

Creative Arts Therapy: A Necessary Intervention for Nigeria’s Internally Displaced Person - (IDPS)

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Abstract. Nigeria is the most populous country and largest economy in Africa. She has witnessed high profile cases of civil disturbance and domestic violence within her borders. Different levels of violence rear their ugly faces as a result of conflicts of interest aggravated by nepotism, corruption, environmental factors and weak governance. Pockets of this violence occur every other day with violent killings and kidnappings. Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and many others have witnessed increased number of victims displaced from their homes, villages and towns. Among these displaced persons are children of school age and youths whose future are left hanging if government fails to secure them Shelter-wise, territorially and emotionally. Objectively, this paper discusses the Internally Displaced persons that are in camps in Odeda local government area of Ogun State and specifically, 40 people out of the lot have were purposively selected. The paper delves into the psychological trauma they have suffered, the mental torture, stress and emotional complications and the presumed responsiveness of government or agents. It also attempts to find out if Art related activities could serve as interventions to restore their self-esteem. Herman’s model of trauma and recovery from trauma was adopted. The result shows that the participants (clients) were able to bring back memories and morn their sad experiences through painful imageries, they also captured and reconnect with daily life through representation of hopeful imageries captured in paintings.

Key Words: Displaced, Art Therapy, Trauma, intervention, mental stress, imageries

1. Introduction and Background to the Study

Pockets of violence occur every other day in recent times in Nigeria with violent killings and kidnapping. Kogi, Benue, Bauchi, Bornu, Taraba, Nasarawa, Yobe, Plateau and many others have witnessed increased number of victims displaced from their homes, villages and towns. Among these displaced persons are children of school age and youths whose future are left hanging if government fails to secure them Shelter-wise, territorially and emotionally.

In Nigeria today, people are displaced in thousands, they are forced to leave their homes, livelihood, detached from families with untold hardship which is better imagined than experienced. Ibrahim and Mohammed (2017, 8-9) affirm that impoverishment and disempowerment often become their lots with particular harsh consequence for women and children.

It is observed that many developed countries seldom experience conflict induced displacement but are more prone to natural disasters, while countries like Nigeria experience relatively less of natural disaster displacement but more of conflict induced. Mohammed (2017, 13) further opines that causes of displacement can overall be grouped into two categories, natural disasters and manmade, which are usually linked to conflict and violence.

If natural disasters that lead to displacement are inevitably determined by a super force, can the rate and the intensity be reduced? If conflict induced disasters that lead to displacement are humanly inflicted, can’t they be prevented or avoided? Are there solid and rapid resettlement plans to serve as respite that is devoid of psychological torture for the displaced people?

Nigeria has come of age to proffer not only interventions such as food, temporary shelter, daily needs like food, clothing and toiletries as well as medical treatment, but also a wholesome programme such as talks, seminars, workshops and engagements in creative art activities leading to acquisition of skills and most importantly activities that would as therapy for the internally displaced people, which is the trust of this paper.

1.2 Objective of the Study

This paper discusses the Internally Displaced persons that are in Odeda local government area of Ogun State, 40 subjects were selected purposively. It also find out if art related activities could serve as interventions to restore their self-esteem.

1.3 The Scope

The study only covers Displaced Persons in a Non-Government Organisation Centre in Odeda local government area of Ogun State. All the Children are from crises ridden areas of the North- Eastern part of Nigeria. 40 subjects (boys and girls) were selected purposively for the study

1.3 Significance of the Study

The rationale for this study would serve as eye opener to government who must see the need to move beyond short-term humanitarian provisions for the Internally Displaced to long-term solutions, which could have serious implications for stability and restore their self-worth.

The study will also help participants to eliminate self-withdrawal, stress and so on, and develop interest in hands-on activities.

2. Review of Literature

“In the last 58 years of independence, the highest recorded numbers of incidences of Internal Displacement have been triggered by violent conflicts. The first incidence can be traced back to the civil war, also known as the Biafran War, from 1967- 1970. Although, it is difficult to determine the exact number of people displaced during this period due to conflicting figures and unreliable data, several sources have estimated that over 2 million people were either displaced or in need of humanitarian assistance within and across the borders during the war” (Ibrahim and Mohammed 2017 , 12-13).

2.1 Internally Displaced Persons

According to Richard and Jillyanne (2011, 52), people are forced to flee because of internal conflict or natural or man-made disasters. While Nindi (1986, 96-107), Ibeanu (1988, 81-84), Olukolajo M., Ajayi, M. and Ogungbenro M. (2014, 40-41) refer to Internally Displaced Persons as people who have been forced, usually by natural disaster, war or civil strife, to flee their homes and take refuge elsewhere but have not crossed an international frontier. Following the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons ("IDPs") are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order 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 border". Campbell (2017, 1) also refers to them as “those forced to leave their homes but who do not cross international borders”. Summarily, internally displaced persons (IDPs) are those forced to leave their homes but who do not cross international borders.



Plate 1: Internally displaced Persons leaving to unknown destination
[Fidelia Agwunch](http://www.tv360nigeria.com) (2018) <http://www.tv360nigeria.com>



Plate 2: IDPs Camps in Nigeria

National Emergency Agency (NEMA) official addressing some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Lamurde (<http://dailypost.ng/2016/09/23>)

Several news and reports in the media have given estimates of the internally displaced persons in Nigeria which covers 13 States in Nigeria, however for this study only one is relied on because it covers all crises ridden states and IDPs camps in the North eastern Nigeria. Displacement Tracking Matrix DTM (2016) and Alli (2017, 1) on State of IDP Camps in Nigeria provide the following reports on 13 States of Northern Nigeria: Abuja (13,481 IDPs); Adamawa (136,010); Bauchi (70,078); Benue (85,393); Borno (1,434,149); Gombe (25,332); Kaduna (36,976); Kano (9,331); Nasarawa (37,553); Plateau (77,317); Taraba (50,227); Yobe (131,203); and Zamfara (44,929).

2.2 Challenge

According to Kushi (2018, 1) “the plight of the IDPs especially the young is multifaceted. Many of them have lost their parents and are, to a large extent, disconnected from all family ties. Some, as a result of their experiences, are psychologically traumatised and have become a social problem that needs psychiatric attention” This is reiterated by Debarre (2018, 1) that “IDPs are among the most vulnerable people in the world, they tend to suffer from extreme poverty, as they are forced to leave their belongings and their work when they flee. Therefore government, knowing that displaced people are first of all highly vulnerable and defenseless, must take drastic steps and workable approaches towards addressing the displaced.



Plate 3: IDPs' Camp Borno State Nigeria
(<http://newswirengr.com/2016/09/21>)

This is because it is the government that has the primary responsibility for the assistance and protection of such displaced persons as it were in the case of refugees. This is perhaps why Mohammed (2017, 13) observes “that these approaches so far appear to be heavily focused on short-term humanitarian aid and less on development-oriented, long-term solutions, which could have serious implications for stability and security. “ hence the need for this study.

2.3 Creative Arts Intervention

Kamali, N., and Javdan, M. (2012, 129-132) in *The Relationship between Art and Psychology*, refer to art as “an important means to develop creativity and establishment of inner innovative forces. If reinforced appropriately, many mental problems of human beings could be resolved. Art is a kind of redemption that frees us from wanting”. The foregoing assertions, i.e. “development of creativity”, “establishment of inner forces”, help to situate into proper perspective, the possibility of using creative expression and hands-on skill as intervention otherwise called “creative Arts therapy” during distress, sorrow, pain and so on.

3. Methodology

The study engaged Practical Process Measuring test (PPMT) through a series of creative clinical sessions. Questionnaires were also used to collect additional information. During the art sessions, creative processes were observed while children interact with varieties of art materials ranging from colours to clay based on predetermined themes. Products were mounted for discussion and interaction.

Art Materials



Plate 4: John Adenle



Plate 4: John Adenle

Selected Creative Outputs



John Dorcas
Plate 5: John Adenle



Yakubu Godwin
Plate 6: John Adenle



Umeh Emmanuella
Plate 7: John Adenle



Jonathan Lot
Plate 8: John Adenle



Deme David
Plate 9: John Adenle



Luka Esther
Plate 10: John Adenle



Andrew Alpha

Plate 11: John Adenle



Adamu Friday
Plate 12: John Adenle



Bulus Lucky
Plate 13: John Adenle



Plate 14:
John Adenle



Plate 15:
John Adenle



Plate 16:
John Adenle



Plate 17:
John Adenle



Plate 118:
John Adenle



Plate 19:
John Adenle

4. Findings

Applying stage 2 and 3 of Herman's model of Trauma recovery which are:

- Remembrance and mourning and
- Reconnection with daily life and creation of new self.

All creative processes involved her is hands-on experience which involves both the mind and senses. Malchiodi expatiates the level of activities to include kinesthetic/sensory (action), perceptual/affective (form) and cognitive/symbolic (image), (Malchiodi, 2007, 66). While kinesthetic involves interactions with materials through movement, tactile, visual and motor activity without emphasis on the product, the perceptive engages art materials to communicate ideas and emotions, at the cognitive level the individual uses art materials to convey personal meaning through structure, form and image. Therefore artistic engagement in this study is enriched by the level of activities to interrogate stages 2 and 3

After fifteen creative seasons otherwise called (PPMT) were held over three months to achieve stage two (Remembrance and Mourning), Fig. 5,6,7 (John Dorcas, Yakubu Godwin and Umeh Emmanuella) were expressions of their mind on the sad moments experienced during ethno-religious clashes by their families or beloved ones. This (Remembering/mourning) is seen as an important step towards Recovery from Trauma.

Plate 8 shows Jonathan Lot tried to call to mind how his father died and expressing his forgiveness to his father's killer; plate 12 recounts how they queued to collect meals in their hostel while others express their wishes to reconnection with normal life that would depict total recovery from trauma. The children were to tell stories of their painful experiences through drawings and paintings. They looked beyond their predicaments to visualise positive and hopeful future. The sessions allowed them to use visual expressions to externalise emotions, which allowed them to resolve internal struggles.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In line with the affirmation of Kamali, and Javdan, (2012, 132) that art has a very close relationship with man's soul, engagement in creative hands-on work in displacement camps (Vocational Therapy) would not only prevent displaced persons from social deviations, it will also serve as a mental and psychological means to pacify anxious hearts (Art therapy). Therefore, the government should see the need to expand the present level of humanitarian care in Internally Displaced Camps to encompass creative activities that impact more on their self-esteem.

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