

Communication Strategies For Mitigating Teenage Pregnancy And Educational Attrition Among Internally Displaced Girls In Logo LGA, Benue State, Nigeria

Okhueigbe, Osemhantie Amos, Ph.D.^{1*} & Hundu, Terungwa Moses²

Centre for the Study of African Communication and Cultures, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: Okhueigbe, Osemhantie Amos, Ph.D.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18884700>

Article History	Abstract
<p>Original Research Article</p> <p>Received: 10-02-2026</p> <p>Accepted: 28-02-2026</p> <p>Published: 06-03-2026</p> <p>Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> <p>Citation: Okhueigbe, Osemhantie Amos, Ph.D., & Hundu, Terungwa Moses. (2026). Communication strategies for mitigating teenage pregnancy and educational attrition among internally displaced girls in Logo LGA, Benue State, Nigeria. UKR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UKRJAHSS), Volume 2(3). 22-31.</p>	<p><i>This study, titled Communication Strategies for Mitigating Teenage Pregnancy and Educational Attrition among Internally Displaced Girls in Logo LGA, Benue State, Nigeria, examined communication gaps and context-specific strategies for addressing teenage pregnancy and school discontinuation among displaced adolescent girls. Anchored on Communication Infrastructure Theory (CIT) propounded by Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach (2001), the study adopted a qualitative cross-sectional descriptive-analytical design. The population comprised internally displaced girls aged 12–19 years residing in selected IDP camps in Logo LGA. Given the absence of a reliable sampling frame and the fluidity of camp populations, purposive sampling guided by data saturation was employed; saturation was reached at eleven participants who met defined inclusion criteria. Data were generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically through open coding, axial categorization, and interpretive synthesis, with trustworthiness ensured via credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability protocols. Findings reveal that 100% of participants identified extreme poverty as a driver of vulnerability; 72.7% linked economic dependence to early pregnancy; and 90.9% reported stigma that suppresses open reproductive health dialogue. Communication flows were predominantly vertical, with 90.9% relying on block leaders and minimal peer-based counseling structures. Furthermore, 100% emphasized one-on-one counseling, 72.7% requested economic empowerment, and 36.4% prioritized educational sponsorship as protective mechanisms. The study concludes that communicative fragility intertwined with structural deprivation sustains vulnerability. It recommends structured SRH dialogue forums led by trained female counsellors, decentralization of camp communication through peer educators, and integrated girl-centered empowerment programs combining financial support, scholarships, and mentorship.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Communication Strategies, Educational Attrition, Internally Displaced Girls, Teenage Pregnancy.</p>

Introduction

Armed conflicts, communal violence, and climate-related disruptions have, over the past decade, intensified patterns of internal displacement across sub-Saharan Africa. In such fragile contexts, adolescent girls often stand at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities: poverty, disrupted schooling, food insecurity, and exposure to gender-based violence. Globally, humanitarian reports consistently show that displacement settings heighten the risk of teenage

pregnancy and school dropout, particularly where social protection systems are weak and access to reproductive health information is limited (UNFPA, 2023; UNICEF, 2022). The collapse of stable community structures in camps and host communities frequently produces environments where adolescents must navigate adulthood prematurely, with limited guidance and constrained choices.

Nigeria mirrors this broader continental pattern. Protracted insecurity in parts of the country has generated significant numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), many of whom reside in informal settlements and overcrowded host communities. According to the International Organization for Migration (2023), millions remain internally displaced nationwide, with women and children forming the majority. In such settings, the disruption of schooling, weakened parental supervision due to economic strain, and limited access to youth-friendly health services create a context in which teenage pregnancy and educational attrition become recurrent social realities rather than isolated incidents.

Within North Central Nigeria, Benue State has experienced repeated waves of displacement arising from farmer–herder conflicts and communal violence. Entire rural communities have been uprooted, livelihoods destroyed, and agrarian economies destabilized. IDP camps and makeshift shelters in school compounds, churches, and unfinished buildings have become semi-permanent habitats. In these congested spaces, privacy is scarce, safeguarding mechanisms are weak, and adolescent girls face heightened exposure to transactional sex, early unions, and survival-driven relationships (food-for-sex syndrome). These lived conditions shape reproductive outcomes and educational trajectories in profound ways.

In Logo Local Government Area, displacement is not an abstract statistic but a daily condition. Families who once depended on subsistence farming now rely on irregular humanitarian assistance, petty trading, or seasonal labour. Many girls who were previously enrolled in primary or secondary schools have experienced prolonged interruptions due to displacement, insecurity along transit routes, or the conversion of school facilities into IDP shelters. The resulting educational discontinuity fosters learning loss, diminished academic self-efficacy, and eventual withdrawal from formal schooling.

Teenage pregnancy within displacement contexts often emerges from a complex web of structural deprivation and social vulnerability. Overcrowded shelters reduce parental oversight; economic hardship may incentivize early marriage or exploitative relationships; and misinformation about sexual and reproductive health circulates freely in the absence of structured communication channels. In many camps and host communities, conversations about sexuality remain culturally sensitive, leaving adolescents to rely on peers or unverified sources. The absence of targeted, culturally resonant communication further entrenches myths about contraception, fertility, and sexual agency, thereby increasing the likelihood of unintended pregnancies.

Educational attrition among internally displaced girls is closely intertwined with these reproductive outcomes. Once

pregnant, many girls encounter stigma from peers, teachers, and even family members, leading to self-exclusion or institutional exclusion from school. Even where re-entry policies exist, economic pressures such as childcare responsibilities and the need to contribute to household income undermine sustained participation. In Logo LGA, anecdotal accounts from camp coordinators and local educators point to a pattern in which adolescent pregnancy precipitates a near-permanent exit from formal education, effectively narrowing life chances and perpetuating cycles of dependency.

Beyond individual experiences, the phenomenon has broader community implications. The erosion of girls' educational attainment reduces human capital formation in already fragile communities. In agrarian regions like Logo, where rebuilding livelihoods depends heavily on social cohesion and intergenerational knowledge transfer, the withdrawal of adolescent girls from education undermines long-term recovery prospects. Moreover, early motherhood in contexts of poverty intensifies maternal and neonatal health risks, especially where primary healthcare infrastructure is overstretched or inaccessible.

Against this backdrop, the communicative environment within IDP settings assumes critical significance. Information flows in camps are often informal, mediated through word of mouth, religious gatherings, local leaders, and sporadic NGO sensitization campaigns. Where communication is fragmented, inconsistent, or culturally misaligned, preventive messaging on sexual health and school retention fails to gain traction. In Logo LGA, the stark realities of displacement: food scarcity, insecurity, overcrowding, and limited institutional support, frame the everyday decisions of internally displaced girls. These lived conditions underscore the urgent need to understand how communication processes operate within this milieu and how they intersect with teenage pregnancy and educational attrition.

Statement of the Problem

Teenage pregnancy and educational attrition among internally displaced girls in Logo Local Government Area have assumed troubling proportions within a context marked by protracted displacement, economic precarity, weakened social protection structures, and limited access to structured reproductive health information. Field realities reveal increasing school discontinuity, early motherhood, transactional relationships, and entrenched stigma that collectively truncate the life chances of adolescent girls in IDP camps and host communities. Existing humanitarian interventions in Benue State have largely emphasized relief materials, food security, and temporary shelter, while communication-driven preventive frameworks tailored to

the socio-cultural ecology of displaced populations remain fragmented, sporadic, or externally designed without deep contextual grounding. Consequently, the absence of coordinated, culturally resonant, and gender-sensitive communication strategies continues to exacerbate vulnerability, reinforce misinformation, and sustain a cycle of early pregnancy and permanent withdrawal from formal education.

Aim and objectives of the Study

To examine communication gaps and context-specific strategies for mitigating teenage pregnancy and educational attrition among internally displaced girls in Logo LGA, Benue State. To realize this, the following objectives were set:

1. To explore the lived socio-communicative realities influencing teenage pregnancy among internally displaced girls in Ugba Camp.
2. To examine existing communication flows within the camp environment.
3. To identify girl-centered communication strategies capable of reducing sexual vulnerability and promoting sustained educational participation.

Research Questions

1. How do communicative environments influence teenage pregnancy among internally displaced girls in Ugba Camp?
2. What are the communication channels currently shape reproductive health knowledge and decision-making within the camp?
3. What communication-driven interventions do internally displaced girls perceive as effective in preventing early pregnancy and supporting educational continuity?

Literature Review

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies have been conceptualized variously across recent scholarship, yet there is broad agreement that they constitute deliberate, goal-oriented plans for sending, receiving, and processing messages. For instance, Littlejohn and Foss (2021) describe communication strategies as systematic approaches individuals or organizations use to achieve effective message exchange, while De Vries, Gensler, and Leeftang (2020) frame them as planned actions aligning communication activities with organizational goals. Similarly, Griffin (2022) defines communication strategies as the purposeful selection of channels, styles, and content to influence audience understanding and behavior, and

Holzäpfel and Schubert (2021) emphasize their role in mediating complexity in interpersonal and mass communication contexts. At the individual level, Faerch and Kasper (2020) highlight learner communication strategies as techniques language learners use to overcome breakdowns in interaction, whereas Ellis (2021) focuses on cognitive and metacognitive strategies that facilitate message planning and monitoring. In organizational communication, Eisenberg, Goodall, and Trethewey (2022) position strategies as frameworks that guide internal and external messaging for coherence and culture building, while Cornelissen (2019) underscores their function in sense-making during change processes. Other scholars distinguish types of strategies: persuasive versus informational (Heath & Bryant, 2020), verbal and nonverbal (Knapp, Hall, & Horgan, 2021), and digital versus traditional media strategies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2021).

According to Berger (2020), communication strategies also vary by intent, such as accommodative versus defensive tactics in conflict settings, whereas Myers (2019) and Rogers and Steinfatt (2021) underline interactive and dialogic strategies in relational contexts. In public relations and marketing, Fill and Turnbull (2020) describe integrated communication strategies that harmonize brand messaging across platforms. The usefulness of communication strategies is widely noted: they enhance clarity (Adler & Elmhorst, 2019), improve relational outcomes (Verderber, Verderber, & Sellnow, 2021), support organizational resilience (Coombs, 2020), and aid in learning and adaptation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2021). Egere and Okhueleigbe (2024) accept the fact whole that there are myriads of communication strategies but hold that such are relative to contexts and purposes, such that, peace communication has its own communication strategies just like other domains of communication and journalism. Collectively, these views reveal communication strategies as multifaceted constructs that encompass planned, adaptable, and context-sensitive techniques essential for effective interaction and message performance across personal, educational, and institutional spheres.

Teenage Pregnancy and Educational Attrition among Internally Displaced Girls

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent public health and educational challenge in Nigeria, with displacement contexts intensifying vulnerability. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey indicates that adolescent childbearing remains significantly higher in rural and economically deprived regions (National Population Commission & ICF, 2019). In Benue State, repeated farmer–herder conflicts have generated displacement patterns that disrupt schooling continuity and expose

adolescent girls to economic precarity (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2023). UNICEF Nigeria (2022) reports that displaced girls face increased risks of early marriage, transactional sex, and school dropout due to poverty and weakened protective systems. Research conducted by Save the Children Nigeria (2021) documents that stigma surrounding pregnancy frequently leads to informal exclusion from school, even in the absence of formal expulsion policies. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2021) acknowledges that cultural taboos around adolescent sexuality limit preventive dialogue and reproductive health literacy. Within IDP camps, overcrowding and limited youth-friendly services exacerbate unintended pregnancy rates (United Nations Population Fund Nigeria, 2023). Educational attrition is further compounded by childcare responsibilities and diminished academic motivation following prolonged displacement (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). Trauma exposure associated with conflict also undermines concentration and school reintegration capacity (International Rescue Committee Nigeria, 2022). These intersecting structural and communicative deficiencies reinforce a cyclical pattern in which early pregnancy truncates educational trajectories among internally displaced girls.

Communication Strategies for Mitigating Teenage Pregnancy and Educational Attrition Among Internally Displaced Girls

Mitigation frameworks increasingly advocate integrated communication architectures tailored to displacement ecologies. The Adolescent and Youth Health Policy stresses comprehensive sexuality education adapted to both formal and non-formal learning spaces as a primary preventive tool (Federal Ministry of Health, 2020). In humanitarian settings, UNICEF Nigeria (2022) recommends structured safe-space dialogue sessions and youth clubs to normalize conversations around reproductive health and schooling continuity. Radio drama serials and edutainment formats have been used in Benue and neighbouring states to influence normative beliefs and challenge early marriage practices (National Orientation Agency, 2021). Mobile health messaging initiatives supported by United Nations Population Fund Nigeria (2023) provide discreet channels for delivering accurate SRH information to adolescent girls.

Similarly, advocacy coalitions linking education authorities, camp coordinators, and civil society organizations enhance policy coherence and school re-entry pathways (International Organization for Migration Nigeria, 2023). Mentorship schemes implemented by Plan International Nigeria (2022) reinforce resilience and future orientation among displaced adolescents. Parent-focused

communication training strengthens protective dialogue within households (Save the Children Nigeria, 2021). Psychosocial communication support integrated into camp education programming addresses trauma-related disengagement (International Rescue Committee Nigeria, 2022). Stakeholder roundtables and participatory monitoring forums further promote sustainability and local ownership of preventive messaging (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). The convergent evidence suggests that sustainable mitigation requires a multi-channel communication infrastructure rooted in participation, contextual adaptation, and institutional collaboration.

Empirical Review

Imoh, Aondoakaa, Oche, and Yakubu (2025) conducted a descriptive cross-sectional survey titled “*Sexual Behaviour and Health Risks among Unmarried Adolescent Girls in Nigerian IDP Camps.*” The study aimed to assess the sexual behaviours and associated determinants, particularly unprotected intercourse and initiation of sex, among older displaced adolescent girls. Guided implicitly by reproductive health vulnerability frameworks, the researchers used a structured questionnaire administered to adolescent girls aged 15–19 living in six IDP camps across Abuja, Benue, and Plateau States. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, yielding a sample of 75 respondents. Data were analysed using SPSS (version 23.0), including chi-square and logistic regression to identify predictors of sexual initiation. Results showed that 42.7% had initiated sexual activity with the majority unprotected after displacement, especially among older adolescents and those out of school. The study concluded that displacement increases sexual vulnerability among girls and recommended strengthening sexual and reproductive health services within IDP settings to mitigate risks.

In a related mixed method investigation, Odo, Musa, and Oladugba (2020) explored “*Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs and Problems of Internally Displaced Adolescents in Borno State, Nigeria.*” The study aimed to identify the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) challenges affecting displaced adolescents and propose improvements, drawing on the social determinants of health theory to frame how socio-environmental factors shape SRH outcomes. Employing a cross-sectional design, researchers used structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. The population comprised internally displaced adolescents in Borno camps, and 396 participants were recruited through stratified sampling. Quantitative data were analysed with descriptive and chi-square statistics, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. Findings revealed urgent needs for sexuality education, safe motherhood services, and family planning, alongside

prevalent problems of early sexual experimentation and unsafe sex. The authors concluded that SRH services remain inaccessible and recommended making these services readily available within camps.

Qualitative evidence from Marlow, Kunnuji, Esiet, Bukoye, and Izugbara (2021) in *“The Sexual and Reproductive Health Context of an Internally Displaced Persons’ Camp in Northeastern Nigeria: Narratives of Girls and Young Women”* directly speaks to lived communicative realities influencing pregnancy. Framed by a vulnerability perspective in humanitarian contexts, the study aimed to document girls’ and young women’s experiences with unwanted pregnancies and related issues. A qualitative cross-sectional design was used, with 25 in-depth interviews of girls aged 15–19 and young women aged 20–24, recruited through purposive sampling from an IDP camp. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and coded for thematic analysis. Results highlighted lack of basic necessities and limited SRH information, which compelled many girls into transactional sex and forced marriages with resultant unwanted pregnancies. The study concluded that SRH knowledge and service utilization were critically low and recommended comprehensive SRH education and services to reduce vulnerability.

Mbachu, Agu, Eze, and Ndu (2024) examined *“Determinants of Peer Education on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of Adolescents”* with the aim of identifying factors that predict adolescents’ agency as peer educators. While not in an IDP camp, the study used social learning theory to understand communication dynamics in teenage peer groups. A cross-sectional quantitative design was implemented with 257 boys and girls from six public secondary schools in Ebonyi State, sampled purposively. Data were collected via pretested structured questionnaires and analysed using univariate and multivariate analyses. Findings showed that peer education was shaped by school level, parent–child communication, and program support structures. It concluded that strengthening communication channels—especially parent–adolescent and peer networks—enhances SRHR knowledge and recommended prioritizing these channels in interventions.

Okorafor, Uzochukwu, Onwujekwe and Uguru (2024) explored *“SRH Needs, Barriers, and Coping Strategies of Women of Reproductive Age in North Central IDP Camps (Nigeria).”* Though focusing on adult women, this qualitative inquiry used an SRH rights framework to examine communication flows concerning access to information and coping mechanisms in IDP camps in Abuja and Benue. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 purposively selected women of reproductive age. Data were analysed with NVivo, revealing significant communication

barriers, limited formal channels for SRH education, reliance on informal networks, and inadequate health messaging. The study concluded that communication flows around SRH within camps are weak and recommended improved structured information dissemination and community engagement.

Okeke, Ezenwaka and Nwankwo (2022) investigated stakeholders’ perceptions of adolescents’ SRH needs in Nigeria with an emphasis on communication between adults and adolescents in varied contexts. This qualitative study used focus groups and stakeholder interviews to analyse communication flows related to adolescent SRH. Findings showed inconsistent messaging, limited access to factual SRH information, and gaps in formal communication channels between adolescents and health providers. Conclusions emphasized enhancing interactive and context-sensitive communication strategies to improve knowledge and SRH behaviours among adolescents.

The *National Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project* implemented through peer education approaches in Nigeria (with partners like ARFH, NYSC, and UNICEF) offers evidence on the effectiveness of girl-centered communication strategies. This intervention aimed to increase adolescents’ access to SRH and HIV education and life skills through structured peer education channels. Evaluation reports indicate improved SRH knowledge and engagement among young participants, concluding that peer-oriented communication can reduce risk behaviours and support continued schooling by building self-efficacy and decision-making skills.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Communication Infrastructure Theory (CIT) propounded by Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach in 2001, which conceptualizes communication as an ecological system composed of storytelling networks, community-based organizations, local institutions, and the broader communication action context that together shape collective meaning and behavior. Rather than isolating individual cognition, CIT emphasizes how social realities are constructed through layered interpersonal, organizational, and mediated interactions, a perspective particularly germane to internally displaced settings in Logo Local Government Area where formal information systems are weak and informal networks dominate. Among displaced adolescent girls, reproductive decisions and school participation are deeply embedded in these communication ecologies—structured by peer narratives, camp leadership briefings, religious gatherings, humanitarian messaging, and rumor circuits. Where the communication infrastructure is fragmented or exclusionary, misinformation about sexuality, stigma around pregnancy, and silence on school re-entry

proliferate; where it is dense, inclusive, and culturally resonant, it can reinforce protective norms, amplify credible reproductive health information, and strengthen pro-education storytelling, thereby mitigating teenage pregnancy and educational attrition.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative cross-sectional research design within a descriptive-analytical framework. The study population comprised internally displaced adolescent girls aged 12–19 years residing in selected IDP camps within the area. Given the fluidity of camp populations, characterized by frequent inflow and outflow of residents, and the absence of an updated sampling frame, probability sampling was neither feasible nor methodologically appropriate. Instead, a scientifically grounded purposive sampling strategy was adopted, guided by the principle of data saturation. Participants were selected based on clearly defined inclusion criteria: displacement status, age bracket, minimum six months’ residence in the camp, and lived experience of schooling disruption or exposure to reproductive health communication. Recruitment

continued iteratively until thematic saturation was achieved, operationalized as the point at which no new conceptual insights emerged from successive interviews. Saturation was reached at eleven participants, consistent with established qualitative sampling benchmarks for homogeneous populations and in-depth inquiry. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis followed a rigorous thematic procedure involving familiarization, open coding, axial categorization, theme development, and interpretive synthesis. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility (prolonged engagement and member clarification), dependability (audit trail documentation), confirmability (reflexive memoing), and transferability (thick description of context). Ethical protocols included informed consent and assent procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality safeguards, anonymized coding of participants, secure data storage, and adherence to institutional ethical review standards.

Presentation and description of data

Table 1: Background profile

Study Site	Date of Interview	Number of Participants	Participant Age Range	Notes
Ugba (Headquarters of Logo LGA, Benue State)	3 January 2026	11 internally displaced females	15–37 years	All participants are internally displaced girls residing in Ugba Camp; 7 have children, 4 have none; 9 have not progressed beyond primary education.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

No.	Name	Age	Number of Children	Educational Status
1	Angela	35	3	Not beyond primary
2	Alimatu	37	4	Not beyond primary
3	Ete	36	3	Not beyond primary
4	Amatu	27	4 (all born in camp)	Not beyond primary
5	Ito	35	3	Not beyond primary
6	Ojo	17	2	Dropped out
7	Amina	15	0	UBE student
8	Sikira	15	0	Primary completed
9	Ugo	19	1	Dropped out
10	Efua	34	2	Not beyond primary
11	Uje	15	0	Beyond primary

Thematic Organization of Responses

Theme 1: Camp Living Conditions and Economic Vulnerability: All 11 respondents (100%) reported severe material deprivation, including lack of food, inadequate clothing, limited potable water, and exploitative labour conditions. Four respondents (36.4%) described working

for others and being underpaid, while three respondents (27.3%) reported resorting to threshing rice chaff to obtain small quantities for cooking. Poverty was explicitly linked to early pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and dependence on men from the host community. Eight respondents (72.7%)

emphasized that economic precarity is a structural driver of vulnerability and shapes daily survival choices.

Theme 2: Communication and Trust Networks: Ten out of 11 respondents (90.9%) indicated that their primary point of contact for personal or reproductive issues is their block leaders, who relay information to the Camp Chairman. NGO interventions on teenage pregnancy and school retention were acknowledged by all 11 respondents (100%) but described as irregular and insufficient. Only one respondent (9.1%) reported providing informal counseling to younger girls about natural family planning, highlighting a significant absence of trained counselors or consistent health educators.

Theme 3: Safety and Exploitation Dynamics: All 11 respondents (100%) stated they feel generally safe within the camp boundaries. However, 9 out of 11 respondents (81.8%) identified the host community as the main source of sexual exploitation, noting that young men lure girls with small payments, deny responsibility for pregnancies, and sometimes disappear to avoid accountability. Eight respondents (72.7%) emphasized the compounding effect of stigmatization and verbal abuse from the host community on their emotional wellbeing.

Theme 4: Stigma and Social Labeling: Pregnancy in the camp carries a strong social stigma. Ten respondents (90.9%) reported that pregnant girls are labeled as “loose” or morally irresponsible. Seven respondents (63.6%) highlighted that attempts to voice complaints or concerns about unfair treatment are often silenced by camp leaders. Social shaming was reported as a significant influence on adolescent behavior, discouraging open dialogue and limiting preventive action.

Theme 5: Educational Attrition: Financial hardship emerged as the unanimous reason for school discontinuation (11/11 respondents, 100%). Nine respondents (81.8%) reported having discontinued formal education due to poverty, while only two respondents (18.2%) continue schooling — Tavershima Mnena (15 years) and Shiaôndo Angel (15 years). One of these students indicated strong motivation to pursue further education but cited exclusion from diocesan scholarship programs due to limited slots, demonstrating structural barriers to educational continuation. Pregnancy and childcare responsibilities were reported by four respondents (36.4%) as additional factors limiting educational access.

Theme 6: Girls' Proposed Solutions: Eight respondents (72.7%) requested financial support through business or farming ventures as a preventive measure against early pregnancy. Four respondents (36.4%) prioritized educational sponsorship as the key solution. All respondents emphasized the importance of one-on-one

counseling and genuine inclusion in decision-making processes affecting them, underscoring the need for participatory and girl-centered communication strategies.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of this work sought to explore the lived socio-communicative realities influencing teenage pregnancy among internally displaced girls in Ugba Camp, and the findings reveal a structurally embedded vulnerability that is both material and communicative. Empirical studies by Imoh et al. (2025), Odo et al. (2020), and Marlow et al. (2021) consistently identified poverty, inadequate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information, and displacement-induced precarity as drivers of early sexual initiation and unprotected intercourse. This study's data corroborates these conclusions but deepens them by quantifying the immediacy of deprivation: 100% of respondents reported severe material hardship, while 72.7% explicitly linked economic precarity to early pregnancy and dependence on men from the host community.

The above fact aligns with Marlow et al.'s (2021) account of transactional survival strategies in northeastern camps, yet data from this study introduce a sharper communicative dimension: stigmatization (90.9%) and silencing by camp leadership (63.6%), which suggests that pregnancy is not only an economic outcome but also a product of constrained discursive spaces. Within the framework of Communication Infrastructure Theory (CIT), which posits that storytelling networks and institutional communication resources shape community resilience, Ugba Camp appears communicatively under-resourced: girls' narratives of exploitation circulate informally but lack amplification through strong institutional support systems. While earlier studies emphasized health service deficits, this present study demonstrates that communicative marginalization, silencing, labeling, and weak advocacy channels—functions as an independent variable reinforcing vulnerability. The variation may stem from this study's micro-level qualitative engagement with trust networks, which exposes communication breakdown as a structural determinant rather than a secondary condition of poverty.

Regarding the second objective, which examined existing communication flows within the camp environment, the findings reveal a highly centralized but weakly diversified communication structure. Whereas Mbachu et al. (2024) highlighted the effectiveness of peer networks and parent-child communication in strengthening adolescent SRH knowledge, and Okorafor et al. (2024) identified reliance on informal networks in North Central IDP camps, data from this study demonstrates a narrow vertical flow: 90.9% of respondents rely on block leaders who channel

information upward to the Camp Chairman. This top-down structure lacks horizontal storytelling networks, which CIT considers essential for community empowerment. Although 100% of respondents acknowledged NGO interventions, these were described as irregular and insufficient, echoing Odo et al.'s (2020) finding of inadequate SRH outreach.

Nevertheless, unlike Okeke et al. (2022), who observed inconsistent messaging across stakeholder groups in broader Nigerian contexts, Ugba's communication ecosystem is not merely inconsistent but structurally thin, there is almost no institutionalised counselling system, and only 9.1% reported informal peer counseling. The camp exhibits what CIT would describe as low narrative integration: information moves administratively but not dialogically. The variation between Ugba and some prior findings may be attributable to camp size, NGO presence, and local governance structures; nevertheless, the convergence lies in the persistent absence of robust, girl-centered communicative infrastructures capable of sustaining preventive dialogue.

In relation to the third objective, which aimed to identify girl-centered communication strategies capable of reducing sexual vulnerability and promoting sustained educational participation, this study's findings strongly reinforce and extend prior empirical evidence. The peer-education and empowerment models documented by Mbachu et al. (2024) and national SRH intervention projects demonstrate that participatory communication enhances self-efficacy and reduces risk behaviour. Similarly, the present study reveals that 72.7% of respondents advocated economic empowerment initiatives, 36.4% prioritized educational sponsorship, and 100% emphasized one-on-one counseling and inclusion in decision-making. These recommendations reflect an intuitive grasp of what CIT frames as strengthening the communication action context: when girls become co-authors of their narratives rather than passive recipients of messages, vulnerability declines.

Contrasting previous studies that primarily recommended improved service delivery, this fieldwork underscores the inseparability of economic empowerment, educational continuity, and dialogic communication. Educational attrition in Ugba (100% citing financial hardship; 81.8% discontinued schooling) parallels national findings linking poverty and pregnancy to dropout rates, yet the emphasis on participatory inclusion signals a more transformative demand. The argument emerging from this analysis is that girl-centered strategies must move beyond information dissemination to infrastructural storytelling reform, embedding peer counseling, mentorship networks, economic cooperatives, and scholarship advocacy within the camp's communicative fabric. Thus, while prior

research validates the protective role of peer and SRH education, this study advances the discourse by demonstrating that sustainable vulnerability reduction requires reconstructing the camp's communication infrastructure itself, not merely inserting messages into an already fragile system.

Conclusion

Communication is intrinsic to human existence; it is co-natural with the human person, shaping relationships, survival, and social order. When displacement occurs, it does not merely uproot people from land, it disrupts their communicative environment, their dignity, and their moral reference points. Yet the instinct to survive remains irrepressible. In conditions of prolonged insecurity and deprivation, survival gradually replaces stability as the organizing principle of life. Within such fragile contexts, social exchanges become transactional, and scarcity redefines value. Where resources are scarce and protection is weak, the tragic barter of food for sex emerges, not as culture, but as consequence. Over time, repeated exposure to hardship dulls moral sensitivity, and practices once considered reprehensible risk becoming normalized. Research, advocacy, and humanitarian response may illuminate the crisis, but they cannot alone uproot the structural violence that sustains it. As long as insurgency and forced displacement persist, communities will continue to operate in emergency mode, negotiating survival within constrained and compromised systems. Only when violence ceases and displacement ends can individuals move beyond mere survival toward meaningful, self-determined living.

Recommendations

RC.1: Camp authorities and NGOs should establish structured SRH dialogue forums led by trained female counsellors.

RC.2: NGOs and camp leaders should decentralise communication by empowering peer educators and adolescent representatives.

RC.3: Government agencies and NGOs should implement girl-centered programs combining financial support, scholarships, and mentorship.

References

1. Adler, R. B., & Elmhurst, J. M. (2019). *Communicating at work: Strategies for success in business and the professions* (12th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
2. Association for Reproductive and Family Health. (2020). *Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health intervention programme report*. ARFH Publications.

3. Berger, C. R. (2020). *Interpersonal communication: Theoretical perspectives, future prospects*. Routledge.
4. Coombs, W. T. (2020). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
5. Cornelissen, J. (2019). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
6. De Vries, L., Gensler, S., & Leeflang, P. S. H. (2020). Effects of digital communication strategies on brand perceptions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 50*, 75–90.
7. Egere, K. I. & Okhueleigbe, O. A. (2024). *Communication, media and society today*. Plush Print.
8. Eisenberg, E. M., Goodall, H. L., Jr., & Trethewey, A. (2022). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint* (9th ed.). Macmillan Learning.
9. Ellis, R. (2021). *Understanding second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
10. Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (2020). Communication strategies in language learning. In C. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 507–538). Wiley-Blackwell.
11. Federal Ministry of Education. (2022). *National policy on education* (6th ed.). Government of Nigeria.
12. Federal Ministry of Health. (2020). *National adolescent and youth health policy*. Government of Nigeria.
13. Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. (2021). *National strategy to end child marriage in Nigeria*. Government of Nigeria.
14. Fill, C., & Turnbull, S. (2020). *Marketing communications: Discovery, creation and conversations* (8th ed.). Pearson.
15. Griffin, E. (2022). *A first look at communication theory* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
16. Heath, R. L., & Bryant, J. (2020). *Human communication theory and research: Concepts, contexts, and challenges* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
17. Holzäpfel, L. C., & Schubert, T. (2021). Communication strategies in digital media environments. *Communication Research Trends, 40*(2), 4–30.
18. Imoh, G., Aondoakaa, S., Oche, O. M., & Yakubu, A. (2025). Sexual behaviour and health risks among unmarried adolescent girls in Nigerian internally displaced persons camps. *Journal of Health Services Practice, 6*(1), 45–58.
19. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023*. IDMC.
20. International Organization for Migration. (2023). *Displacement tracking matrix: Nigeria round report*. IOM.
21. International Rescue Committee. (2022). *Adolescent girls in emergencies report: Nigeria*. IRC.
22. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2021). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 64*(1), 78–92.
23. Knapp, M. L., Hall, J. A., & Horgan, T. G. (2021). *Nonverbal communication in human interaction* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.
24. Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2021). *Theories of human communication* (12th ed.). Waveland Press.
25. Marlow, H. M., Kunnuji, M., Esiet, A., Bukoye, O., & Izugbara, C. O. (2021). The sexual and reproductive health context of an internally displaced persons' camp in northeastern Nigeria: Narratives of girls and young women. *Frontiers in Reproductive Health, 3*, 779059. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frph.2021.779059>
26. Mbachu, C. O., Agu, I. C., Eze, I., & Ndu, A. (2024). Determinants of peer education on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of adolescents in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. *BMC Public Health, 24*, 1987.
27. Myers, S. A. (2019). *Human communication theory and research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
28. National Orientation Agency. (2021). *Community sensitization and behavioural change communication report*. NOA.
29. National Population Commission (Nigeria), & ICF. (2019). *Nigeria demographic and health survey 2018*. NPC & ICF.
30. Odo, A. N., Musa, A., & Oladugba, A. (2020). Sexual and reproductive health needs and

problems of internally displaced adolescents in Borno State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 24(2), 45–56.

31. Okeke, C. C., Ezenwaka, U., & Nwankwo, B. O. (2022). Stakeholders' perceptions of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health needs in Nigeria. *BMJ Open*, 12(6), e051389.
32. Okorafor, C. U., Uzochukwu, B. S. C., Onwujekwe, O. E., & Uguru, N. P. (2024). Sexual and reproductive health needs, barriers, and coping strategies of women of reproductive age in internally displaced persons camps in North Central Nigeria. *BMC Women's Health*, 24, 612.
33. Plan International. (2022). *Girls' education in emergencies programme report: Nigeria*. Plan International Nigeria.
34. Rogers, E. M., & Steinfatt, T. M. (2021). *Intercultural communication* (7th ed.). Waveland Press.
35. Save the Children. (2021). *Barriers to girls' education in conflict-affected communities: Nigeria report*. Save the Children Nigeria.
36. Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2021). Self-regulated learning: Theories, measures, and outcomes. In K. A. Renninger & S. E. Hidi (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of motivation and learning* (pp. 473–495). Cambridge University Press.
37. Society for Family Health. (2021). *Evaluation report of peer education interventions for adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Nigeria*. Society for Family Health.
38. United Nations Children's Fund. (2022a). *Adolescent girls' empowerment and communication interventions in humanitarian settings: Nigeria country report*. UNICEF.
39. United Nations Children's Fund. (2022b). *Education disrupted: The impact of conflict and displacement on children's learning in sub-Saharan Africa*. UNICEF.
40. United Nations Population Fund. (2023). *State of world population 2023: 8 billion lives, infinite possibilities*. UNFPA.
41. United Nations Population Fund. (2023). *Adolescent sexual and reproductive health programme brief: Nigeria*. UNFPA Nigeria.
42. Verderber, K. S., Verderber, R. F., & Sellnow, D. D. (2021). *Communicate!* (16th ed.). Cengage Learning.