

User's Cultural Specific Spatial Needs in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

Shelter constitutes one of the primary needs of displaced persons who seek refuge because of natural and human orchestrated crisis in which their initial shelters have been destroyed. Accordingly, different actors such as NGOs, international organizations and Governments of different nations actively sought to provide shelter for the displaced persons. Due to the rise in terrorism since 2012 in Nigeria, there has been a dire need of shelter provision for internally displaced persons, with the focus of these institutions being mostly on the decision for these shelters to either be temporary or permanent. However, little study exists in the understanding of cultural specific spatial needs of the internally displaced persons. This research thus qualitatively understudied the perception of internally displaced person about their shelter in Abuja Nigeria. In carrying out the research, three camps were purposively selected using interviews and participant observations as instruments for data collection. The content analysis of the data shows the emergence of unique spatial architectural character of the culture sensitive residents of the internally displaced person's (IDP) camps. Most importantly is that the findings have implications in the planning of refugee camps, especially the accommodative facilities for these campers which aligns more to the communal system of living as opposed to individualistic spaces that are generally obtainable in IDP camps

Keywords: Architecture, Design, IDP Refugee, Perception, Space

Introduction

Refuge is sought globally from either natural disaster as showcased in China, America, Philippines, Indonesia and India (Kinghorn), 2015 or from terrorism as seen in countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa (Dudley, 2016). These include Syria, Columbia, Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria and Pakistan as outlined by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR, 2015). This has resulted in thousands of individuals and families fleeing from their homes, to settle in other locations within the country or in neighbouring countries. Each year, UNHCR provides shelter for displaced person around the globe (Alloush, Taylor, Gupta, Rojas Valdes, & Gonzalez-Estrada, 2017). The shelter provided are supposed to be temporary, however, over time they become almost a

permanent abode for the displaced persons, even though they are not intended to be so (Ramadan, 2013). This is because some of these displaced persons are found to stay in the temporary camps for long periods so much so that they are not ready to return to their homes (Sliwa & Wiig, 2016). This is because, situations that drove the refugees away from their homes persists for a long time. It thus suggests that these refugee camps should be planned to accommodate the cultural needs of the campers. More also is that one of the essential needs of settlements such as the IDP camp is the integration of culture specific spatial need of the settlers. It is common knowledge that culture plays a great influence on the spatial needs and values of the people (Muhammad, 2017). This therefore means that, a prototype design template for all

IDP camps will be inappropriate due to the diverse cultural heritage available within a country. In existence is the United Nations minimum standards for IDP camps, though it is also possible to have a regional community based cultural infusion in the planning of these camps (Oesch, 2017).

Mostly, government agencies are concerned with what they consider as a minimum standard for displaced persons and their spatial needs, not putting into consideration the actual needs of the end users of the camps. Few studies exist on the behavioural spatial mapping, as well as people's perception of displaced people's camp in Nigeria except few (Nwagbo & Gerald, 2015; Okanlawon, Anene, & Reeves, 2010). Consequently, this paper seeks to fill this gap through the study of internally displaced person's camps in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. This is because it became one of the most favourable place of refuge for the internally displaced persons, especially those that flee from the Boko Haram insurgency from the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria (Adibe, 2012; Agbiboa, 2013). This is perhaps due

to the location of donor agencies which are mostly situated in the country's capitals.

Overview of Emergency Settlement in IDP Camps

Emergency settlement, such as IDP camps is constructed to meet up with the basic needs of the displaced persons (Liu, Ruan & Shi, 2011). Due to the increasing number of internally displaced persons, governments of nations in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in its submissions have made provisions in most parts of the world to accommodate these displaced persons (UNHCR, 2015).

Furthermore, UNHCR in 2015 stated that 'out of the twenty-four countries with the highest ratio of refugees to the population, ten are members of the African Union'. Similarly, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in 2015 reported that in the past decade (2006-2015), over 23.8 million persons have been displaced. The Figure 1 shows at a glance the number of persons displaced globally from 2006-2015.

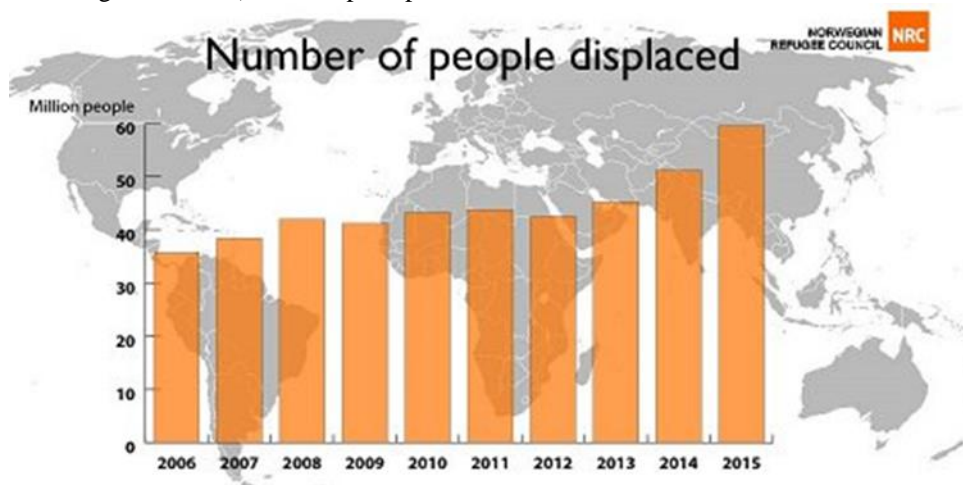


Figure 1 Number of Persons Displaced Globally, over the Last Decade
Source: Norwegian Refugee Council (2015)

This thus showcases the global importance of displaced persons' camp. More also is that it is evident that it will be difficult to completely put an end to the unpleasant

circumstances that forces people to become displaced, which also necessitates the need for attention to be paid to shelter, health care and education (NRC, 2015).

This perhaps is amongst the reasons why UNHCR was mandated by the General Assembly Resolution 428 of 14 December 1950 to lead and coordinate every international action for the worldwide protection of internally displaced persons and refugees and the resolution of problems relating to these groups of persons (UNHCR, 2007). The UNHCR was therefore responsible for camp coordination and management, including the design and construction of accommodations.

The nature of emergency shelter ranges from the typical temporary tent used as a transitional shelter to basic permanent ad hoc structures (Yuksel & Hasirci, 2012). It is, however worthy of note that though these tent shelters are intended to be temporary and used for a short period of 1-3 months, they are being used in recent times for much longer periods spanning many years.

Users Oriented Spaces in IDP camps

User oriented design is a process which focuses on usability all through the development process and through the life cycles of a design (Moghimi, Jusan, Izadpanahi & Mahdinejad, 2017). It therefore means that the decisions by the end-users must be incorporated in design of shelters to make them workable and applicable to real life situation of the users (Kosk, 2016). User orientation simply implies that a designer puts into consideration the needs and wants of the end users in order to design useful and functional spaces. This therefore means that the wants of internally displaced persons must be considered in the design of a camp for their use.

The significance of user oriented design ensures that spaces are planned towards the needs of end-users rather than forcing a change resident's behaviour (Moghimi *et al.*, 2017). Indicated in Figure 2, is the ideology that user oriented designs require the understanding of the users through five metamorphic stages.

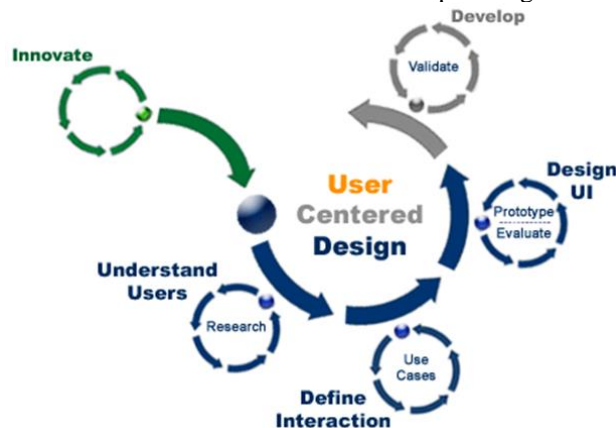


Figure 2: User Centered Design Metamorphic Stages
Source: <https://users.encs.concornis.edu>

As shown in Figure 2, it is safe to say that user oriented design involves understanding the intended uses of the product or facility by means of interaction and then developing on whatever the users identify as their needs and wants.

This therefore implies that the requirements of the end users (IDP) are to be noted and

refined through various investigations as well as generative processes and the careful analysis during the use of the facility (Mundo-Hernández, Valerdi-Nochebuena, & Sosa-Oliver, 2015). The participatory design approach to the user centered method of designing was therefore adopted for this research. This approach allowed for the qualitative needs of the respondents to

be understood (Blummer & Kenton, 2014; Mannay & Morgan, 2014).

Research Methodology

People's perception about space requires the understanding of the people's life worlds which entails the deep understanding of how and what the world means to them (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). As such for this study, qualitative means of inquiry was found suitable and therefore adopted (Creswell, 2012; Macmillan, 2011; Mannay & Morgan, 2014). This entails the use of unstructured interview as well as behavioural mapping through observation of the participants (residents of the IDP camp). The interviews were conducted mostly in Hausa language as well as *Pidgin* English (the Nigerian Version of English), this is to allow for ease of communication as well as the formation of rapport with the respondent (Patton, 2005). Furthermore, data collection process involved a series of visits to the camps and cumulatively, the

data collection process took 3 months (between May and July 2016).

The Study Community

The Federal capital territory as outlined in Table 1 has 21 recognized IDP camps. The researchers, therefore, purposefully selected 3 camps with the population of the camps guiding the selection. In this regard, the most populated camp, an averagely populated camp and a lesser populated camp were selected. Eleven (11) persons, including campers and camp officials were interviewed in each of the camps visited for this research, bringing the total number of respondents to thirty-three (33) persons. The number of interviewee (11) in each of the camp is as a results of the saturation point attained in the elicitation of information which aligns with Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) assertion on the determination of the number of respondents in qualitative research.

Table 1 Internally Displaced Persons Camps within the F.C.T

| S/N | I.D.P Camp | Location | Population |
|-----|---|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Abuja IDP Camp | Gidadaya, Orozo | 754 |
| 2. | Unnamed | Kagruma, Kwali | 504 |
| 3. | Gwoza and Bama IDP Camp | Durumi II, Area I | 2226 |
| 4. | Internally Displaced Persons Camp, Old Kuchingoro | Old Kuchingoro | 782 |
| 5. | Internally Displaced Persons Camp, New Kuchingoro | New Kuchingoro | 500 |
| 6. | Karmajiji IDP Camp | Karmajiji, City Gate | 340 |
| 7. | Building Market Camp | Saburi II, Dei-Dei | 710 |
| 8. | Guzape Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Guzape, Asokoro Extension | 661 |
| 9. | Internally Displaced Persons Camp | One Man Village | 720 |
| 10. | FCT III, Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Kutunku II, Gwagwalada | 711 |
| 11. | EFAB IDP Camp | Apo Mechanic Village | 426 |
| 12. | Abuja Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Durumi I, Area 1 | 671 |
| 13. | MSSN Camp for the Internally Displaced | Lugbe I, Airport Road | 543 |
| 14. | No Name | Waru, Gwagwalaga | 1023 |
| 15. | FCT II Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Kwali | 502 |
| 16. | No Name | Kuje | 763 |
| 17. | No Name | Wassa | 997 |
| 18. | Kutunku Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Old Kutunku, Gwagwalada | 210 |
| 19. | Unnamed | Piwoyi, Lugbe | 678 |
| 20. | FCT I Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Kuchiyako | 987 |

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|-----|
| 21. | NASFAT Internally Displaced Persons Camp | Back of Market, Karmo | 432 |
|-----|--|-----------------------|-----|

Source: Abuja Facts (2016)

As shown in Table 1, three sites that best represent the nature of IDP camps found in Abuja based on population were chosen. In that regard, the most populated, least populated and averagely populated camps within the Federal Capital Territory. This is because, population density influences human behaviour and space.

Data collection

Interviews constitutes one of the primary sources through which people's perceptions about a phenomenon can be understood (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). For this study, the interview-questions focused on the resident's perceptions about their spaces and what they think needs to be provided to meet their basic space needs. While, the observations were carried out

using the minimum requirement checklist of UNHCR (2015) for the assessment of IDP camps as shown in Table 2.

Finally, the behavioural mapping of the residents was carried out. The emphasis of the behavioural mapping was on the nature of activities that take place, by whom, and at what time such activities took place (Muhammad & Said, 2015). The trio approaches (interviews, checklist and behavioural mapping) of qualitative data collection allowed for triangulation of information towards the attainment of valid data that evidently best describes the phenomenon under investigation (Charmaz, Clarke, Friese, & Washburn, 2015; Tracy, 2012; Yin, 2013).

Table 2: UNHCR 2015 Checklist for Assessing IDP Camps

| S/NO | DESCRIPTION | MINIMUM STANDARD |
|------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. | Covered living area | 3.5sqm per person Minimum ceiling height of 2m |
| 2. | Camp settlement size | 45sqm per person |
| 3. | Fire safety | Minimum of 2m between structures or two times the height of the structure |
| 4. | Gradient of camp site | 1 to 5% |
| 5. | Drainage | Appropriate drainage must be put in place, especially in locations that experience drainage difficulties in rainy seasons. |

Source: UNCHR (2015)

Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis of the three camps visited by the researchers are hereby discussed below sequentially starting with participants observations.

Socio-spatial Characteristics of the Selected IDP Camps

Gwoza and Bama IDP Camp

The Gwoza and Bama IDP camp in Durumi incepted on 15th December 2014, is one that has served as settlement for indigenes of Gwoza and Bama village, both in Borno state, thus the name. The population of the camp as at the time of the

visit was 2226, comprising of 375 women, 657 youths, 65 adult men, 58 children.

The camp consists of eleven (11) subsets, a camp clinic, a camp nursery and primary school, two mosques, a church, a mechanical workshop, and an administrative office. Some of these facilities are shown in Figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3: Gwoza and Bama Camp School, picture taken in 2016



Figure 4: Gwoza and Bama Camp accommodation, image captured in 2016

The accommodation in the camp is constructed using wooden support columns, covered with sack bags and tarpaulin. They are arranged in no order on the camp site and are not durable and so do not protect their occupants from harsh weathers. The school in the camp is a structure constructed using wood and galvanized roofing sheets.

The clinic, Figure 5, in the IDP Camp is a single room and toilet. The single room serves as a male and a female ward, doctors consultation room and store for medical equipment and medicines. A tank provides water, while a generator powers the clinic. As such the camp clinic is inadequate to meet the needs of the residents of the camp.



Figure 5: The Clinic building in Durumi IDP camp, Abuja

IDP Camp, New Kuchingoro, Abuja

The internally displaced persons camp located in the Kuchingoro area of Abuja and which began operation on the 5th of December 2014 is one that has served as a home to internally displaced persons who had to flee from their village, which is Gwoza in Borno State of Nigeria. Although a small percentage of camp residents are indigenes of other parts of Borno State and the northeast in general, 90% of them are from Gwoza. The camp comprises of 500 campers (230 women, 240 men, 30 children), with 4 officials in control of the campers. The people relocated in the year 2014 and have settled extensively on the piece of land they found fallow in Kuchingoro. The camp, therefore, evolved and is purpose built. The men and women are basically farmers who go as far as Nyanya and Mararaba areas of Nassarawa state to farm. It was observed that the residents of the camp travel as far as 10 kilometers for farming and the produce of the farms are sold to meet their family needs.

One of the distinctive physical characters of the camp is that it is unplanned and consists of structures made of cartons, tarpaulin, sacks and cement bags, anchored by wooden support. As such, nearly all the structures such as the accommodation, a camp office, a school, a church, a mosque, a skill acquisition centre and a relaxation joint are made up of temporary materials as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6: Sleeping Tent Erected Using Polythene Cover. Image Captured in 2016

Figure 7: Kuchingoro Camp Rooms Interior.
 Image Captured in 2016

The accommodation in the camp consists of single rooms measuring 2 x 2m. The buildings are constructed using tarpaulin covers on wooden column supports.

IDP Camp, Karmajiji, Abuja

The FCT internally displaced persons camp is located on the Lugbe- Airport road axis in FCT Abuja. The camp was established on the 26th of June 2013 by Muslim Women’s Association of Nigeria (MWAN). Sited in Karmajiji, it is one that has accommodated 340 (170 women, 160 men and 10 children) internally displaced persons from Borno and Adamawa states of Nigeria. The camp, unlike others in the Federal Capital could be seen to have some of the accommodations built as permanent structures.

The men amongst the residents of this camp are basically engaged as labourers on construction sites while some of the women stay back as teachers for the children. Similarly, some of the men and women are also seen engaged in farming in which the products of the farm are sold to earn a living. Aside from these, Non-Governmental organisations such as the Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (MWAN) as well as other religious bodies who see to the needs of the internally displaced persons in the camp.

The gradual development of the camp by the residents into permanent structures as shown in Figure 8, showcases the integration of cultural spatial norms. This is because, the rooms are built together in compound settings, having courtyards in the middle. A kitchen and toilet are placed at the extreme ends of the buildings. This suggests that the residents are linked to their cultural roots in the development of their spaces in a new location.



Figure 8: Karmajiji camp Accommodation, built as a permanent structure. Picture taken in 2016

Cumulatively, it can be deduced that, none of the camps meet the required minimum standards being laid down by the United Nations for the establishment of internally displaced persons camps. Furthermore, the state in which the IDP camps in comparison to the UNHCR minimum requirements are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of Physical Condition of Sampled Camps using UNHCR Spatial requirement

| Camp | Covered Living Area | Camp Settlement | Fire Safety | Gradient of Camp Site | Drainage |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Gwoza and Bama IDP Camp | 1.2sqm per person and 1.8m ceiling | 3.0 sqm per camper (IA) | 900mm between structures | 4% (A) | Presence of free-flowing Gutters to |

| | height (GIA) | | (IA) | | drain waste water (A) |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------|---|
| IDP Camp Kuchingoro | 1.5sqm per person and 1.8 ceiling height (GIA) | 4.0 sqm per camper (IA) | 1.2m between structures (IA) | 2% (A) | Absence of any form of drainage (IA) |
| FCT IDP Camp Karmajiji | 3.5 sqm per person and 2.1 ceiling height (A) | 4.0 sqm per person (IA) | 2m between structures (A) | 6% (IA) | Absence of any form of drainage system (IA) |

Key: A- Adequate IA- Inadequate GIA- Grossly Inadequate

From the Table 3, it is evident that the physical conditions of the existing IDP camps are unpalatable and do not meet up to the minimum requirements given by the United Nations, the body in charge of refugees and internally displaced persons. Therefore, there is a dire need for an internally displaced persons camp to be provided for the IDPs within the Federal Capital Territory.

Residents Spatial Perceptions

One of the main criteria for IDPs aside from the accommodation is the provision of safe haven against external aggression. As such, the researchers sought to understand the perceived feelings of the residents on security. The question thus asked was "Do you Consider Your Camp Free from security threats? And most of the respondents indicated their feelings. The response collated showed that 80% of respondents indicated that their camp is not safe, this is further buttressed in the following quotation by a woman aged 40 years;

"Our camp is not safe. We have been attacked more than four times by miscreants from outside. They took away the little we have managed to gather, they steal our clothes, food and other valuables"

The response from the IDP above, indicates that the camp studied has no form of security and as it is, is open to attack. Thus, the refuge is not totally offered to the residents of the camp. Furthermore, aside from the security challenges, most of the residents of these camps are concerned with the state of health facilities within the camps. A female Respondent, aged 35

residents in the Kuchingoro IDP camp, who was displaced since June 2013 had this to say about health facilities in the camps:

"We do not have a clinic in our camp. If we go to the general hospital outside the camp, nobody treats us because we are IDP and they know we cannot pay. We are rather asked for police report, we have lost 8 people in our camp because there is no clinic. (With tears in her eyes, she added) My sister's only daughter died in December last year (2015) because nobody treated her".

This suggests the need for the IDP camps fortification with medical facilities. As indicated, the hospitals outside the camps do not readily accept patients without any form of identification. This may be borne out of the fear of security challenges of the country, thus the IDPs are left without medical attention. More also is that it is nearly impossible to provide the identification required due to the nature of how the IDPs left their home towns. In sum, the general state of the New Kuchingoro IDP camp is perceived to be spatially insufficient.

Establishing Self-Esteem Through Independence/ Self Sufficiency

An IDP based in the Karmajiji IDP camp, displaced since 5th of February 2014 replied (after he was being made to understand that being self-sufficient means that they need not be dependent on other sources, but can obtain food, shelter and other basic amenities from their camp), as translated from Hausa language-

"As you can see, we cannot get everything we need from here. We have to wake up,

leave our camps and hustle daily for survival. We have no land to farm, no animals to rear, we have nothing. We came here with nothing; we thank God for sparing our life. Some of our women go all the way to Keffi road almost every day to farm corn and yam. They bring some home and sell some in Orange market.”

The respondent above states that the camp in which they are housed are not self-sufficient. They must fend for themselves by going long distances to trade. A camp facility ideally should be self-sufficient and be able to provide basic needs of campers (UNHCR, 2015). However, within the context of Nigeria, the residents of the IDP camps would not mind fending for themselves if the enabling environment is provided. That is why the researchers observed that in some of the IDP camps plots of farmland were seen being cultivated by campers. This is not different from the results obtained in Congo refugee camp where the cash aids were seen to upgrade the economic status of the refugees rather than in kind aids (Alloush, Taylor, Gupta, Rojas, et al., 2017). This is because the refugee would be able to invest in their area of interest and Specialty. In the context of this scenario, the refugees would invest in Farm inputs.

From the above, the Karmajiji camp is the most adequate and sufficient in terms of accommodation size, social amenities and circulation, however, the residents will like to have farm lands. None of the camps have secondary schools, but the New Kuchingoro camp has a skill acquisition ground where campers acquire skills in leatherworks. The church also doubles as a sewing and weaving workshop where campers learn the skill for a fare as organized by a private NGO.

In summary, the residents of the IDP camps are not satisfied with the facilities found at the camp. Consequently, the respondents advocated for the need of a standard health care facility, the need for school and skill acquisition facilities. Additionally, there were also some cultural

specific spatial needs which is to have a camp that has a traditional communal compound setting. This is in contrast with the individual single rooms that were found in the IDP Camps which happened to be individualistic in terms of social transactions. Similarly, the respondents perceived an IDP camp to be that which can offer them the opportunity to practice their main occupation, farming. Other needs of the campers also include relaxation facilities, religious buildings and sporting facilities.

Conclusions

The research did set out to understudy the culture specific spatial needs of the IDP camps in Nigeria. Aside from the minimum requirement stipulated by UNHCR, it is expected that the spatial need could be contextual. The findings of this research show that the needs of the IDPs who are mainly from the North-Eastern States of Nigeria are culturally sensitive in their perception of what is required in an IDP camp. These needs aside from the minimum standard of the UNHCR include the setting of the camp in a compound like structure, the provision of privacy for the female members and the provision of secured places for farming. This thus suggests that, the planning of IDP camps aside from the socio-cultural needs, the profession of the displaced person must be considered to make the camps users oriented. This finding is potentially important for IDP policies that need to include cultural spatial needs of IDPs in the planning of IDP camps (Alloush et al., 2017).

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