, however, the Centre puts in mind that since women*

are more vulnerable during crisis, they target them more. Special focus was given to women, breastfeeding women, and older men. Women were more favoured than men in donations, especially vulnerable...". The text did not have specificities on women's needs..." *The representative added that "...it was an emergency humanitarian plan – some of these things were not taken into consideration in the planning. It was meant to assist the immediate need of IDPs – it was supposed to be an 18-month plan which then extended with the crisis..."* This is contrary to the Gender in Humanitarian Aid theory which stipulates that any form of humanitarian aid must rest on an understanding of gender differences between women and men. It is also contrary to the commitments stated in Cameroon's National Action Plan of UNSCR 1325.

Even though the Centre was an Emergency Humanitarian Plan, it has failed to go by Cameroon's commitment to integrating gender dimension in emergency aid. In addition, there is a shortcoming in collecting gender-disaggregated data for further intervention. It should be noted that filing at the Centre was done based on Names, names of dependents, Identity Card Numbers, former residence, present residence and telephone numbers. We realise that there are no statistics that can inform an inclusive study or gender analysis.

Furthermore, about its objective of ensuring synergy and coordinating the actions of the various national and international stakeholders involved in the implementation of the humanitarian assistance plan, which also falls in line with the National Action Plan for WSP on strengthening institutions, the representative of the Centre reiterated that *"...EHAP coordinates activities of all NGOs doing humanitarian work. The Centre is like a watchdog to the activities of other NGOs. The Centre has to see the distributions to be given to IDPs to avoid exaggerations of numbers from the NGOs. It's our role to decide locations to create more impact..."*. However, it must be noted that the gender aspect is not included in their mandate/objective for coordination.

II- GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE BENEFITS OF IDPs FROM THE EHAPs AND ITS CHALLENGES

This second part has dwelt on an examination of the benefits obtained from the EHAP (2.1) as well as the challenges that have hindered EHAP from effectively dispatching its humanitarian assistance to IDPs (2.2).

A) The benefits of IDPs from the EHAP

To have an understanding of how IDPs benefited from the EHAP, it is significant to begin by highlighting the main needs of these persons in their host communities due to displacements from their home communities.

a) The main needs of IDPs in their host communities

Numerous needs were highlighted by IDPs, who were beneficiaries of the EHAP due to their displacement from their home communities. Their needs included: shelter (12.5%), lack of food (13.5%), and limited access to non-food items

(13.5%). Limited access to health care (13.5%), no capital (12.2%), no education for children (12.2%), loss of means of livelihood (9.5%), inadequate access to Sexual and reproductive health facilities with dignity kits being a priority (10.1%) and loss of loved ones (2.7%) as illustrated below.

Table 18: Distribution of respondents according to need during displacement

Challenges faced during displacement	N	%
Shelter	19	12.5
Lack of foodstuff	20	13.5
Non-food items	20	13.5
Loss of means of livelihood	14	09.5
Limited access to health facilities	20	13.5
Inadequate access to SRHR	15	10.1
Loss of loved ones	04	02.7
No capital	18	12.2
No education for children	18	12.2
MRS	148	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 19: Distribution of respondents by their gender-specific challenges

Challenges faced during displacement	Sex			
	Female n	%	Male N	%
Shelter	10	13.2	09	12.5
Lack of foodstuff	10	13.2	10	13.9
Non-food items	10	13.2	10	13.9
Loss of means of livelihood	06	07.8	08	11.1
Limited access to health facilities	10	13.2	10	13.9
Inadequate access to SRHR	09	11.8	06	08.3
Loss of loved ones	03	03.9	01	01.4
No capital	10	13.2	08	11.1
No education for children	08	10.5	10	13.9
Total	76	100	72	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Most men acknowledged that the loss of their source of livelihood (income) has made it difficult for them to be able to cater for their families. A married man of between 41 and 50 years explained that "*... as a man, I was more affected because I lost my source of livelihood...*" Another added, "*... even though I had no job, I had to prepare my wife for delivery even though I had done it before the crisis displaced us and the things burnt with other items in our house...*". A female between the age ranges of 31-40 years also lamented that "*... I lost my husband as a result of the crisis.... so I have to cater for the family by myself...*"

Access to reproductive health and dignity kits was identified by both sexes, though with more emphasis on women because, men noted that when these kits are limited and their wives do not have access to them, it negatively affects their mental health, as they are often not at peace with themselves. As a consequence of displacement and the consequent loss of a source of livelihood, the beneficiaries emphasized the challenge of having no finances to be able to start up a living.

b) The diverse needs received by IDPs from the EHAP

Fieldwork demonstrated that since its creation in 2018, IDPs in the North West Region have received diverse items from the EHAP (a), which have not only been beneficial to them in different ways (b) but have affected gender relations in households (c), as follows :

i- Donations received from the EHAP

Among the items received from the EHAP by the IDPs were blankets (23.9%), mattresses (25.4%), toiletries (22.4%) and food items (28.4%) as shown in a multiple response set table below:

Table 20: Distribution of respondents according to donations received from the Centre

Donations received from the centre	N	%
Blankets	16	23.9
Mattress	17	25.4
Toiletries	15	22.4
Food items	19	28.4%
MRS	148	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

To corroborate the donations received by the beneficiaries, the coordinator enumerated the different items that the plan was giving out to the IDPs, which were, "...mattress, buckets, rice, oil, sardine, Savon, oil, blankets, financial assistance that ranged from 10.000FCFA to 30.000FCFA...". During interviews, several beneficiaries indicated that they did not receive all the items that were being donated from the EHAP Centre. In an interview with the Coordinnator to understand the disparities in the distribution of items from the Centre, the Coordinator explained that, "...normally all the IDPs were destined to receive same donations, however, these donations also depended on the means/items that were available at the time of donation... For example, at the time of some donations, items like rice or mattresses might have been short in supply, so some people will not benefit at the moment. Also, it must be noted that some of the donations depended on the size of the families concerned...".

It is worth noting that money was also part of the donations. As stipulated by the coordinator, the amount ranged from 10.000 to 30.000 FCFA. The money was given as transportation for the IDPs to be able to get back to their homes. Some beneficiaries however testify that they used the money to start up small businesses or

to start paying rents for their homes as they had no shelter. A Single mother of between 31-40 years supported this fact by explaining that, “... *I used the 10.000 FCFA given to me for transportation and rice to start up a business of cooking for to sell...*”. Another Muslim female, a widower added that “...*the money was used to buy books for my children to go back to school...*” A male of between 41-50 years said, “...*I used the money as part rents to acquire shelter for my family...*”

ii) *Benefits derived by IDPs from the donations of EHAP*

The beneficiaries identified several benefits they acquired from the donations received from the EHAP Centre. Among them were: starting a business (8.5%), providing food to the children/family (28.8%), reducing stress (33.9%) and serving as a bed for the family (28.8%) illustrated in Table 21 below.

Table 21: Benefits of donation from the Centre

Benefits of donation	N	%
Started a business	05	08.5
Provided food to the children/family	17	28.8
Reduced stress	20	33.9
Served as a bed for the family	17	28.8
MRS	59	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

In addition to the benefits explained above, the beneficiaries who benefited from the mattress acknowledged that it was a great relief for them as they did not have anything to sleep on. The mattresses were used and are still being used today to sleep on even though the quality has reduced. The beneficiaries equally highlighted the fact that the donations were a great relief to some of the challenges they were facing at the time. The Coordinator corroborated this fact by adding, “...*I think the donations were a great relief to the IDPs... some have expressed their gratitude and relief after receiving the donations...!* The foodstuffs given were also quite instrumental as most of the displaced children were able to feed – improve on their nutritional level as a result of that”. A female Muslim widow explained that, ‘...*my children practically did not have food, ...so the donation enabled me to be able to provide for my children...*”

iii) *Perspective on women and men’s participation in household gender relations and benefits as a result of receiving humanitarian assistance.*

In a bid to understand the changes in household gender relations and to boost the discussions above, women and men respondents were interrogated on their decision-making power before and after displacement. Beneficiaries expressed mixed feelings as far as decision-making in the household before and after displacement. A male respondent between the ages of 31-40 years averred that ‘...*before displacement, men were the ones making decisions about key issues in the home like health, feeding, investments, number of children etc. However, after displacement, women*

are more in charge of these decisions because a lot of men have either been killed or separated from their families for greener pastures...". Another man, between 41 to 50 years supported this argument adding that, *'...we got separated during displacement so my wife had to be in charge of all these responsibilities...'*". These aspects emphasize the aspect that displacement does not only separate families but also changes dynamics in gender relations both inter and intra-household.

Table 24: Distribution of respondents by their perspective on women and men's participation in household gender relations and benefits as a result of receiving humanitarian assistance.

Statements	Sex											
	Female						Male					
	Agreed n	%	Disagreed N	%	Neutral n	%	Agreed N	%	Disagreed n	%	Neutral n	%
Women are more likely than men to spend their income from humanitarian donations on children's needs	09	10.3	1	100	0	00	07	08.9	0	00	3	25
The Centre serves as a cushion to households which are crumbling in the face of displacement	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	10	12.8	0	00	0	00
Women/men benefiting from the Centre have changed household gender relations positively	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	10	12.8	0	00	0	00
Women's/men's decision-making power in the household has increased due to the benefits they got from the Centre	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	08	10.3	0	00	2	16.7
The program has improved the well-being of both women and children in households	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	08	10.3	0	00	2	16.7
The program has enabled women/men to fulfil their responsibilities, as mothers and heads of households	09	10.3	0	00	1	50	08	10.3	0	00	2	16.7
The proceeds from the Centre are the main source of income for their families	09	10.3	0	00	1	50	07	08.9	0	00	3	25
Women/men develop survival skills as a result of the benefits from the Centre	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	10	12.8	0	00	0	00
The Centre has contributed immensely to the well-being of IDPs	10	11.5	0	00	0	00	10	12.8	0	00	0	00
Total	87	100	01	100	02	100	78	100	00	00	12	100

Another beneficiary, a female between the ages of 31-40 years reiterated that “...before displacement, my husband was the one taking key discussions in the household, however, after displacement, we are both taking these decisions. Displacement affected my husband a lot, he even lost his source of livelihood and had to look for alternative sources to take care of the family...”. This was supported during the interview with the Coordinator. He stated that, “...you could realise that the crisis affected a lot of people, especially men. Some men who were comfortable, with their businesses before displacements and lost their businesses in the displacement cried during donations. They envisioned how they had been reduced to 'beggars', with donations that are not even commensurate to anything they had lost...”. Another male respondent (51 and above years) however added that, “...before and after displacement, decisions in our household were taken by both I and my wife...we would dialogue and come to a consensus on what is best for the family...”.

In addition, other respondents thought that, whether with displacement or not, men as heads of household are subjected to carry these responsibilities. This was reiterated by a 31-40-year-old male who said, “...as a man, I must carry/take decisions on these responsibilities because I am the head of household...”. This discussion however brings to question the aspect of women becoming heads of households also as a result of separation from spouse during displacements or loss of spouse. Respondents who had lost their spouses as a result of the crisis were obliged to make these decisions for their families.

Some respondents were also of the opinion that because they do not have a source of income/livelihood, they cannot participate in household decision-making, so their husbands makes the decisions for the families. A female, 21-30 years of age asserted that, “... my husband makes the decisions because I don't have any means of livelihood...Since I do not have any source of income, it is difficult for me to make any decisions...the crisis had affected us a lot and trying to discuss certain issues tends to aggression...,”.

The general impression from our male respondents was that the crisis has affected a lot of men and disrupted their ability to handle their traditional male responsibilities. The crisis has disrupted gender relations with women taking up responsibilities that were traditionally perceived as male roles. Displacement has led to an increase in all forms of violence. The tensions of conflict and the frustration, powerlessness and loss of traditional male roles associated with displacement are being manifested in an increased incidence of domestic violence against women. The underlying acceptance of violence against women which already existed has become more outwardly acceptable in the conflict situation with worsening effects. This has also been exacerbated by the high level of dependency experienced by women as they lost their farms and other sources of livelihood in displacement.

B- Challenges hindering effective humanitarian assistance by EHAP to IDPs

Humanitarian assistance to IDPs is limited due to some challenges faced by both the IDPs and EHAP, as examined below:

1- Challenges faced by the IDPS

Among the other challenges faced by the IDPs, were Gender specific barriers faced by the IDPs. The challenges identified by the respondents were as follows:

i) *Gender-Specific barriers faced by IDPs*

Several gender-specific needs were identified by the beneficiaries at the Centre, among which were; dignity kits (12.9%), shelter (18.8%), household items (13.9%), scholarship for children (17.8%), capital (15.8%), Security (6.9%), fear (6.9%), specific needs for Persons with Disability (2%) as summarized below:

Table 22: Distribution of respondents according to their gender-specific needs

Gender-specific barriers	N	%
Dignity kits	13	12.9
Vocational Centers	04	04.0
Shelter	19	18.8
Household items	14	13.9
Scholarship for children	18	17.8
PWD specific needs	02	02.0
Fear	07	06.9
Security	07	06.9
Capital	16	15.8
Others	01	01.0
MRS	104	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Given the table above establishing the relationship between the gender-specific needs of the beneficiaries and their sex, it is evident that women articulated their needs more around issues that cater for their sexual and reproductive health- dignity kits especially. Women also identified shelter as one of their greatest needs due to their displacement from home. Capital (money) was also identified as one of the key needs for both men and women. This was raised by all the IDPs interviewed. It is very obvious as they all lost their homes and some of their means of livelihood.

Men on the other hand emphasized the need for shelter. Being with their families, shelter was certainly imperative for them. Scholarship for children was also among the pressing needs for men as their children were either not going to school due to displacement or they could not secure enough money to send them to new schools in their host communities. In addition, men proposed vocational training centres that could help with skills building for both men and women that can serve as a support system for the family. Men, however, also advocated for reproductive products, a male between the ages of 31-40 explained that “...for our women not to have access to these dignity kits, it is also a stressor for us...”

Fear and insecurity were some of the gender-specific challenges identified by male respondents during the interviews. Men lamented that they live in constant fear of being arrested or coerced into joining the struggle by the State Security Forces and NSAGs respectively. Some even gave testimonies of having been kidnapped and ransom collected by NSAGs because they refused to join them in the fighting. A female between 21-30 years old supported this fact by explaining that, *‘...my husband was kidnapped and asked 6 million FCFA, my brother also kidnapped with 600000FCFA demanded.... this led me to develop High Blood Pressure and today I have been warned in the hospital not to put to birth again because of my unstable health....’*. Another female supported this argument by saying that, *“...my husband lost all his cattle to the NSAGs... our house burnt and threatened to be kidnapped...”*. Another respondent, a male between 31-40 years added that, *‘...I was quarantined due to insecurity.... stigmatisation from host community also kept us in permanent fear of the unknown...’*. He also added that, *“...the fact that some of us were civil servants made us an automatic target by the NSAGs...we therefore are living in constant fear of the unknown”*.

Table 23: Cross-tabulation between sex and Gender-specific needs of Respondents

Gender-Specific barriers	Sex			
	Female		Male	
	n	%	n	%
Dignity kits	08	19.5	05	08.3
Vocational centers	00	00	04	06.7
Shelter	09	21.9	10	16.7
Household items	08	19.5	06	10.0
Scholarship for children	08	19.5	10	16.7
PWD specific needs	00	00	02	03.0
Fear	00	00	07	11.7
Insecurity	00	00	07	11.7
Capital	08	19.5	08	13.3
Others	00	00	01	01.7
Total	41	100	60	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 24 aptly portrays how household decision-making and intra-household power relations have greatly been influenced with women and men benefiting from donations from the EHAP Centre. Though the roles and responsibilities carried out by women are more directed to their traditional gender roles, women's emancipation has also greatly improved as they now make decisions concerning their livelihood and that of their families. The table below vividly explains beneficiaries' level of agreement or disagreement with statements that explain the influence of humanitarian donations to women and men, intra-household power relations and its contribution to their wellbeing.

The majority of the women were in support of the statement that women are more likely than men to spend their income from humanitarian assistance on

their children. This was corroborated by the majority of the men who strongly agreed with the assertion. The three neutral men thought that both sexes were liable to take care of their children through humanitarian assistance. It is worthy to note that, the majority of men who agreed to this assertion said, *“...it is obvious because it is women’s nature (reproductive role) to take care of children...so they must always use such resources for that purpose...”*.

On the issue of donations from the EHAP Centre serving as a cushion to households in the phase of economic crisis, both men and women strongly agreed. This was even reinforced by the statement that women and men benefiting from the EHAP Centre have changed household gender relations positively. Again, the majority of men and women strongly agreed that women and men's decision-making power in the household has increased due to donations from the EHAP Centre. A few men were however neutral about this assertion. Some men thought that *“...the donations were temporal and therefore could not help mitigate the effects that the crisis has had on their traditional male responsibilities”*.

Furthermore, in assessing the level of agreement on the statement if the program has improved the livelihood of both women/men and children in the household, women respondents were strongly in support. Though men supported the statement, three (3) of the male respondents were neutral by this assertion. The majority of men and women respondents confirmed that the EHAP Centre has helped women/men to fulfil their roles as mothers/fathers and heads of households. One woman and 2 men were however neutral of this fact.

While some respondents were in support of the fact that money from donations was the only source of income for families at the time, others disagreed with this assertion averring that it was insignificant to have catered for any responsibilities. In the domain of coping strategies, both men and women strongly agreed that women/men developed more survival skills as a result of the benefits of the EHAP Centre. Finally, in interrogating the argument that the Centre has contributed immensely to the well-being of families, all respondents agreed.

ii) Other Challenges

Apart from the gender specific barriers identified above, it was equally observed that IDPs are face with other challenges benefiting from the donations of EHAP. These challenges are :

Tiring registration process

Most of the respondents interviewed identified the registration process as a key challenge in getting their names enlisted at the humanitarian office. A male, between 41-50 years supported this challenge by explaining that, *‘...to register was not easy... it took me three days before my name could enter the list....* A female between the ages of 31-40 years corroborated by adding that *‘...the registration process was too cumbersome.... Only one person was doing the registration ...’*. Another female, between 31 -40 years added that it took three days before she could get her name into the Centre’s register. This cumbersome process of registration was corroborated by the staff of the Centre who explained

that ‘... the Centre did not have any workers employed to carry out the activities of the Centre... There were just volunteers and interns who came to help in the registration process...’

Long Queues and no shelter

Long queues and no shelter were identified as another challenge. The Centre is a small office with no provision made for external shelter to accommodate the number of IDPs that came to register. A female between 31-40 years lamented that ‘... the scorching effects of the sun dealt with me...given the long lines because of the thousands of people present at the Centre to register, we were forced to stay under the sun for long hours before we could be registered.... we will have to stand and still not succeed to register’. Another 35-year-old female said ‘...I went to register but each day I am there; I will meet more than 500 people who also came to write their names for assistance...’ Another female between 31-40 years added that, ‘... there were even no chairs for us to sit while waiting to be registered...’. It was so difficult that some respondents testified that they almost gave up on the registration process.

Donations not sustainable

A number of the respondents raised the issue of donations from the Centre not being sustainable. Most of the donations provided by the Centre, apart from the mattresses and blankets, were mostly food items and toiletries. These to the IDPs, though a temporal measure for the distress they found themselves, were not sustainable for their needs. A female between 31-40 years complained that ‘... what I received as donations could not sustain my needs... the foodstuff finished after a few months. I would have preferred a sustainable source of livelihood that would help me take care of the 9 members I have in my household...’. This aspect of a sustainable source of income or capital for business was corroborated by many of the IDPs interviewed. A male between 41-50 years explained that ‘...capital that I could use to buy Okada to transport people would have been more sustainable for my family...’. It must be noted that the crisis resulted in the loss of livelihood.

Attacks from Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)

Another challenge identified by respondents was the attack received from the Non-State Armed Groups after benefiting from the Centre. A female between 31-40 years testified that, ‘... I received threats from the NSAG because I benefitted from the items given by the Centre...’. There were threats from the NSAGs to IDPs not to accept the donations given by the Centre as they were perceived to be coming from the government. This instilled a lot of fear in some of the beneficiaries who still lived in the risky zones.

2 Challenges faced by the EHAP Centre :

The EHAP was also faced with numerous challenges that perturbed the effectiveness and efficiency in the discharge of its duties in assisting the needs of the IDPs. These include:

i) Delays in the distribution of donations

The personnel at the Centre expatiated that there were delays in giving donations at the Centre. Personnel 1 explained that, *'...sometimes IDPs come from faraway places such as Ndu, Nkambe and other areas with no means of lodging and cannot be helped immediately...'* Personnel 2 added that, *'...those who flee their homes and came to the Centre were expecting to get the humanitarian assistance on the spot but it was not always the case due to the limited resources. So, their needs were not provided immediately, especially those who came from far...'* This challenge was supported by the beneficiaries themselves who explained that most donations were given a few days to 3 months after registration.

ii) Limited personnel and no stipends

All staff from the Centre interviewed complained about the limited personnel to handle the number of IDPs that came to the Centre, especially at the peak of the crisis. It was stated that the personnel at the Centre were either volunteers or interns who came to the Centre to help register the IDPs. Personnel at the Centre stated that, *'...At some point, the only person working at the Centre was the Regional Chief of the Centre. Some of the staff sent, came and left due to insecurity. The Centre has been faced with the problem of a shortage of staff except those who decide to come and do voluntary service (interns and volunteers) ... The workers had to put in extra hours to meet the needs of the IDPs'*. Another personnel added that *'...the Minister could not provide stipends for staff working at the Centre. Most workers were interns/volunteers and could not work there for a long time since they were not being motivated...'*. This as a result affected the quality of work done at the Centre. It also resulted in the long queues and waits experienced by the IDPs during registrations.

iii) Insecurity

Personnel at the Centre asserted that, *'... Insecurity in the region made it very difficult for the Centre to do proper needs assessments in the Subdivisions or carry out registration of IDPs on the field. Even doing distribution at the sub-divisional level proved difficult...'*. This was supported by another personnel who added that *'...getting in contact with the real IDPS in their different communities was a challenge due to insecurity... There was equally the transportation problem...'*.

iv) Fake IDPs

The issue of fake IDPs was also a major challenge experienced by the Centre. Personnel stated that, *'...we had issues of fake IDPs coming to the Centre to register and benefit... it was difficult to determine those vulnerable ones given the fact that everyone was claiming to be an IDPS with no adequate parameters to determine since some of their documents were burnt with their property in the crisis...'* Another added that *'...some beneficiaries tried and even succeeded to benefit multiple times from the intervention... at the detriment of the vulnerable ones and when they are rejected, it becomes a problem to an extent that some*

threaten to deal with the personnel of the Centre...'. Another personnel said, '... this problem was compounded by the poor organization of the activities of the Centre. Sometimes we had a mix-up of data collected from the different years...'

v) *Ineffective collaboration between the Centre and other Humanitarian Services*

Given the fact that the EHAP Centre was expected to coordinate the activities of the Centre and those of other humanitarian institutions providing the same services, one of the personnel stated that '*...the Centre was faced with the problem of communication, especially with the humanitarian organs put in place...*'. They could not effectively coordinate the activities of all these humanitarian institutions in the North West to ensure the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance to the affected IDPs.

vi) *Ineffectiveness of donations*

Apart from the fact that it is not all IDPs who have benefitted from the humanitarian support, there was also the problem of the donations not meeting the needs of the IDPs. An EHAP Personnel stated that '*...the interventions provided did not meet some of the needs of the IDPs. The acceptance was based on their desperate situations but not to cater for the long-term needs of the IDPs. Sometimes the IDPs sold the goods donated to raise funds for petit business...*'. This aspect was supported by the IDPs themselves who highlighted the fact that donations were only temporary and barely solved the real problems they faced as IDPs.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it has been established that the creation of the EHAP in 2018 was great news to IDPs displaced by the Anglophone Crisis in their host communities. Since its creation, this structure has donated food and non-food items, such as mattresses, toiletries and money to IDPs in their different host communities in the North West Region. Despite these donations; the EHAP has not effectively incorporated gender issues into its operational processes. This is reflected in the decree creating the structure and its decision-making and implementation processes in particular. The most affected groups during an armed conflict like women and girls have not been fully integrated especially in the decision-making phase. In addition, donations received by these IDPs do not have long-term effects on their abilities as most of them are unable to cater for their families. These issues have largely been due to limited funds, increasing prevalence of fake IDPs, administrative bottlenecks, insufficient personnel and insecurity.

Against this backdrop, it is highly recommended that for gender issues to take central stage in the humanitarian assistance initiative of EHAP to IDPs, the following should be implemented :

- The needs of men/boys and women/girls should be mainstreamed into the decision-making and implementation processes of the EHAP ;

- Sustainable initiatives should be organized to build the capacities of IDPs on income-generating activities to ensure that they are economically empowered in the long term ;
- EHAP should strengthen its working relationship with local and international non-governmental organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to IDPs. This is because humanitarian issues require a collective response. As such, the State should be pro-active enough to lobby and bring in relevant humanitarian agencies ;
- The EHAP should recruit permanent staff to ensure that the needs of IDPs are addressed on time, and faster ;
- The EHAP should be able to integrate Government's commitment to the National Action Plan for the UNSCR 1325 by mainstreaming gender in humanitarian aid while effectively strengthening its relationship with organizations offering similar services for a coordinated and sustainable intervention for IDPs ;
- Alternative sources of funding for the EHAP should be sought to ensure that it functions properly. Its main source of funding is from the government. As such, there is a need for the state to seek other alternative sources of finance to carry out its task effectively ;
- The EHAP should also with time be able to meet the needs and interests of all targeted groups stated in the decree creating 'the Centre' and not only focus on IDPs within the Anglophone Crisis.
- A scholarship scheme should be put in place for the parents of IDPs and IDPs of school-going age because most of them have dropped out of school due to a lack of finances.

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