Information a Tool for Social Advocacy Protection Services for Children in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State

Mohammed Karfa Bizi[1], Dikkuma Mohammed Ibrahim[2], Ali Usman[3], Gambomi Goni Musa[4] & Musa Adamu Mahdi[5]

[1,2&3]Fane-fane Central Library, Mai Idris Alooma Polytechnic,Geidam, Yobe State
[4]Department of General Studies, Mai Idris Alooma Polytechnic,Geidam, Yobe State
[5]Department of Public Administration, Mai Idris Alooma Polytechnic,Geidam, Yobe State

Abstract

This study attempted to examine the role play by Information as a tool for social advocacy protection services for children in Damaturu, Yobe State.The study set to determine available types of social protection services in Damaturu Metropolis and how these services reach the children who no interest in education or acquiring any vocational skill that will shape their lives and the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of the knowledge for child protection. The study adopted the descriptive survey design and the population consisted of all the one hundred and ten (110) respondents on child protection and fourty (40) members of the community was used. Structured questionnaire (4-Point likert scale rating) and interview method was employed for data collection. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. The finding reveal low level involvement of information managers in packaging, disseminating and communicating knowledge on child protection against social vices by the agencies responsible for designing and coordinating programs. The study also showed dissatisfaction of few teachers and some members of the community over the unavailable access to the knowledge on how to counsel and manage cases of social vices among children when the need arises. The study suggest that adequate integration of the services of information managers into the services of child protection agencies is necessary since their major task is to create and disseminate information to various kinds of information seekers everywhere.

Key words: Social Advocacy, Information, Protection, Children, Damaturu.

Introduction

Information is a powerful phenomenon that any living being can't do without it if he want to leave efficiently and effectively. In other aspect every person is dwelling within the pool of his information. Information is a resource that influences the determination of any person or group of persons to arrive at the attainment of set goals. In other word, every rational being needs some vital information for their day-to-day existence and wellbeing. The fact still remains that no individual or society can grow beyond the quality of information at their disposal (Emmanuel, 2022). Information is seen as the strategic tool for virtually every person or group of person in organization or establishment be it public or private for growth and sustainability (Emmanuel, 2012). Information when used as tool in social advocacy for the protection of children would importantly help in their social life, in comprehension and learning of what they are being taught.

Advocacy is a set of coordinated activities (ideally contributing to a broader strategy) that seek to protect of persons of concern by promoting changes that bring policy, practice or law into line with international standards. Advocacy (media campaigns, public speaking, and commissioning and publishing research and lobbying) aims to influence decision makers and stakeholders to adopt policies and practices that will protect refugees, internally displaced people, stateless people and other affected populations. It is a central element of comprehensive protection and solution strategies. Combined with other protection activities (such as information sharing, monitoring, negotiation), advocacy can help to transform attitudes, systems and structures that put Persons of Concern at risk. Advocacy messages must have clear objectives and audiences (UNHCR, 2021).

Social Media Advocacy can be used to enhance the following protection outcomes: To prevent and end human rights violations, and encourage States to respect, protect and fulfill their human rights obligations; To ensure humanitarian actors deliver protection and assistance to Persons of Concern in a safe and dignified way, on the basis of need and without discrimination; To ensure relevant actors and stakeholders make funds and resources available to meet the needs of Persons of concerns (PoCs); To bring the policies, practice and law of a State into line with international standards (notably refugee law, humanitarian law, human rights law, guiding principles on internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), international standards on the prevention of statelessness and the protection of stateless people); To promote greater acceptance of Persons of Concern (PoCs); by host communities and combat discrimination and xenophobia (UNHCR, 2021).

Child Protection is the prevention of, and response to, exploitation, abuse, neglect, harmful practices and violence against children. It is embedded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals. Child Protection is universal: it is for all children everywhere, from low- to high-income countries (UNICEF, 2021).

Over 1 billion children experience violence every year. The consequences of Child Protection violations are catastrophic – profound, enduring and often deadly for children – and with economic costs of violence against children estimated at $7 trillion per year. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified risks for children and reduced services to manage those risks. But there have also been significant and positive changes in child protection in recent years. Government- and community- led actions have resulted in increases in birth registration and reductions in child labour, child marriage and female genital mutilation. Above all, we have learnt that child protection violations are preventable: progress can be made through political will, societal change and an emerging science of prevention and treatment strategies (UNICEF, 2021).

Knowledge is power and one must understand that power that cannot be tap into is useless. This means that only applied knowledge brings results. For this reason, information dissemination is a core responsibility of any organization tasked with generating and sharing

knowledge products. In other word, achieving optima utilization/applicability of the services provided by the advocacy protection agencies, the information managers and libraries should be carried along due to their expatriates (the Librarians and Information Managers) in attending to the various needs of users in addressing their information needs. Managers of information are saddled with the tasks of selecting, managing, providing access, and sharing of information in a manner that attracts its users (Kwakpovwe, 2019). Roger et al. (2019) describe information manager as someone who collects, records, organizes, stores, preserves, retrieves and disseminates printed or digital information.

Dissemination is the interactive process of communicating knowledge to target audiences so that it may be used to lead to change (Muriel and Oliver, 2017).

Many studies have discussed extensively on the role of information in social advocacy with reference to vulnerable youths and children in Nigeria and elsewhere. This particular study is aimed at finding out the available types of social protection services. How often the services reach the children, and the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of knowledge on child protection to children with a special reference to Damaturu Metropolis of Yobe state, Nigeria.

The paper is segmented into five sections with introduction as section one. Literature review in Section two. While methodology adopted for this study is presented in section three. The Results, discussions and recommendations are done in section four and five respectively.

Literature Review

Emmanuel (2022) analysed in her study the Information a tool for social advocacy protection services for children in Gwagwalada area council, Abuja. Where she critically dwelled on the challenge of social vices effects among children in Gwagwalada town as worrisome as

their life destiny is been truncated. These children or teenagers no longer have interest in education or acquiring any vocational skill that will shape their lives for a better future. So the study was set out to determine available types of social protection services in Gwagwalada, how the services reach the children and the involvement of information managers in the dissemination of the knowledge for child protection. The study also adopted the descriptive survey design and the population consisted of all the 120 agencies staff on child protection. Structured questionnaire and interview was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores of four-scale rating. The finding reveal low level involvement of information managers in packaging, disseminating and communicating knowledge on child protection against social vices by the agencies responsible for designing and coordinating programs. The results also showed dissatisfaction of few teachers and some members of the community over the unavailable access to the knowledge on how to counsel and manage cases of social vices among children when the need arises.

Hestres (2017) examine the Social Media and the Work of Advocacy Organizations; were find out that Advocacy organizations rely on social media services, such as Facebook and Twitter, to engage their supporters. These services increasingly influence how citizens and advocacy organizations engage politically online through the technical features and policies they choose to implement a phenomenon that can sometimes disrupt the work of advocates. Interviews with digital strategists at several US advocacy organizations revealed low levels of awareness of this phenomenon, despite its potential impact on their work; substantial dependence on these services for advocacy work; and a shared sense of necessity to embrace these tools, despite their potential downsides. Implications for the scholarship and practice of Internet governance and digitally mediated advocacy are discussed.

According to Bowen, Nickesia and Margaret (2017) in their study Advocacy through Social Media: Exploring Student Engagement in Addressing Social Issues; were they revealed

Social media have become ubiquitous and are seen as beneficial to society. Although the use of social media for educational purposes has been the subject of recent research, not much is known about their role in higher education civic engagement. Employing critical discourse analysis, this study explored the function of social media as a tool to promote the civic engagement of students through advocacy focused on identified social issues. Findings of this qualitative research are discussed as themes pertaining to the challenges of advocacy, the relative importance of advocacy processes, and the function of social media infrastructure. They further discuss the implications for pedagogy and for research in the area of technology-mediated, issue-focused advocacy by university students.

Scott and Maryman (2016) in their study Using Social Media as a Tool to Complement Advocacy Efforts, were in which they said Community practitioners must leverage a variety of tools in order to promote and advocate for social change. Social media are relatively innovative tools for informing and mobilizing communities in an advocacy effort. As part of a coordinated effort, social media align well with the principles of community psychology by enabling individuals to contribute to participatory dialogue about social issues, collaborate on change efforts, and establish a sense of community. These tools can enhance supporters' advocacy engagement and can help sustain efforts in the midst of inevitable challenges. However, social media alone are not sufficient for promoting social change, but should be used to enhance traditional organizing strategies. In addition to synthesizing literature across empirical and practitioner (e.g., communication consultants) sources, real-world examples are provided to illustrate how social media can enhance advocacy efforts.

Methodology

The Study Area

Damaturu is the headquarters of Yobe state and equally the headquarters of Damaturu (metopolis) Local government area which was creation on 27th August 1991. Situated on the coordinates of 11^0 44'40'' N 110 57'40''E 11.74444 ^{0}N 11.961110 E at north eastern corner of Nigeria, with a total land mass area of 2,366 KM^2 (914sq mi) and a total Population of 88,014 (NBS, 2006).

Damaturu is the headquarters of Damaturu emirate, at one time part of and headquarters the Ngazargamo emirate now based in Geidam town (Wikipedia, 2021). Damaturu local government area consist of twelve (12) wards in which four (4) wards of (Bundigari/Pawari, Gwange/Njiwaji, Nayinawa, and Damaturu central) are in metropolitan area or core metropolis while the remaining eight (8) wards are term as sub-core metropolis. Damaturu houses all Nigerian ethnic groups and other foreign nationals. But the major ethnic groups in the study area are: Kanuri, Fulani, and Hausa among others. The people are predominantly Farmers, Business men and Civil servants.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study employed descriptive survey research design to analysed the study information as a tool for social advocacy protection services of children in Damaturu metropolis, Yobe state. Descriptive survey research design according to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is concerned with systemic description of events as they are, because it is aimed at collecting data on something and describing the characteristics and facts about the population of a given study. The research population consisted of the one hundred and ten (110) children social protection advocacy staff and Fourty (40) randomly interviewed teachers and members of the community in the study Area Council, Damaturu metropolis. The purposive sampling technique method was employed for the study. A well-structured questionnaire and interviews was conducted to primary school teachers and some members of the community in study area. The structured questionnaire was governed by psychometric scale of 4-point Likert rating *scale (SA: Strongly Agreed; A: Agreed; D: Disagreed; and SD: Strongly Disagreed).* The data collected were

subjected to analysis using frequency counts and mean scores statistic, percentages and tabular representations.

Results Analysis and Discussions

Table 1: Gender distribution and Years of working experience of the respondents

Characteristic	Respondent:	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	75	68.18
Female	35	31.82
Working Experience:		
1 – 5 Years	10	9.09
6 – 10 Years	22	20
11 – 15 Years	60	54.54
16 – 20 Years	8	7.42
21 Years above	10	9.09

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 1 shows that 75(68.18%) respondents were males and 35(37.5%) of respondents were females. This shows that majority of the respondents were males. On working experiences the result shows that 10(9.09%) of respondents have working experiences between 1 and 5 years, 22(20.0%) respondents have working experiences in service between 6 and 10 years, 60(54.54%) respondents have working experience in services ranges from 11 to 15 years, 8(7.42%) respondents have working experiences between 16 and 20 years and 10(9.09%) respondents have working experiences between 21 years and above. The analysis therefore, reveals that majority of the respondents are males 75(68.18%) and those within the working experiences of 11 – 15 years 60(54.54%) have the highest majority. These entails the study have masculine and active sample size.

Table 2: Types of social protection services available for children

S/N	Kind of services	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	**Social Welfare Child**	20	90	0	0	2.9	Accepted
2	**Protective Human**	35	75	0	0	3.2	Accepted
3	**Right Children**	5	105	0	0	3.0	Accepted
4	**NGOs**	0	0	48	62	1.0	Rejected

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 2 above shows that social welfare, child protective and human right with the mean scores of 2.9, 3.2 and 3.0 respectively were accepted as some of the types of social protection services in Damaturu Metropolis. While children NGOs was rejected by the respondents with mean score of 1.0 as is not considered as type of social protection services for children protection in the study area.

Table 3: The Services channels

S/N	Ways in which the services get to the children	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Organized seminar	40	70	0	0	2.8	Accepted
2	Camp meetings	3	7	82	18	1.3	Rejected
3	Special outreach to event Centres	0	7	85	17	1.1	Rejected
4	Social Media platforms	33	77	0	0	3.2	Accepted
5	Radio	54	56	0	0	2.7	Accepted
6	Internet	50	60	0	0	2.6	Accepted
7	Visits to Schools	27	49	16	18	2.5	Accepted
8	Television	41	55	8	6	2.6	Accepted

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 3 above shows that respondents with the mean scores of 3.2, 2.8, 2.7, 2.6, 2.5 and 2.6 respectively indicates that seminars, social welfare platform, radio, internet, visits to schools and television are the means through which information on child protection get to the children in need. Whereas, majority representing (90.91% and 92.73%) of the respondents disagreed with camp meetings and special outreach to event centres as means to channel information to children with mean scores of 1.3 and 1.1. The respondents affirmed that camp meetings and special outreach has never been used as means of disseminating information on children's protection in the study area.

Table 4: How often are the services offered to children?

S/N	Times these services are provided	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	**Seminar/camp meetings:**						
	Monthly	24	23	30	35	2.4	Rejected
	Quarterly	0	27	54	29	2.0	Rejected
	Yearly	36	72	1	0	2.8	Accepted
2	**Outreach to event centres/ visits schools:**						
	Beginning of every term	4	8	80	18	1.1	Rejected
	Twice in a term	4	0	50	56	2.0	Rejected
	Middle of the term	51	55	4	0	2.9	Accepted
3	**Social media platforms/internet:**						
	Every day	36	65	0	9	2.9	Accepted
	Weekly	27	68	19	6	2.6	Accepted
	Monthly	57	28	19	6	2.7	Accepted
	Quarterly	35	55	10	10	2.6	Accepted
	Yearly	40	45	19	6	2.8	Accepted

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4	**Radio/television:**						
	Weekly	45	56	3	6	2.7	Accepted
	Monthly	25	45	20	10	2.5	Accepted
	Quarterly	40	45	20	5	2.5	Accepted
	Yearly	20	65	19	6	3.0	Accepted

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 4 shows that respondents with mean scores of 2.5 and above agreed that organized seminars only holds yearly whereas respondents with less than 2.50 disagreed with camp meetings been means of social service for children in Damaturu. Hence the mean scores of 2.9 and 2.5 agreed that visits to schools holds at the middle of the term before the commencement of serious class work. However, almost all the respondents attested that outreach to event centres were assumptions but never a reality. Interview with few respondents assert that visits to schools by the agencies were never for the children's benefits at all. Respondents with the mean scores of 2.9, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.7 respectively, that is children often get information on social protection through social media platforms and the internet. Radio/Television are major means through which information on children protection against social vices gets to children as opined by majority of the respondents with the mean scores of 2.9, 2.6, 2,7, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.7.

Table 5: The involvement of information managers in disseminating/packaging of knowledge on child protection in Damaturu

S/N	Items	No. of information managers	Percentage (%)
1	Information managers are involved in disseminating and packaging knowledge on child protection	80	72.73
2	Information managers are not involved in disseminating and packaging knowledge on child	30	27.27
	Total:	120	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of information managers' involvement in the dissemination and packaging of child protection knowledge to children in the area of study. The result shows that 80(72.73%) of information managers are involved in the service of disseminating and packaging information/ knowledge on child protection to the children in the study areas. Whereas, 30(27.27%) of the respondents admitted that they are not involved in the protection advocacy service to children in the study area.

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Table 6: Primary schools teachers and community leaders' responses on the availability of information on children protection to schools and the community

S/N	Items	No. of primary school staff and community leaders	Percentage (%)
1	Readily Available Information /knowledge on protection children to schools and the community alright	16	40
2	Information provided on child protection are satisfactory	24	60
	Total:	40	100

Source: Authors' computation, 2022.

Table 6 shows that 24(60%) of knowledge/information provided to both the schools and the community are not satisfactory. Whereas 16(40%) of the respondents confirmed that the available information/ knowledge on child protection are alright in Damaturu metropolis. But the further study reveals 24(60%) of the interviewed teachers and the community members attested that the information/knowledge are not alright. While the remaining 16(40%) are of the view that information provided on children protection are satisfactory in Damaturu metropolis.

Conclusions

The study has assessed the role of information as a tool for social advocacy protection services for children in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State. Were the researchers concludes that applied information is a tool for positive progress in any person, group of persons, society or nations that embrace it, and then it has become imperative for agencies on child's protection to redesign and strategized their services to capture the interest of targeted audience for effective applicability of the services. Also, the agencies should incorporate the services of information managers into their services, since their major tasks is to create, generate, acquire, disseminate information and ensure availability and accessibility of the information to the targeted audience. Finally, the knowledge on child protection by the agencies on protection should be readily available to the targeted audience on their preferred platform.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the research proffers the following recommendations: That NGOs should be incorporated as their roles in disseminating of vital information to rural areas into social welfare services of Damaturu council and all local government councils in Nigeria by extension; Information managers should incorporate vocational advocacy services for effective delivery of relevant and timely information in the community.

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