

**UNICEF AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN
NIGERIA 2015 - 2023**

BY

Joy Ebosele ABUNENE (Miss)

ART2000356

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

FEBRUARY, 2025

**UNICEF AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN
NIGERIA 2015 - 2023**

BY

Joy Ebosele ABUNENE (Miss)

ART2000356

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)
HONOURS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

FEBRUARY, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Joy Ebosele ABUNENE (Miss)** in the department of History and International studies, University of Benin, Benin city under my supervision.

Prof. Eddy O. Erhagbe
Project Supervisor

Dr. Frank Ikponmwosa
Head of Department

Date

Date

DEDICATION

It is my esteemed privilege to dedicate this research work to Almighty God, the Creator and Sustainer of my life, who graciously imparts wisdom and knowledge. I also dedicate this work to my mother, Mrs. Oluwafemi Abunene, whose unwavering support and love have been my foundation and strength. Furthermore, I lovingly remember and honor the memory of my late father, Mr. Samuel Abunene."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge with sincere gratitude the divine providence of God Almighty, whose grace and mercy have sustained me throughout my journey. I also express profound appreciation to my mother Mrs. Abunene Oluwafemi, my rock and inspiration to keep pushing, my big mummy, my twin and support system Ese, Anty Sarah(mummy M4), HRM KING DAVID USIFOH the ENOGIE OF EBELLE KINGDOM and HRM QUEEN BOSE my aunty, Tamuno-Amisha my best friend, uncle Oboh Basil, uncle Caleb, uncle Edobor, Ogedegbe Peter, Jegbefumen Osas, amongst my family members, whose unconditional love, support, and guidance have played important roles in my life towards my academic journey.

My deepest appreciation also goes to my Spiritual fathers; Pastor Andie Orji, Deacon Polycarp Onuma, and my fathers from CGMI, for their unending love, check up and prayers.

The completion of this research work would have been impossible without these great personalities. My appreciation goes to my esteemed lecturers in the Department of History and International studies, University of Benin, who have guided me through my journey. To Prof. Eddy O. Erhagbe, who has not only been my project supervisor but also my mentor and an inspiration, Dr. Charles O. Osarumwense for his wisdom and support, Dr. Daniel Iweze for his help and guidance, Dr. Frank Ikponmwosa (HOD) for being a father to us all, Dr. Williams Orukpe for always being there, Mr. Daniel Orobato for his

constant care, Dr. Osemwengie for her love and kind heart and the entire staffs, of the department, I say thank you and may God bless you all.

To Chioma Naomi who has been of great assistance to me even way before I got admission till the end, Egbon Michelle Zemen who has been a true and loving friend to me through my 4 years, Amb. Gregory Osayuwa, Oyedipe Tosin, Ituah Emmanuel, amongst others from the Department, I say thank you for the privilege of knowing you.

I also want to express deep appreciation to the beautiful souls I met through my journey, Omonegho, my only Bunkie (Mrs Duba Sarah), Success Osasenaga, Esmond, Oyaluna Michael, who have now become friends for life, thank you and God bless you.

Finally special thanks to Iwowo Paula, Adebessin Ferann, Dekunke, Olupinla David, Jeje Mofe, and the others for their non-stop support, motivations and encouragements throughout my academic journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Title	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Acknowledgments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1
CHAPTER TWO: POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN NIGERIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-19
CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPACTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE, 2015-2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-41
CHAPTER FOUR: UNICEF: STRATEGIES FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE, AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS IN NIGERIA, 2015-2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-52
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-74
BIBLIOGRAPHY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-80

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established in 1946 as part of the agency of the United Nation Organization (UNO) in the aftermath of World War II. Its mandate was to help children and young people whose lives and future were at risk, no matter what role their country had played in the war. What mattered to UNICEF was reaching every child in need, protecting children's rights to survive, thrive and reach their full potentials. It has consistently worked to protect the rights and well-being of all children whoever they are wherever they live.¹

UNICEF has been in the forefront of the global fight against poverty and child abuse, striving to ensure the well being and rights of children worldwide. It believes that nurturing and caring for children are the cornerstones of human progress. UNICEF was created with this purpose in mind to work with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination place in a child's path.²

The Organization involves everyone in creating protective environments for children as it is present to relieve suffering during emergencies and where children are threatened, because no child should be exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation that is why they upload the convention of the rights of the child. It also works for the millennium development goals and for the progress promised in the United Nations

charter as it strives for peace and security and work to hold everyone accountable to the promises made for children.

However, it is part of the global movement for children a brand coalition dedicated to improving the life of every child. Through this movement and event such as the United Nations special session on children, it encourages young people to speak out and participate in the decisions that affect their lives. As the organization expanded its program, it was able to spread across the world to other continents, UNICEF is active in more than 190 countries and territories of which Nigeria is a part as regards to our case study in which country programmed and National committee were established.

In 1952, its Executive board was able to approve aid for relief in sub-Saharan Africa and later that year an office was opened in Lagos, Nigeria.³ Nigeria was one of the very first African countries where UNICEF established a program of cooperation.⁴ It was formerly established in Nigeria in 1965 and has been actively working to promote the well-being and rights of children in the country through various programs and initiative. UNICEF has evolved as an organization that helped Nigeria to evolve as well

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine how UNICEF endeavors in Nigeria stand as a compelling case study, reflecting both the progress achieved and the challenges faced in addressing the critical issues of poverty and child abuse from 2015 to 2023 while the specific objectives arising from this study includes:

1. To examine the landscape of poverty in Nigeria

2. To examine child abuse in Nigeria: patterns and challenges
3. To examine UNICEF initiative and interventions
4. To evaluate the outcomes and results of UNICEF efforts in Nigeria between 2015-2023.

Scope of the Study

The study will cover UNICEF and the fight against poverty and child abuse using Nigeria as a case study with emphasis on the period between 2015-2023. The choice of the period 2015–2023 for examining UNICEF's role in combating poverty and child abuse in Nigeria is strategic due to several political, social, and economic developments during these years. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with goals such as ending poverty (Goal 1) and ensuring children's well-being (Goals 3 and 4). UNICEF, as a key player, prioritized aligning its efforts in Nigeria with these global objectives.

Methodology

The study adopts the historical research methods in examining concepts and issues which is common among historians and involves the use of primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data entails oral interview with different category of people, which will include women, youths, and advocate for child right group within Benin, while the secondary sources of data will include; journals, magazines, books and online materials.

Literature Review

Comcec Coordination Office (CCO), defined poverty as the lack of sufficient resources to meet one's basic needs. The definition of poverty depends on the basic necessities, which depend on geography, time and cultural expectations, or even on the source of the definition. In this respect, there are different ways to study the poverty situation of countries. The most frequently used method is to define poverty in monetary terms, such as the USD 1.90 a day and the USD 3.10 a day poverty lines that have been specified by the World Bank, or the value of a minimum calorie requirement. Poverty is also defined in non-monetary terms from a multidimensional perspective. Within this context, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began to calculate Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in 2010, in order to measure poverty in a much broader context. The MPI considers multiple deprivations of the population and their overlap by utilizing the dimensions of health, education and standards of living. HDI is another non-monetary indicator of poverty produced by UNDP. Including health, education and standards of living dimensions as is the case with the MPI, the HDI focuses on some further components of these dimensions.⁵

Ajakaiye & Adeyeye in A. Gbosi, and C. O. Philip, *The Nigerian Economy and Current Problems*, the concepts of poverty are as follows: inability to obtain necessities or goods; lack of or restricted access to resources that can be used for production. Therefore, those people or households in a given community who are unable to afford a certain basket of essential goods and services are thought to be impoverished. "In this

context, basic goods are defined as: food, shelter, water, health care, political and civil rights to participate in decisions pertaining to socioeconomic conditions, and access to productive resources, including education, working skills, and tools". Accordingly, efforts and tactics targeted at lessening the frequency and intensity of poverty in a society are considered to be part of poverty reduction in this study. Therefore, encouraging sustainable socioeconomic growth and development, putting in place social safety net programs, empowering and integrating the public, sustainable development, and good governance are some strategies for reducing poverty.⁶

W. T. Amakoromo, V. I. Asiegbu, & C. O. Okafor, in their article title declared that "Poverty Alleviation Programmes and the Prevailing Challenges for Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: An Assessment" declared that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks present Nigerian leaders with an additional avenue to demonstrate their unwavering commitment in the fight against poverty. As the nation persistently strives to combat this issue, these initiatives provide Nigerian leaders with an opportunity to intensify their efforts. Internationally, ending poverty within the globe is outlined by the United Nation in the agenda 2030 as the first goal among the seventeen SDGs. Many countries around the world, particularly in Africa, are taking deliberate steps to eradicate poverty by adopting and implementing policy frameworks, all of which have the potential to help alleviate poverty. Nigeria should not lag behind in these endeavors. However, the defining features of the Nigerian society appear to be impeding the success of poverty alleviation programmes. The country is

replete with corruption, income inequality, ethno-religious crises, and unemployment especially among youths among others. This paper takes a look at both past and current poverty reduction programmes articulated and implemented by the Nigeria state with emphasis on the different challenges militating against the success of the different poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. More specifically, the point of departure of this study from other earlier studies is its tendency to be.⁷

Another aspect of this research is that of child abuse. Child abuse has become a global problem. Children are most times abused by people who are supposed to love, cherish and protect them. Children face the menace of abuse ranging from physical injuries, abandonment, sexual abuse to child labour. The society seems to be silent about it except for few like the creative writers who write from what is obtained in their society. Many writers examine the ordeals of children in many societies and how these abuses affect these children. Abuse in children is the physical, sexual or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or caregiver. The CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 defines child abuse as “Any recent act of failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation”.

K. Wells in his book titled *Childhood in Global Perspective*, declared that another common form of child abuse after physical violence is child labour. He defines children as young human beings between birth and puberty, they are people considered not to be

legally responsible. It is thus very disturbing to see children being saddled with demands and challenges they are not emotionally and mentally ready for.⁸

L. B. Ajisafe, B. Ohaeri, L. O. Ojo, and O. Babarimisa, in their article titled: "Child Abuse: A Significant Contemporary Community Problem", highlights the different forms of child abuse and neglect including physical violence, emotional/psychological abuse, verbal abuse, child labour, child abandonment and child sexual abuse. In the Nigerian context, they note that some parents/guardians often confuse discipline with domestic abuse as they are often not aware of the difference between the two; hence, what they regard as discipline is actually child abuse. They further note that child abuse and neglect have a profound impact on a child's life both in the now and future as it affects physical health and wellbeing, intellectual and cognitive development. They conclude that parents must be aware of the threshold at which discipline becomes abuse.⁹

D.O Edu & G.O. Edu in their work "Child Abuse in Nigeria its Impact on Child Development" describe child abuse as "a wilful maltreatment of a child. Such maltreatment can include acts of commission (abuse) and omission (neglect)". Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.¹⁰

A. Nseababi & J. Abiodun in their article “The Menace of Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Case Study of Hawking in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State” narrowed the definition of child abuse as “life threatening physical violence, including severe beatings, burns and strangulation which are inflicted on children by adults members of the community”.¹¹

D. Theoklitou, & N. Kabitsis, in their article “Physical and Emotional Abuse of Primary School Children by Teachers” declares that Physical abuse of a child is seen as those acts of commission by a caregiver that cause actual physical harm or have the potential for harm. Physical abuse is any accidental injury to a child. This involves physical aggression directed at a child by an adult. Most nations with child abuse laws considers the deliberate infliction of serious injuries or actions that place the child at obvious risk of a serious injury or death to be illegal, bruises, scratches burns, broken bones, lacerations, as well as repeated “mishaps” and rough treatment that could cause physical injury, can be physical abuse.¹²

A. J. Isangedighi, in his article “Child abuse in R. O. Nnachi & P. S. E. Ezeh (eds.) Child abuse and neglect” indicated that child physical abuse is a global phenomenon, in United States of America (USA) for instance about 14% of children are physically abused yearly and out of those who are abused an estimated 20,000 die as a result of the abuse. Averages of 1,000 to 5,000 children die each year in USA as a result of injuries arising from maltreatment.¹³

L. Bunting, G. Davidson, C. McCartan, J. Hanratty, P. Bywaters, W. Mason, and N. Steils, in their work titled “The association between child maltreatment and adult

poverty: A systematic review of longitudinal research" examines the relationship between child maltreatment and adult poverty. The authors stated that child maltreatment as a global issue has resulted in many detrimental outcomes as they grow into adults. So, it was reported that there is a clear relationship between child maltreatment and poorer socioeconomic status including parents' income, unemployment, and lower level of job skills. Hence, they noted that there is limited work linking the two variables, and there is also strong evidence of the association between them. This work is relevant to the present study as it focuses on how poverty increases the amount of child abuse. However this work differs from this present study as it focuses on the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect while this present study focuses on the role of UNICEF in the fight against poverty and child abuse in Nigeria.¹⁴

A. Nwozor, and B. Okhillu, in their article titled "Child's Rights and the Challenges of Educating the Girl-Child; Assessing the Contributions of UNICEF in Nigeria" emphasizes that the Child Rights Act highlights the rights that the Nigerian child should enjoy. The authors pinpointed that despite the legislation, the Nigerian child; especially the girl-child is yet to get full protection. So, they noted that the religious and cultural norms that prevail in Nigerian /societies have contributed to the abuse and violence suffered by the girl-child. The consequence of this misnomer resulted in the marginalization of the girl-child from accessing education and other forms of privileges. The authors state that although UNICEF has intervened through programmes such as the Nigeria Girls' Education Project (NGEP), which has resulted in the re-enrolment of over

one million out-of-school girls, more measures still need to be in place to save the girl-child from practices that denies her access to education. This article is relevant to this present study as it assesses the UNICEF's contribution to eradicating child abuse and its related vices. However, the work differs from this study as it focuses mainly on the girl-child, while this present study focuses on abuses on children generally in Nigeria.¹⁵

O. Adedeji, N. Ezenagu, & F. I. Ajepe, in their work titled: "The Nigerian Girl-Child and Sexual Abuse: The Plight of Victims in Bayelsa State Nigeria", assess the plight of girl-child victims of sexual abuse in Yenagoa Local Government Area, Bayelsa State. The study is aimed at ascertaining the perceived prevalence of child sexual abuse in Yenagoa. The authors report that bad parenting posed as a factor for the incidence of child sexual abuse in the studied area and one of the consequences of this act was vaginal bleeding on the part of the victim. So, the prevention of this menace can be through developing and sustaining prevention programmes that empower the girl child and deter the culprit. The authors conclude that negligence on the part of parents or caregivers is a major factor responsible for female child sexual abuse in the study area.¹⁶

M.A. Bugaje, G.O. Ogunrinde, & J.A. Faruk, in their work titled, "Child sexual abuse in Zaria, North-western Nigeria", examines the issue of child sexual abuse in Zaria, Kaduna State, Northwestern Nigeria and note that child sexual abuse had been reported all around the world among all age groups and sex. They assert that although the abuse trauma may heal with time, it often leaves long-term medical and psychological problems. The authors note that the rate of child sexual abuse in the studied area was low and more

prevalent among the girl- child compared to boys, with a ratio of 1:5.7. A little above half of the victims attended schools, while about three out of twenty were hawkers. About 3 out of 5 were abused more than once and the perpetrators were all males and were identified in seven out of ten of the cases. Furthermore, in eleven out of the twenty cases, the perpetrators were either members of the household or neighbours. The author concluded that child sexual abuse was not an uncommon issue in Zaria.¹⁷

David. Ezechi, Wapmuk, Gbajabiamila, Ohihoin, Herbertson, & Odeyemi in their article titled "Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South Western Nigeria: a community based study" explore the menace of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and disclosure among adolescents in a community in South Western Nigeria. The authors noted that child sexual abuse is often underreported in Nigeria, and it was revealed that the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the studied location was low as most of the abuse was forced and involved penetration in 8% of the case. The perpetrators were mostly neighbours, family members and "boyfriends" and only one out of three ever reported the abuse when it occurred. Their study concluded that CSA occurs in the community and was perpetrated by people known to the victims. Consequently, it was recommended that children and adolescents should be provided with enlightenment in schools on sexual abuse prevention, education and reporting of incidence when it occurs to serve as a deterrent to perpetrators and others with such tendencies. This work is relevant to the present study as it examines the need to establish measures to curb child sexual abuse in Nigeria.¹⁸

G.C.M.Skinner, P.W.B. Bywaters, & E. Kennedy, in their work "A review of the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect: Insights from scoping reviews, systematic reviews and meta-analyses" examines the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect. The authors noted that an up-to-date and precise picture of the impact of poverty on children's welfare is a necessary issue in discussing the future of children. The authors further observed that poverty either in the community or in relation to economic security had a strong association between poverty and child maltreatment. So, they stated that certain economic insecurities like loss/low income, and hardship associated with housing or material resources were risk factors for child maltreatment. The study concluded that the observed relationship between poverty and child maltreatment has not only raised concerns but also is a call for the need to prioritize issues surrounding social work as it relates to child protection. They further recommended the need for government to take up its responsibilities in shaping economic, social, and political systems which facilitate conditions that reduce inequalities in society, hence ensuring the survival of the child.¹⁹

S.O. Onwe, article on "Championing the Campaign against Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Call to Save the Needy", states that a child is the bedrock of any society, and must be adequately handled, trained, and protected. He further observes that championing the cause of child abuse in Nigeria is dependent on the amicable environment of the nation and the society in the child's lives. So, due to the level of poverty in the nation, children from poor economic backgrounds suffer malnutrition which makes them

vulnerable to health-related problems. Also, he noted that the Almajiri system in the Northern part of Nigeria has made it possible for notorious armed groups such as Boko Haram, etc., to recruit and indoctrinate children who are then used to commit heinous acts. He notes that, there is an urgent need to fashion out strategies to curb the menace of child abuse.²⁰

O. A. Chiamaka, and A. F. Adeniran, in their work “Perceived Effects of Child Sexual Abuse on Psychological Wellbeing And Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Students in a Higher Institution at Ogun State, Nigeria” said that Child physical abuse may result to improper education of the child, loss of opportunities in life, poor performance in school, dropping out of school, fear, anxieties, depression and even develop in the affected child low self-esteem. These indices are negative indicators of good academic performance of students. The abused child can also suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder if they see someone else being abused. Sexual abuse is viewed as those acts where children are forced or persuade into sexual acts or situation by others for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse is passive in every part of the world. Child sexual abuse is one of the health and human right challenges in Nigeria.²¹

O. O. Olusegun, & A. A. Idowu, in their article "Child abuse in Nigeria: Dimension, reasons for its persistence and probable" examine child abuse in Nigeria: Dimension, reasons for its persistence and probable cause and stated that children are the future generation and the manner in which they are treated will eventually reflect on the level of development of the society. They note that child abuse must be addressed before

its consequences become too difficult to tackle. They pinpoint that whereas much has been done over the years through the implementation of policies and laws, however, these have not been effective for reasons ranging from poor implementation, corruption, lack of rehabilitation of sexual offenders, negative attitude of parents, poverty, and inefficient judicial system. The authors conclude that with the consequence of child abuse and its impact on children, issues such as poverty, cultural practices, corruption, parental attitude, and lack of implementation of the law must be addressed.²²

A report by the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF states that many Nigerian children suffer violent abuses. The report says that for some kids, the abuse starts before their fifth birthday. It says that six out of ten children experience some form of violence before they turn eighteen, with half of them experiencing physical violence. Others are abused emotionally or sexually. The violence starts young, over half of children were abused before the age of eleven, and one in ten were abused before they turned five. This is a very disturbing scenario.²³

Based on the challenges of poverty and child abuse bedeviling the in the nation, hence the study to examine the extent to which UNICEF has helped in the fight against poverty and child abuse in Nigeria.

CHAPTERS OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE: Background to the Study

In this chapter, we delve into the comprehensive outline that lays out the structure of all subsequent chapters. The chapter contains the aim and objectives, scope of the study, methodology, literature review and chapters outline

CHAPTER TWO: Poverty and Child Abuse in Nigeria

This chapter gives an overview of poverty and child abuse. In this chapter, the landscape of poverty in Nigeria, and cause of poverty within Nigeria during the specified period are examined. This chapter also takes a look at child abuse, the patterns and challenges of child abuse in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE: The Impacts and Consequences of Poverty and Child Abuse, 2015-2023

This chapter explores the impacts of poverty and child abuse in Nigeria. In the long run, it also examines the consequences of poverty and child abuse in Nigeria within the period 2015-2023.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNICEF: Strategies for Alleviating Poverty and Child Abuse, and its Achievements in Nigeria, 2015-2023

This chapter examines the strategies UNICEF is using to alleviate poverty and child abuse. This chapter also highlights UNICEF's strategies to protect children from abuse and exploitation, and its achievements in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the entire research work and gives us an overview of what the entire project entails and lastly provides recommendations for future actions and improvement in combating poverty and child abuse based on the findings and lessons learned.

Endnotes

1. UNDESA, World Population Prospects, 2022.
2. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q3 2022.
3. National Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index November 2022.
4. Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and UNICEF, Monetary Child Poverty in Nigeria, 2021.
5. Comcec Coordination Office “CCO Brief on Poverty Alleviation, November 2016,
6. A. Gbosi, and C. O. Philip *The Nigerian Economy and Current Problems*, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Pack Publishers, 2004.
7. W. T. Amakoromo, V. I. Asiegbu, & C. O. Okafor, in their articles title declared that “Poverty Alleviation Programmes and the Prevailing Challenges for Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: An Assessment” , *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 2024, 8 (4), p.107
8. K. Wells, *Childhood in Global Perspective*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009.
9. L. B. Ajisafe, B. Ohaeri, L. O. Ojo, and O. Babarimisa, "Child Abuse: A significant contemporary community problem", *International Journal of Public Health, Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, 2023, 8(1):18 26.
10. D.O Edu, & G.O Edu, Child Abuse in Nigeria its impact on child development, A paper Presented at the First Zonal Conference of the National Association of Women in Academics in the University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 1999.
11. A. Nseababi & J. Abiodun “The manace of Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Case Study of Hawking in Uyo, Akwaibom State”, *Journal of Social Science*, 2010, 24 (3), 50.
12. D. Theoklitou, & N. Kabitsis, “Physical and Emotional Abuse of Primary School Children by Teachers, *Child abuse Neg*, 2012, 26 (1), 64-70.
13. A. J. Isangedighi, Child abuse in R. O. Nnachi & P. S. E. Ezeh (eds.) Child Abuse and Neglect. Awka: Erudition Publisher, *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 3, 2005, 245–254.

14. L. Bunting, G. Davidson, C. McCartan, J. Hanratty, P. Bywaters, W. Mason, and N. Steils, N. "The Association between child Maltreatment and Adult Poverty: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Research", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 77:121-133.
15. A. Nwozor, and B. Okhillu, "Child's Right and the Challenges of Educating the Girl-Child; Assessing the Contributions of UNICEF in Nigeria", *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, 2022, 18, 285-309.
16. O. Adedeji, N. Ezenagu, & F. I. Ajepe, "The Nigerian girl-child and sexual abuse: The plight of victims in Bayelsa State Nigeria", *International Journal of Gender & Women's Studies*, 2019, 7(2):123-135.
17. M. A. Bugaje, G. O. Ogunrinde, & J. A. Faruk, "Child sexual abuse in Zaria, Northwestern Nigeria", *Nigerian Journal of Paediatrics*, 2012, 39(3):110-114.
18. N. David, O. Ezechi, A. Wapmuk, T. Gbajabiamila, A. Ohihoin, E. Herbertson, & K. Odeyemi, "Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South Western Nigeria: a community based study", *African Health Sciences*, 2018, 18(2), 199-208.
19. G.C.M. Skinner, P.W.B. Bywaters, & E. Kennedy, "A Review of the Relationship between Poverty and Child Abuse and Neglect: Insights from Scoping Reviews, Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses". *Child Abuse Review*, 2022, 2, 795.
20. S.O. Onwe, "Championing the Campaign against Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Call to Save the Needy", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2014, 4(10):279-286.
21. O. A. Chiamaka, and A. F. Adeniran, Perceived Effects of Child Sexual Abuse on Psychological Wellbeing and Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Students in a Higher Institution at Ogun State, Nigeria, *World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research*, 2017, 3(8), 36-42.,
22. O. O. Olusegun, & A. A. Idowu, "Child abuse in Nigeria: Dimension, reasons for its persistence and probable", *Child and Family Law Journal*, 4(1), 2016.
23. UNICEF. Nigeria and the Convention of the Rights of the Child Lagos: UNICEF Country Office, 2000.

CHAPTER TWO

POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN NIGERIA

Introduction

The term poverty refers to the state or condition in which people or communities lack the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. As such, their basic human needs cannot be met. People and families who live in poverty may go without proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention. Each nation may have its own criteria for determining the poverty line and counting how many of its people live in poverty. Poverty is a socioeconomic condition that is the result of multiple factors—not just income. These factors include race, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and little to no access to education, among others.¹ Poverty refers to the lack of adequate financial resources such that individuals, households, and entire communities don't have the means to subsist or acquire the basic necessities for a flourishing life. This means being so poor as to struggle to obtain food, clothing, shelter, and medicines. Poverty is both an individual concern as well as a broader social problem. On the individual or household level, not being able to make ends meet can lead to a range of physical and mental issues. At the societal level, high poverty rates can be a damper on economic growth and be associated with problems like crime, unemployment, urban decay, education, and poor health. Governments often put social welfare programs in place to help lift individuals, families, and communities out of poverty. Some countries have stronger welfare states (social safety nets) than others. For instance, the U.S. tends to be

much more individualistic and shuns welfare programs. European countries, in comparison, have a much broader range of welfare programs and support for those in need.²

Poverty is the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Poverty is said to exist when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. In this context, the identification of poor people first requires a determination of what constitutes basic needs. These may be defined as narrowly as “those necessary for survival” or as broadly as “those reflecting the prevailing standard of living in the community.” The first criterion would cover only those people near the borderline of starvation or death from exposure; the second would extend to people whose nutrition, housing, and clothing, though adequate to preserve life, do not measure up to those of the population as a whole. The problem of definition is further compounded by the noneconomic connotations that the word poverty has acquired. Poverty has been associated, for example, with poor health, low levels of education or skills, an inability or an unwillingness to work, high rates of disruptive or disorderly behaviour, and improvidence. While these attributes have often been found to exist with poverty, their inclusion in a definition of poverty would tend to obscure the relation between them and the inability to provide for one’s basic needs. Whatever definition one uses, authorities and laypersons alike commonly assume that the effects of poverty are harmful to both individuals and society.³

Children growing up in poverty experience many disadvantages which accumulate across the life cycle. Poverty has multiple, negative impacts on children's outcomes leading to inequalities in health, cognitive development, psychosocial development and educational attainment. These inequalities are evident from preschool children through children during the school years, from entry into the labour market to resources for retirement, from mortality rates in later life, and 'often on to the next generation'.⁴ The implication that trajectories may already be set for children living in poverty is viewed as a cause for concern and area of intervention. This briefing reviews the empirical evidence on the impacts of poverty on children's outcomes and on the factors highlighted as having an effect on these outcomes to help those working with children and their families understand these children's experiences and support needs. In this briefing, the term 'children' includes young people up to 18 years old.⁵

The poverty thresholds, as well as the number of children under the age of 18 in a home, are important because they help determine how government aid can be allocated, such as food assistance and medical care.⁶ Poverty has decreased in developed countries since the Industrial Revolution. Increased production reduced the cost of goods, making them more affordable, while advancements in agriculture increased crop yields, as well as food production. The international poverty line is a monetary threshold under which an individual is considered to be living in poverty. This figure is calculated by taking the poverty threshold from each country—given the value of the goods needed to sustain one

adult—and converting it into U.S. dollars. The current international poverty line is \$2.15 per day.⁸

Many people around the globe still struggle to make ends meet. According to the World Bank, an estimated 719 million people lived in extreme poverty defined as surviving on less than the \$2.15 per day line by the end of 2020.⁹ It's estimated that more than 40% of the world's population lives in poverty, with the United States scoring the highest among developed nations. According to a report from Frontiers, communities of color are more susceptible to poverty because of "racist notions of racial inferiority and frequent denial of the structural forms of racism and classism" globally and within the U.S.¹⁰

Causes of Poverty

Poverty is a difficult cycle to break and often passes from one generation to the next. It is often determined by socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and geography. Many people are born into poverty and have little hope of overcoming it. Others may fall into poverty because of negative economic conditions, natural disasters, or surging living costs, as well as drug addiction, depression, and mental health issues. Access to good schools, healthcare, electricity, clean drinking water, and other critical services remains elusive for many and is often determined by socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and geography. Other root causes of poverty include:

- Limited to no job growth
- Poor infrastructure
- Conflict and war
- High cost of living
- Social barriers
- Lack of government support¹¹

For those able to move out of poverty, progress is often temporary. Economic shocks, food insecurity, and climate change threaten their gains and may force them back into poverty. Typical consequences of poverty include alcohol and substance abuse, little to no access to education, poor housing and living conditions, and increased levels of disease. Heightened poverty is likely to cause increased tensions in society as inequality increases. These issues often lead to rising crime rates in communities affected by poverty.¹²

Child Abuse and Its Consequences

Child abuse (also called child endangerment or child maltreatment) is physical, sexual, and/or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or a caregiver. Child abuse may include any act or failure to act by a parent or a caregiver that results in actual or potential harm to a child and can occur in a child's home, or in the organizations, schools, or communities the child interacts with. The terms child abuse and child maltreatment are often used interchangeably, although some researchers

make a distinction between them, treating child maltreatment as an umbrella term to cover neglect, exploitation, and trafficking. In general, abuse refers to (usually deliberate) acts of commission while neglect refers to acts of omission.¹³ Child abuse includes both acts of commission and acts of omission on the part of parents or caregivers that cause actual or threatened harm to a child. Some health professionals and authors consider neglect as part of the definition of abuse, while others do not; this is because the harm may have been unintentional, or because the caregivers did not understand the severity of the problem, which may have been the result of cultural beliefs about how to raise a child. Delayed effects of child abuse and neglect, especially emotional neglect, and the diversity of acts that qualify as child abuse, are also factors.¹⁴

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse and child maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power." The WHO also says, "Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, romantic partners, or strangers."¹⁵ In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses the term child maltreatment to refer to both acts of commission (abuse), which include "words or overt actions that cause harm, potential harm, or threat of harm to a child", and acts of omission (neglect), meaning "the failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, or

educational needs or to protect a child from harm or potential harm".¹⁶ The United States federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum, "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation" or "an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm".¹⁷

Child abuse is complex and difficult to study. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), estimates of the rates of child maltreatment vary widely by country, depending on how child maltreatment is defined, the type of maltreatment studied, the scope and quality of data gathered, and the scope and quality of surveys that ask for self-reports from victims, parents, and caregivers. Despite these limitations, international studies show that a quarter of all adults report experiencing physical abuse as children, and that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report experiencing childhood sexual abuse. Emotional abuse and neglect are also common childhood experiences.¹⁸

As of 2014, an estimated 41,000 children under 15 are victims of homicide each year. The WHO states that this number underestimates the true extent of child homicide; a significant proportion of child deaths caused by maltreatment are incorrectly attributed to unrelated factors such as falls, burns, and drowning. Also, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse in situations of armed conflict and refugee settings, whether by combatants, security forces, community members, aid workers, or others.¹⁹

Causes of Child Abuse

Child abuse is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes.²⁰ No single factor can be identified as to why some adults behave abusively or neglectfully toward children. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) identify multiple factors at the level of the individual, their relationships, their local community, and their society at large, that combine to influence the occurrence of child maltreatment. At the individual level, studies have shown that age, mental health, and substance use, and a personal history of abuse may serve as risk factors of child abuse.²¹ At the level of society, factors contributing to child maltreatment include cultural norms that encourage harsh physical punishment of children, economic inequality, and the lack of social safety nets. WHO and ISPCAN state that understanding the complex interplay of various risk factors is vital for dealing with the problem of child maltreatment.²²

Factors related to relationships include marital strife and tension. Parents who physically abuse their spouses are more likely than others to physically abuse their children. However, it is impossible to know whether marital strife is a cause of child abuse, or if both the marital strife and the abuse are caused by tendencies in the abuser.²³ Parents may also set expectations for their child that are clearly beyond the child's capability (e.g., preschool children who are expected to be totally responsible for self-care or provision of nurturance to parents), and the resulting frustration caused by the

child's non-compliance may function as a contributory factor of the occurrence of child abuse.²⁴

Unemployment and financial difficulties are associated with increased rates of child abuse.²⁵ In 2009 CBS News reported that child abuse in the United States had increased during the economic recession. It gave the example of a father who had never been the primary care-taker of the children. Now that the father was in that role, the children began to come in with injuries. Parental mental health has also been seen as a factor towards child maltreatment.²⁶ According to a recent Children's HealthWatch study, mothers with positive symptoms of depression display a greater rate of food insecurity, poor health care for their children, and greater number of hospitalizations.²⁷ Founding editor of the *International Journal of Children's Rights*, Michael Freeman, also argues that the ultimate causes of child abuse lie in prejudice against children, especially the view that human rights do not apply equally to adults and children. He writes, "the roots of child abuse lie not in parental psycho-pathology or in socio-environmental stress (though their influences cannot be discounted) but in a sick culture which denigrates and depersonalizes, which reduces children to property, to sexual objects so that they become the legitimate victims of both adult violence and lust".²⁸

Forms of Child Abuse and Its Consequences

Child Labour



Source:<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm>



Source:<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm>²⁹

Child labor refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, or is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful.³⁰ The International Labour Organization considers such labor to be a form of exploitation and abuse of children. Child labor refers to those occupations which infringe the development of children (due to the nature of the job or lack of appropriate regulation) and does not include age appropriate and properly supervised jobs in which minors may participate.³¹ According to ILO, globally, around 215 million children work, many full-time. Many of these children do not go to school, do not receive proper nutrition or care, and have little or no time to play. More than half of them are exposed to the worst forms of child labor, such as child prostitution, drug trafficking, armed conflicts and other hazardous environments.³²

Child labour can take the form of child trafficking which is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation.³³ Children are trafficked for purposes such as of commercial sexual exploitation, bonded labour, camel jockeying, child domestic labour, drug couriership, child soldiering, illegal adoptions, and begging.³⁴ It is difficult to obtain reliable estimates concerning the number of children trafficked each year, primarily due to the covert and criminal nature of the practice. The International Labour Organization estimates that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year.³⁵

Forced Adoption

Children in poverty have been removed from their families with their welfare being used as argument to do so.³⁶ The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Norway, which disproportionately removes children of immigrant background and argues it gives them a better future, was mistaking poverty for neglect and that there are other ways to help destitute children.³⁷ In Switzerland, between the 1850s and the mid-20th century, hundreds of thousands of children mostly from poor or single parents were forcefully removed from their parents by the authorities, and sent to work on farms, living with new families. They were known as *contract children* or *Verdingkinder*.³⁸ Most of the children living in institutions around the world have a surviving parent or close relative, and they most commonly entered orphanages because of poverty. It is speculated that, flush with money, for profit orphanages are increasing and push for children to join even though demographic data show that even the poorest extended families usually take in children whose parents have died and it would be cheaper to aid close relatives who want to take in the orphans. Experts and child advocates maintain that separating children from their families often harm children's development.³⁹

In February 2012, the Senate Community Affairs References Committee released a report on the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices. The report found the policies and practices that resulted in forced adoptions and the removal of children were widespread throughout Australia, particularly during the mid-twentieth century. The Senate Committee received submissions from hundreds of

individuals who have suffered from the effects of forced adoptions and found there were many different ways in which forced adoptions occurred. The accounts range from personal experiences of mothers drugged and shackled to beds, to social workers failing to advise mothers of the government payments available at the time to support mothers to keep their child.

Forced adoption practices impacted a large number of Australians and caused significant ongoing effects for many people, particularly mothers, fathers and adoptees. The report estimates there were 140,000 to 150,000 total adoptions in the period between 1951 and 1975, and as many as 250,000 total adoptions from 1940 to 2012. The report concludes it is impossible to know the exact number of people affected by forced adoptions.⁴⁰

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as “physical injury caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Physical abuse is the most visible form of child ill-treatment”. Physical injury that ranges from small bruises to brutal fractures or death as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting with a hand, stick, strap or other object, burning or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.⁴¹

The consequences associated with child physical abuse go beyond what many people think of initially. Not only are there potential physical injuries like broken bones,

head trauma, abdominal injuries, skin injuries, and so on, there can also be behavioral, emotional, and psychological effects from exposure to abuse of this kind. Research has found links between physical abuse, depression, and aggressive behaviors but the relationship among these variables appears different when looking at men versus women.⁴² It appears that males and females react differently to trauma, with males engaging in more antisocial behaviors and females becoming more withdrawn. Several studies have reported that child physical abuse is a noteworthy predictor of depressive symptoms.⁴³ Depression can be a difficult disorder to live with as it can impact us personally and professionally. Children who have been physically abused may still feel the effects long after their injuries have healed. Being shaken, hit or physically abused in any way as a child can lead to poor physical or mental health later in life, including depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, childhood behavioural or conduct disorders, drug use, suicide attempts, obesity, sexually transmitted infections and risky sexual behaviour.⁴⁴ Other long-term consequences of physical abuse include

- Not doing as well at school or education
- Criminal risk taking behaviour
- Drug and alcohol problems.⁴⁵

Emotional Abuse

Opposite of some people's beliefs, words can hurt and emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or emotional development. It includes a way of behaving that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of sense of worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and therefore, it may be difficult to intervene. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms are identified.⁴⁶

Emotional abuse can take the form of:

- Regular mocking, shaming, and embarrassing
- Calling names and making negative comparisons to others
- Telling a child they're "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake"
- Regular yelling, frightening, or maltreatment
- Ignoring a child as reprimand, giving them the silent treatment
- Limiting physical contact with a child—no hugs, kisses, or other signs of affection
- Exposing a child to violence against others, whether it is against the other parent, a sibling, or even a pet.⁴⁷

Emotional abuse is often considered as less grave than other forms of abuse because it has no instant physical effects. But over time emotional abuse can have very grave long term effects on a child's social, emotional and physical health and development.

- **Emotional abuse and risk taking behaviour:** - A child who is being emotionally abused by caregivers, parents, and siblings or in neighborhood may develop risk taking behaviours such as robbery, aggressive behaviour and usually running away from home.
- **Emotional abuse and mental development:** - Emotional abuse can also increase the risk of developing mental health problems, eating disorders or self-harming. Some research studies propose that there's a significant correlation between emotional abuse eating and language. If emotional abuse continues when the child gets older, it can have more serious consequences. Adolescents who have been emotionally abused over a long period of time are more likely to hurt themselves like self-harm and experience other mental health problems.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Children in impoverished communities are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including child labor, early marriage, and trafficking; the lack of social safety nets and the lax enforcement of child protection laws contribute to the problem; and poverty itself is a major contributor to child abuse. In many Nigerian households, poverty restricts access to basic necessities like food, shelter, healthcare, and education, causing significant stress on families and increasing the likelihood of physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children, as some parents or guardians may feel overwhelmed by their situation. As a result, tackling poverty via economic empowerment, expanding access to high-quality education, and fortifying child protection laws are

essential measures. Additionally, supporting community-based treatments and increasing awareness of the long-term harm caused by child abuse can aid in ending the cycle of abuse and poverty.

Endnotes

1. D. Hirsch, "Chicken and Egg: child poverty and educational inequalities", *CPAG Policy Briefing*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, 2007.
2. J. Harris, M. C. Treanor, & N. Sharma., *Below the breadline: a year in the life of families living in poverty*, London: Barnardos. NICHD Duration and developmental timing of poverty and children's cognitive and social development from birth through third grade. *Child development*, 2009, 76, 795–810
3. P. Beresford, & CPAG (Great Britain). *Poverty first hand : poor people speak for themselves*, London: CPAG, 1999.
4. K. Hansen, H. Joshi, & S. Dex., *Children of the 21st century*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 2010.
5. G. J. Duncan, & J. Brooksgunn, (eds.) *Consequences of Growing Up Poor*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997.
6. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. "Programs that Use the Poverty Guidelines as a Part of Eligibility Determination.
7. U.S. Census Bureau. "How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty."
8. P. Beresford, & CPAG (Great Britain) *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves*, London: CPAG, 1999.
9. The World Bank. "Fact Sheet: An Adjustment to Global Poverty Lines."
10. The World Bank. "Global Progress in Reducing Extreme Poverty Grinds to a Halt."
11. Amrit Virk ,Ediomo-Ubong Nelson and Ini Dele-Adedeji The challenge of youth unemployment in Nigeria Published online by Cambridge University Press, 2024
12. Frontiers. "Poverty, Racism, and the Public Health Crisis in America." M.L McCoy and S.M. Keen, "Introduction". *Child Abuse and Neglect (2 ed.)*. New York: Psychology Press, 2013, pp. 3–22. ISBN 978-1-84872-529-4. OCLC 863824493. Archived from the original on 23 February 2017. Retrieved 28 December 2024.

13. Mehnaz Aisha, "Child Neglect: Wider Dimensions". In RN Srivastava; Rajeev Seth; Joan van Niekerk (eds.). *Child Abuse and Neglect: Challenges and Opportunities*. JP Medical Ltd., 2013, p. 101. ISBN 978-93-5090-449-7. Archived from the original on 28 December 2024.
14. "Child abuse and neglect by parents and other caregivers" (PDF). World Health Organization. p. 3. Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 30 December 2024.
15. "Violence against children". www.who.int. Retrieved 29 December, 2024.
16. R.T. Leeb, L. J. Paulozzi, C. Melanson and T. R. Simon, Arias, I. (January 2008). *Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0* ,(PDF). *Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*. Archived (PDF) *from the original on 29 August 2017*. P.11
17. R. C. Herrenkohl, "The definition of child maltreatment: from case study to construct". *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 29 (5), 2005, 413–24.
18. "Child maltreatment: Fact sheet No. 150". *World Health Organization*. December 2014. Archived *from the original on 17 July 2015*.
19. *Ibid*
20. V. J. Fontana, "The maltreatment syndrome of children". *Pediatric Annals*. 13 (10), 1984, 736–44. PMID 6504584.
21. C. Djeddah, P. Facchin, C. Ranzato, and C. Romer, "Child abuse: current problems and key public health challenges". *Social Science & Medicine*. 51 (6), 2000, 905–915. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(00)00070-8. ISSN 0277-9536. PMID 10972434.
22. World Health Organization and International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, "1. The nature and consequences of child maltreatment", *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence*. Geneva, Switzerland, 2006. ISBN 978-92-4-159436-3.
23. S. Ross, "Risk of physical abuse to children of spouse abusing parents", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 20 (7), 1996, 589–598. doi:10.1016/0145-2134(96)00046-4. PMID 8832115.

24. C. T. Twentyman and R. C. Plotkin, "Unrealistic expectations of parents who maltreat their children: an educational deficit that pertains to child development", *J Clin Psychol.* 38 (3), 1982, 497–503.
25. "Child Abuse". *Florida Performs*. Archived from *the original* on 13 January 2010.
26. S. Hughes, "Child Abuse Spikes During Recession". *CBS News*, 2009. Archived from the original on 19 September 2009.
27. Conron, Kerith J.; Beardslee, William; Koenen, Karestan C.; Buka, Stephen L.; Gortmaker, Steven L.). "A Longitudinal Study of Maternal Depression and Child Maltreatment in a National Sample of Families Investigated by Child Protective Services". *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.* 163 (10), 2009, 922–30. doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2009.176. ISSN 1072-4710. PMID 19805711.
28. Source:<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm> accessed on 30 November 2024
29. P. Casey, S. Goolsby, C. Berkowitz, D. Frank, J. Cook, D. Cutts, M. M. Black, N. Zaldivar, and S. Levenson, "Maternal depression, changing public assistance, food security, and child health status", *Pediatrics.* 113 (2), 2004, pp.298–304. doi:10.1542/peds.113.2.298. ISSN 1098-4275. PMID 14754941. S2CID 40550743.
30. Freeman Michael. "Beyond Conventions—Towards Empowerment", *The Moral Status of Children: Essays on the Rights of the Child*, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997, p. 76.
31. International Labour Organisation, "What is child labour?", 2012. Archived from the original on 14 July 2017. Accessed on 30 November 2024.
32. "United Nations Resources for Speakers on Global Issues – Child Labour". *United Nations*, 2013. Archived from *the original* on 7 August 2013. Retrieved 30 November 2024.
33. "International and national legislation – Child Labour". *International Labour Organisation*, 2011. Archived from the original on 9 February 2012. Accessed 2 December, 2024.
34. *Ibid.*

35. UNICEF, "Child trafficking", 2011. Archived *from the original on 1 March 2015*. Retrieved 2 December 2024.
36. David M. Smolin. "Intercountry Adoption as Child Trafficking". *Valparaiso Law Review*. **39** (2), 2005, Archived from the original on 2 April 2015. Retrieved 2 December 2024.
37. *Ibid.*
38. International Labour Office (ILO) "Every Child Counts: New Global Estimates on Child Labour", 2002. ISBN 978-92-2-113113-7. Retrieved 28 November 2024.
39. "Forced Adoption Case Against Norway Hits European Rights Court". *Sourthousenews*, 3 December 2024.
40. Whewell Tim, "Norway's hidden scandal". *BBC News*, 2018. Retrieved 3 December 2024.
41. A. Shaffer, T. M. Yates, and B. R. "Egeland, The relation of emotional maltreatment to early adolescent competence: developmental processes in a prospective study", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33(1), 2009, pp.36-44.
42. H. Gavin, Sticks and stones may break my bones: the effects of emotional abuse, *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment and Trauma*, 20(5), 2011, pp.503-529.
43. R. J. Milletich, et al., Exposure to interparental violence and childhood physical and emotional abuse as related to physical aggression in undergraduate dating relationships, *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(7), 2010, 627-637.
44. *Ibid*
45. R. E. Norman, et al. The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *PLOS Medicine* 9(11), 2012.
46. *Ibid.*

47. A. Shaffer, T. M. Yates, and B. R. Egeland, "The relation of emotional maltreatment to early adolescent competence: developmental processes in a prospective study", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33(1), 2009, pp.36-44.

CHAPTER THREE
THE IMPACTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE,
2015-2023

Introduction

Poverty has long been identified as one of the most influential risk factors for incidents and reporting of child maltreatment.¹ Children living in impoverished conditions face a significantly elevated risk of encountering incidents of child maltreatment and being reported, in comparison to those not experiencing poverty.² Moreover, communities with higher poverty rates demonstrate increased rates of child maltreatment incidents and reports across various community levels.³

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. The World Development Report 2000/2001 summarizes the various dimensions as a lack of opportunity, lack of empowerment and a lack of security. The window of opportunity remains closed to the poor masses, and this makes them practically inactive in the society. Their lack of empowerment limits their choices in almost everything and their lack of security makes them vulnerable to diseases, violence and so on.⁴ Similarly, a United Nations statement says:

Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living,

*not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.*⁵

In Nigeria, widespread and severe poverty is a reality. It is a reality that depicts a lack of food, clothes, education and other basic amenities. Severely poor people lack the most basic necessities of life to a degree that it can be wondered how they manage to survive. There are several effects and deficiencies associated with poverty in Nigeria. One of the main effects of poverty is poor health, as is reflected in Nigeria's high infant mortality and low life expectancy. Poor people in Nigeria face several health issues as they lack basic health amenities and competent medical practitioners. Most children do not have the opportunity of being immunized and this leads to certain physical defects in some of the children. Their health has become low priority and as they have little or no choices, they live with whatever they are provided with, whether healthy or not.

Some of the key factors that contribute to poverty in Nigeria: (1) unemployment, especially among young graduates; (2) corruption, especially among political office holders; (3) non-diversification of the economy; (4) income inequality; (5) laziness, especially among those who come from wealthy households; and (6) a poor education system. Some of these could also be considered to be causes of poverty. While the distinction between causes and effects of poverty is fuzzy, our

discussion below will show that these factors seem more likely to be causes than effects of poverty in Nigeria. Some of the more obvious effects or dimensions of poverty in Nigeria are provided in the section on empirical background.⁶

The Impact of Poverty in Nigeria

The most immediate consequence of poverty is not having enough nutritious food to eat. Over 2 billion people did not have access to enough safe and nutritious food in 2020. Hunger and the risk of famine remain very high in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly one child in five under the age of five in the developing world is underweight.⁷

Poor housing

Today 900 million people are now estimated to be living in slums compared to 760 million in 2000 and 650 million in 1990. Of the world's population, 11% or 783 million people remain without access to clean drinking water. In 2021 in Nigeria, 20% of the population does not have access to clean water and less than half the population have access to a decent toilet.⁸

Lack of Education

Children from the poorest households are three times as likely to be out of school as those from the richest households. Those who miss out on education are often unable to read or write, restricting their options in life and making it extremely difficult to escape poverty.

According to the World Bank, more than half of children living in low- and middle-income nations can't read or understand a simple story by the end of primary school.⁹

Poor health

Children born into poverty are almost twice as likely to die before the age of five as those from wealthier families.¹⁰

Poverty can negatively impact child health, child well-being, and child development in the following ways:

- Chronic or prolonged stress, such as the stress experienced by those who live in extreme poverty, can negatively impact early brain development, potentially resulting in cognitive impairment and other long-term consequences for children. This effect is sometimes referred to as toxic stress. The effects of stress and other social conditions of poverty also can increase the risk of children developing mental health issues and behavioural problems. For this reason, poverty has been described by some researchers as an adverse childhood experience (ACE).¹¹
- There is evidence that children living in poverty experience worse health outcomes; child poverty also contributes to poor health outcomes during adulthood. In general, poverty is widely understood to be a risk factor for many health conditions, so much so that physicians are now encouraged to screen patients for poverty in order to better respond to health concerns.¹²
- Children who live in poverty typically have low levels of access to health care services and other social supports which are critical for promoting good

health and managing and treating health conditions. Children from low-income families also have less financial resources to draw upon in times of need and crisis¹³

- Children living in food insecure households and communities may suffer from inadequate nutrition which can contribute to physical health problems (e.g. diabetes, obesity) as well as mental health issues. During the early years, malnutrition can result in failure to thrive and developmental problems.¹⁴
- Poverty is associated with lower levels of academic achievement and educational attainment for children. This is because the experience of poverty poses many challenges for children. For example, children from low-income families may not be able to concentrate because of hunger or may be victimized by bullies.¹⁵

Effects of Poverty on Families

Poverty can negatively impact families and caregivers in a number of ways:¹⁶

- As with children, adults who live in poverty experience worse health outcomes, including higher mortality rates and increased risk of mental health conditions (e.g. depression, substance use disorders). The stress of poverty, coupled with inadequate health care access and limited financial resources for treatment, further exacerbates health conditions and makes parenting even more challenging
- Poverty can create considerable stress for families. As per the family stress model, poverty can contribute to interparental conflict, which plays a key role in family dynamics and can be a precursor to negative child outcomes. Conflict can also arise

between children and parents because of economic pressures. For example, children may resent parents for having to work late or not being able to provide small luxuries. Finally, the living conditions associated with poverty - notably overcrowded housing and housing instability - can negatively affect all family relationships, including sibling relationships.

- Poverty can make it difficult for parents to maintain a work-life balance that allows them to spend time at home caring for their children and to be active and involved with school, extracurricular activities, and community life. Parents on a low income are more likely to work long hours in precarious jobs that do not provide basic supports like parental leave and sick pay. Low-income workers typically also have less flexibility and choice than other parents (for example, they must rely on public transportation and do not have access to work-from-home options)
- Low-income fathers and paternal family members may be at risk of reduced family involvement due to negative perceptions they may have regarding their value and ability to fill the role of father as economic provider. It's important to note that the relationship between poverty and father involvement is complicated, as structural violence and other systemic barriers also play a role. Recent research also indicates that, despite racist and classist stereotypes about "deadbeat dads," the majority of low-income fathers are involved with their children once the definition of fatherhood is expanded beyond financial contributor

Impact and Consequences of Child Abuse

Children who have experienced abuse are therefore at increased risk for a number of problematic developmental, health, and mental health outcomes, including learning problems (e.g., problems with inattention and deficits in executive functions), problems relating to peers (e.g., peer rejection), internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety), externalizing symptoms (e.g., oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, aggression), and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As adults, these children continue to show increased risk for psychiatric disorders, substance use, serious medical illnesses, and lower economic productivity.¹⁷

Abuse increase children's risk for experiencing academic problems. Perez and Widom found that child abuse had a significant impact on reading ability, IQ scores, and academic achievement. For example, 42 percent of abused children completed high school, compared with two-thirds of the matched comparison group without histories of abuse. The average IQ score for the abused children was about one standard deviation below the average for the control group; this association was significant after controlling for age, race, gender, and social class.¹⁸ Jaffee and Maikovich-Fong found that chronically abused or neglected children had lower IQ scores than situationally abused children. The effect of chronic abuse on IQ scores remained significant after controlling for the effects of caregiver educational level on IQ.¹⁹

Leiter and Johnsen found that effects of abuse on school performance were cumulative, with more episodes of abuse and neglect being associated with poorer outcomes. Abuse and neglect predicted entry into special education after controlling for early medical conditions.²⁰ Jonson-Reid and colleagues found that 24 percent of the abused and neglected children entered special education, compared with 14 percent of those with no record of abuse or neglect. Further, every additional report of abuse or neglect before the age of 8 led to an increase of 7 percent in entry into special education.²¹ Thompson found that expectations of future academic success were adversely affected by previous experiences of abuse and neglect, with these expectations having powerful self-fulfilling possibilities.²²

Conclusion

Poverty is multi-dimensional and even though it is difficult to separate the various dimensions of poverty from the various causes of poverty, in the case of Nigeria, we have shown that unemployment, corruption, the non-diversification of Nigeria's economy, inequality, laziness, and a poor education system are some of the key determinants of poverty. These determinants are many times related to each other and also enforce each other. For example, unemployment, poor education and poverty can be seen as vicious cycle. Today, people who are not educated lack the opportunity of being hired for good jobs, and the poor masses today still cannot afford to go to school which makes them the poor unemployed masses tomorrow. Hence, all these factors are correlated and must all be tackled together if any progress wants to be

made. In the same vein, Child abuse can result in immediate adverse physical effects but it is also strongly associated with developmental problems and with many chronic physical and psychological effects, including subsequent ill-health, including higher rates of chronic conditions, high-risk health behaviors and shortened lifespan.

Endnotes

1. L.H. Pelton “The Continuing Role Of Material Factors In Child Maltreatment And Placement”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2015.
2. C.J. Coulton *et al.* “How Neighborhoods Influence Child Maltreatment: A Review of The Literature And Alternative Pathways”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2007
3. H. Kim *et al.* “Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment among US Children”, *American Journal of Public Health*, 2017.
4. World Bank (2001) *World Development Report 2000/2001—Attacking Poverty* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
5. United Nations Statement of June 1998, which was signed by the heads of all UN agencies; see: <http://www.helium.com/items/1587576-poor-service-delivery>. Accessed 8 January 2025
6. Garcia, Rose Mary; Richard Kohl; Ann Ruengsorn; and Julia Zislin, *Nigeria: Economic Performance Assessment*, (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2006, p.15
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z2rxsbk/revision/3> Accessed 12 January 2025
8. *Ibid*
9. Chimobi Ucha, “Poverty in Nigeria: Some Dimensions and Contributing Factors”, *Global Majority E-Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 2010), pp. 46-56.
10. Source: <https://oacas.libguides.com/c.php?g=702168&p=499014220> Accessed 10 January 2025
11. *Ibid*
12. NIH, “New Directions in Child Abuse and Neglect Research.”, *National Centre for Biotechnology Information*, n.d
13. Source: <https://oacas.libguides.com/c.php?g=702168&p=499014220> Accessed 10 January 2025

14. *Ibid*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid*
17. C. M. Perez, & C. S. Widom, “Childhood victimization and long-term intellectual and academic outcomes”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(8), 1994, 617–633.
18. S. R. Jaffee, & A. K. Maikovich-Fong, Effects of Chronic Maltreatment and Maltreatment Timing on Children’s Behavior and Cognitive Abilities. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 52, 2011, 184-194.
19. C. Leiter and G. Johnsen, “Child maltreatment and school performance declines: An event-history analysis”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(3), 1997, 563–589.
20. M. Jonson-Reid, B. Drake, J. Kim and S. L Porterfield, “A Prospective Analysis of the Relationship Between Reported Child Maltreatment and Special Education Eligibility Among Poor Children” *Child Maltreatment*, 9(4), 2004, 382-94
21. R. A. Thompson, “Wither the preconventional child? Toward a life-span moral development theory”, *Child Development Perspectives*, 6, 2012, 423–429.
22. *Ibid*

CHAPTER FOUR

UNICEF: STRATEGIES FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE, AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS IN NIGERIA, 2015-2023

Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a global organization committed to safeguarding the rights and welfare of children. This section of our presentation explores UNICEF's multifaceted strategies for addressing poverty and child abuse, emphasizing their impact and outcomes, in Nigeria. United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) plays a key role in preventing and responding to sexual violence worldwide – both in emergency and non-emergency contexts – through programmes, partnerships and advocacy. Globally, they build advocacy tools and develop technical guidance for violence prevention and response, helping to ensure services are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of survivors. UNICEF works closely with partners on a variety of global initiatives, including the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, together for Girls and the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online.

At the national level, they work with governments to develop and strengthen laws and policies, and to increase access to justice, health, education and social services that help child and adolescent survivors recover. UNICEF also invests in national prevention programmes to change social norms that condone sexual violence and perpetuate a

culture of silence. Throughout all they do, they focus on supporting children and parents. UNICEF works directly with children to build their knowledge on how and where to seek help and protection; and with parents, teachers and adults to identify signs of abuse and make sure children receive ongoing care.¹

According to report by UNICEF, Children experience insidious forms of violence, exploitation and abuse. It happens in every country, and in the places children should be most protected – their homes, schools and online. Violence against children can be physical, emotional or sexual. And in many cases, children suffer at the hands of the people they trust. Children in humanitarian settings are especially vulnerable. During armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies, children may be forced to flee their homes, some torn from their families and exposed to exploitation and abuse along the way. They risk injury and death. They may be recruited by armed forces. Especially for girls and women, the threat of gender-based violence soars. Harmful cultural practices pose another grave risk in various parts of the world. Hundreds of millions of girls have been subjected to child marriage and female genital mutilation – even though both are internationally recognized human rights violations.²

No matter the circumstance, every child has the right to be protected from violence, exploitation and abuse. Child protection systems connect children to vital social services and fair justice systems – starting at birth. They provide care to the most vulnerable, including children uprooted by conflict, poverty and disaster; victims of child labour or trafficking; and those who live with disabilities or in alternative care. Above all,

protecting children means protecting their physical, mental and psychosocial needs to safeguard their futures.³

UNICEF works in more than 150 countries to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse. They partner with governments, businesses, civil-society organizations and communities to prevent all forms of violence against children, and to support survivors, including with mental health and psychosocial services. Their efforts strengthen child protection systems to help children access vital social services, from birth through adolescence.⁴

Strategies for Alleviating Poverty

Educational Initiatives

UNICEF promotes equitable access to education to break the poverty cycle. Programs include building schools, training teachers, and providing learning materials. Also, UNICEF provides financial support to families to encourage school attendance and reduce child labor.⁵

Nutrition and Health Programs

Ensuring access to vaccinations, maternal care, and clean water to improve children's survival rates and long-term health. This was achieved through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) program. UNICEF also engaged in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance which involved the distribution of food and supplements to malnourished children.⁶

Economic Empowerment of Families

Economic empowerment of families is the process of providing people with the resources they need to live beyond subsistence and have more control over their lives. It can help reduce poverty, improve social integration, and strengthen family dynamics. Training parents and caregivers in income-generating activities. Also, Advocating for universal child benefits to reduce family poverty.⁷ Economic empowerment is something that should be seen as utmost priority in order to curbed poverty. Minister of Women Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, highlighted the crucial role of economic empowerment in fostering family cohesion, asserting that self-sufficient women can create a ripple effect in their communities. She said that “when women are economically empowered, they can train their children who, in turn, fill the economic gaps of their families. This will significantly reduce cases of sexual and gender-based violence”.⁸

Strategies to Combat Child Abuse

Legal Frameworks and Policy Advocacy

There is the need for Strengthening Child Protection Laws. This will help in Assisting governments in drafting and implementing policies to protect children from abuse and exploitation. For instance the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).⁹

Awareness and Community Engagement

Public Awareness Campaigns can also help in educating communities about the impact of child abuse and the importance of reporting it. For instance End Violence Against

Children campaign. There is also the need for Community-Based Monitoring Systems, this can be achieved by training local leaders to recognize and address abuse cases.¹⁰

Direct Intervention Programs

Counseling and Rehabilitation Services should be made available. Counselors should provide psychological and medical support to child abuse survivors. There should also be provision for confidential channels for children and adults to report abuse.¹¹

Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships and Collaborations" refers to the act of two or more entities (individuals, organizations, companies) working together to achieve a shared goal, often by combining resources, expertise, and efforts to produce a greater outcome than they could individually; essentially, it's a strategic alliance where parties mutually benefit from the collaboration. UNICEF works closely with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector partners to amplify its impact. For instance, partnerships with organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) and Save the Children.¹²

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation is a combined term for the processes set up by organizations such as companies, government agencies, international organisations and NGOs, with the goal of improving their management of outputs, outcomes and impact. Monitoring includes the continuous assessment of programmes based on early detailed information on the progress or delay of the ongoing assessed activities.⁸ Evaluation

involves the examination of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activities in the light of specified objectives.¹³ UNICEF employs rigorous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of its programs.¹⁴

Achievement of UNICEF



Source: The Sun Nigeria, 2022. Accessed February 15th, February, 2025



Unicefforeverychild.org Accessed February15th 2025.

Advocating Children's Rights

For UNICEF, advocacy means not only informing donors and the public about what UNICEF is doing but, more importantly, sending public messages on its policies in an effort to influence national and international decision-makers and obtain the support of public opinion for policies, some of which may, at times, be controversial or opposed by large segments of populations or countries. These policies are either initiated by the agency itself, or are part of a UN interagency campaign, or are the result of campaigns by NGOs. Effective advocacy requires communications and marketing expertise, an area in which UNICEF has long proved its skills. Advocacy is an essential part of all UNICEF

programmes: in some cases, the programme is limited to advocacy when the causes are too broad to generate specific operations, or when resources are lacking, or when other organizations, in particular NGOs, assume the operational activities.¹⁵

UNICEF advocacy is expressed either by the public speeches of its Executive Director, by press releases, by publications, by commissioned research or surveys followed by public reports, by announcements preceding conferences or seminars and resolutions adopted in these meetings, by the public announcements of National Committees, by lobbying chiefs of state, governments, parliaments and intergovernmental fora, by the use of Goodwill Ambassadors, and by the organization of special events (days of tranquillity, 'Day of the African Child').¹⁶

In Jim Grant's times, campaigns were often based on catchy slogans in specific areas. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, UNICEF has integrated these rights in its Mission Statement. As part of its Mission, adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board in January 1996:

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

The Child Rights Monitoring Project, initiated by Child Watch International (an NGO) and supported by UNICEF and several other donors over the period 1994 to 1998, has stimulated the development of monitoring activities at the local level in a number of countries. The UNICEF yearly Progress of Nations also serves to monitor global and

national advances towards the goals set in 1990 by the World Summit for Children, as a blueprint for action in conjunction with the human rights and development objectives of the Convention.¹⁷

On 25 May 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted two Optional Protocols to the Convention. The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography makes it a criminal offence to sell, trade or use children for a variety of purposes including sexual exploitation and pornography. The measure was first proposed by Cuba and Guatemala, among other countries, because of other perceived violations of children's rights, including the selling of organs and forced adoptions, according to the UNICEF representative. With the rapid growth in human trafficking, especially the sale of girls into brothels in Asia, the proposed Protocol gained wide support in the US, Europe and other regions. By July 2000, six countries had signed the Protocol; ten ratifications are required for it to enter into force.¹⁸

UNICEF is involved in inter-agency campaigns on violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia. Its partners include, among others, UNFPA, Save the Children and other international, national or regional NGOs. UNICEF produces information material on the equal rights of girls including video dramas and assists in the printing of posters. The agency runs training workshops on legislation and women's rights for judges, public prosecutors, police and lawyers and awareness and training workshops in schools.¹³

Advocacy has been one of the more successful tools used by UNICEF over the years to advertise its policies, initiate its own programmes, form alliances and try to convince governments and the general public of the value of its views.

UNICEF contributed to give the World Bank's structural programmes a 'human face', by stressing the social consequences of these programmes for the poorest population groups, a position that has been recently forcefully expressed by a variety of NGOs in Seattle and Budapest. Among other issues, UNICEF has taken a clear position on breastfeeding, child labour, the sale and trafficking of children, child prostitution, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, child soldiers and Sudanese slave redemption. Its combat against HIV/AIDS, together with UNAIDS, WHO and other partners, has, however, been unclear on such an effective prevention measure as the use of condoms. Its present policy of passive reserve on this issue should be reconsidered.¹⁴

UNICEF tried to 'embrace' too much when advocating for debt relief, or denouncing the impact of economic sanctions at the risk of trespassing on other organizations' mandates, of opposing influential governments and of being exposed to manipulation? Such issues are not only economic, but involve political decisions to be taken by the UN Security Council, the World Bank, the IMF and creditor countries. Even if it can be argued that giving debt relief and lifting economic sanctions would free income in developing countries, there is no guarantee that leaders of those countries would use these resources for social aims, including support to children's and women's causes.¹⁵

As UNICEF insists rightly on its own independence and autonomy in order to maintain its own image, it is fair to ask that the agency remains firmly within its own domain. Some of UNICEF's rhetoric appears excessive and thus empty. For instance, UNICEF proposes three significant outcomes for children, as part of a global pact to be adopted by the international community and governments, 'because within them lies the key to breaking persistent cycles of poverty'.¹⁶ These priority outcomes are:

1. Infants start life healthy and young children are nurtured in a caring environment that enables them to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and intellectually able to learn.
2. All children, including the poorest and most disadvantaged, have access to and complete basic education of good quality.
3. Adolescents have opportunities to fully develop their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments and are helped to participate and contribute to their societies.

Certainly such conditions are desirable parts and results of development efforts. It is not, however, credible that they constitute 'the key' to breaking persistent cycles of poverty. The real keys are, again, good governance, civil peace, proper distribution of national income, economic growth, and effective public health and education systems. UNICEF can contribute to the reduction of poverty within its own domain, but governments and the financial institutions hold the main keys to this major issue.

Monitoring of Human Rights

In the normative area, the ratification by 191 countries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the ratification by 161 countries of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, are major achievements. UNICEF is playing an active role in the pre-sessional meetings of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: it is now an informal monitoring body to the Committee, together with other organizations. While some countries may have signed and ratified these Conventions without any intention to enforce them, or to enforce parts of them, as for all human rights treaties, ratification provides legal grounds for national and international human rights NGOs to encourage governments to amend their legislation and practices in accordance with the standards set by the Conventions, and to publicly denounce violations. Additionally, it enables citizens to make legitimate legal claims against their authorities' rejection of the clauses which have been formally approved or against their inaction in the face of blatant violations.¹⁷

According to Hammarberg,¹⁸ the most important achievement of the Convention is that governments have been encouraged to give children's issues political priority. Countries have undertaken comprehensive reviews on the situation of children in relation to their obligations under the Convention. A few countries have amended their legislation accordingly, and some have established Ombudsmen for Children or other structures to monitor independently how the authorities treat children. International organizations,

governments and NGOs have focused on vulnerable groups such as child labourers, child prostitutes and children in armed convicts.

Is there a contradiction between the rights approach adopted by UNICEF and development strategies? The basic issues of children's survival and development, health, nutrition, education and sanitation are contained in articles of the Convention as 'rights': they should be strengthened, not weakened, by a rights approach. However, as an example, immunization protects children from death or illness it does not guarantee that the whole range of their rights will be promoted and protected by their government.¹⁹

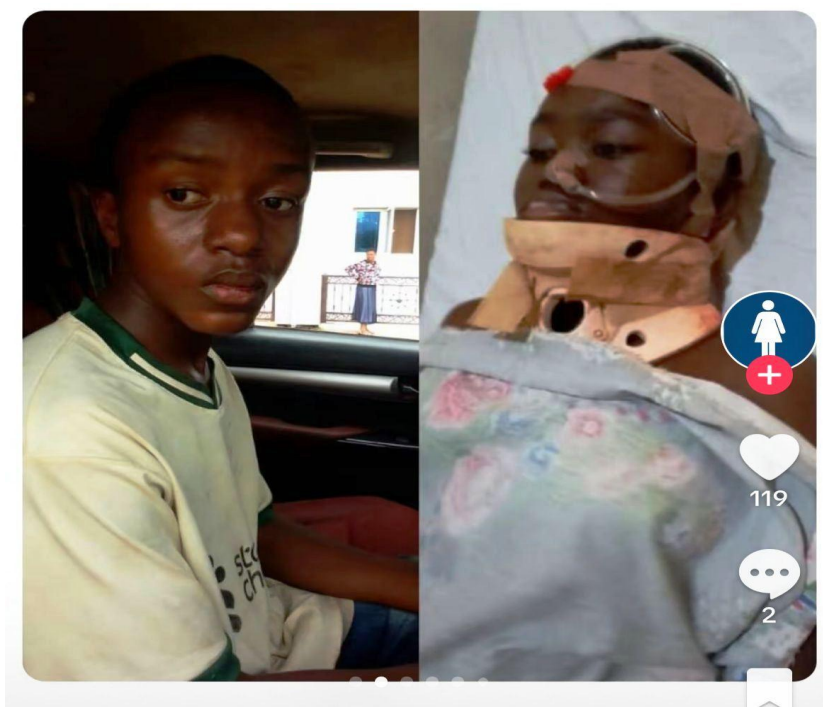
More generally, the adoption by UNICEF of a 'rights approach' raises the question of the agency's role and image. The multi-donor evaluation has rightly recalled that UNICEF is a favoured partner of the governments of developing countries because of its general effectiveness in providing supplies and equipment, facilitating financial assistance and providing programme advice in often neglected sectors. Before the Convention, UNICEF tended to concentrate its support on activities that are 'above politics' (e.g. advocacy on child survival as a moral imperative) and 'below politics' (its operational activities). It is now viewed as the single most important advocate of child rights worldwide. In advocating for the rights of the child and of women on the basis of ratified Conventions, UNICEF may lose its humanitarian and provider image by changing into a 'critical partner' to governments, with the obligation to monitor and address violations of these international legal instruments.²⁰

UNICEF being seen as a critic of governments' policies and practices may affect its relationships with national and local authorities and its operational efficiency. UNICEF's Executive Director rejected, in 1993, the suggestion that the agency should play an 'openly critical' role, which might result in the loss of its comparative advantage and harm the achievement of its objective, i.e. to improve the respect of children's and women's rights. He advocated what could be called (by the author) a 'soft approach'. He explained that UNICEF had used methods which allow it to collaborate constructively with governments when confronted with particularly sensitive questions. UNICEF applies its own planning procedures, such as the consultation process leading to the analysis of the situation in a country, procedures not applied by other international organizations and NGOs. In the view of UNICEF, these procedures are a positive way of directing the attention of governments to certain facts calling for changes in policies and programmes concerning the rights of children and women.²¹

In an interview with Mrs Mary Amandi, a manager of Amadin Orphanage Home, she said that child abuse is a serious issue in Edo State and Nigeria as a whole. According to her, overtime a lot of children are facing abuse ranging from physical abuse, child labour and molestation, defilement, neglect from parents, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, etc. These various abuse can be attributed to the hardship of Nigeria, due to these, many families find it difficult to afford basic amenities, like feeding the family and children. They are children that are supposed to be under parental care, trying to find a means of livelihood, and ways to fend for themselves at a very young age. For example

when children on the streets see and hear about any party nearby, they go to pick recyclable cans to sell and have little money to themselves.²²

According to Mrs. Mary Amandi, she specifically made allusion to female children that they have passed through traumatic experiences, being exposed to early sexual abuse. Most children see it that way of moving on in life. She also said that child abuse has also caused the children abusing their mates around them. This was seen from the case of a 15 years old boy breaking into the home of a 14 year old girl to assault her, hit her on the head with a pistol and rape her on August 29th 2024.²³



Source: Sahara Reporters, 2024. Accessed February 15th, 2025²⁴

Abusing children physically and psychologically by parent inflicting injuries on children due to transfer of aggression. Often times, children receive bully from their mates which affects their self esteem moving in life.²⁵

From the interview carried out it was seen that UNICEF are trying their method and strategies in fighting against child abuse. It was seen that the organization is created to fund children in need. According to Mrs. Mary Amandi, the organization has put in place strategies in achieving certain goals in the protection of child interest. Creation of other various bodies and organization in Edo State such implementive committee whose role is to coordinate and fight for the right of any child being abused. They educate children on abusive cases and for children and women to know their rights, in communities and children in schools. They have partnered with the ministry of social development and gender issues, and have created calling numbers for cases of abuse. UNICEF have NGO's that deals with poverty alleviation, they render help not only to children but also household, empower parents to be able to provide for their children and family. UNICEF has created programmes like "children out of school", providing books and necessary materials for children.²⁶

UNICEF'S Challenges

UNICEF is usually considered as both the best-managed and the better-known and appreciated UN agency, not only because of its humanitarian mandate for children and women, but because of the drive of its leaders and the visibility of most of its activities. Despite certain deficiencies, UNICEF must be considered one of the most

important and best functioning of the UN organizations in the field of development assistance. Its target group, choice of sectors and strength of implementation at district and local level has in most developing countries given the organization a central, multilateral presence in the social field, both in terms of operations and in 'advocacy'/spokesman functions.²⁷

UNICEF also plays an important role in the area of emergency aid. It is often singled out as one of the organizations which manages 'to get the help to its destination'. There is no doubt that strong representation in the field and experience of development activities commends the organization in this respect. UNICEF is a particularly relevant organization in the area of poverty reduction ... UNICEF's target group comprises relatively weaker social groups of women, children and youth. UNICEF has a broad social development objective, and it works within relevant social sectors such as health, nutrition, education and water and sanitation. Finally, with its strong national representation and as a logistically strong implementing organization, UNICEF is in direct contact with beneficiaries.²⁸

Indeed, UNICEF has impressive strengths: a well-defined mission; attractive objectives shared, at least formally, by North and South governments and populations; strong constituencies in most countries, including public opinion support; strong leadership and committed staff; a decentralized structure, with country programming and implementation; a reputation for exhibility and adaptability; strengthened audit and control systems. On the basis of its broad mandate for children, UNICEF Executive

Directors have often had access to chiefs of state or governments, while most UN specialized agencies are linked only with their respective technical ministry (health for WHO, labour for the ILO, etc.), another advantage publicizing its policies and having them adopted.²⁶ Contrary to some other UN organizations, UNICEF has benefited from initiating or accepting external independent evaluation surveys of its programmes and management, which have enabled the agency to adjust to new challenges in giving satisfaction to its main donors while increasing its 'transparency'.²⁹

Other challenges of UNICEF are as follows:

- 1. Bureaucracy:** UNICEF is an overly bureaucratic organization. Staff resources (i.e. time plus skill) are being wasted on overly complex internal processes and there seems to be no concerted organisational push to deal with this. In India, large quantities of UNICEF supplies that are shipped from abroad have often been delayed due to administrative foul-ups.
- 2. Reporting:** Business information solutions have greatly improved but still do not focus adequately on results and are not easily aligned with donor reporting requirements.
- 3. Management:** Programmes are becoming more result-oriented but this is far from 'managing by results'. Management by inputs is still the dominant management model.³⁰
- 4. Accountability:** The organization is hampered by a weak performance management regime. Managers are not yet accountable for results or being rewarded for achieving

them. UNICEF is not the only UN agency affected by a more general UN malaise with regard to management responsibility for results.

5. **Human Resource:** Human Resource Management was a cause of concern, including continuing problems with timely recruitment, gaps in technical competencies, and increasing occurrence of staff “burn-out”. Weaknesses in HR support to country programme remain but are being addressed gradually.
6. **Funding:** Funding is certainly not uniform across the regional offices of the UNICEF. In Nigeria the various units faces perennial lack of adequate funds.
7. **Public Awareness:** While relatively few Nigerians are aware of the nature of UNICEF's work, fewer still know that there is no such thing as a UNICEF project and that all UNICEF aided activities are merely a part of **existing Nigerian** government projects. This is probably one reason why UNICEF's actual impact gets watered down to a large extent.³¹

Conclusion

UNICEF’s comprehensive approach to alleviating poverty and combating child abuse demonstrates its commitment to creating a safe and nurturing environment for children. By combining policy advocacy, direct intervention, and collaboration, UNICEF contributes significantly to the global effort to uphold children’s rights.

Endnotes

1. UNICEF for every child. <https://www.unicef.org/> accessed January 10, 2025
2. UNICEF for every child. <https://www.unicef.org/> accessed January 10, 2025
3. Ibid
4. <http://www.unicef.org/child-protection>"
5. UNICEF Cash Transfers for Education (<https://www.unicef.org/reports>) Accessed 10 January 2025
6. UNICEF Nutrition Programs (<https://www.unicef.org/nutrition>) Accessed 8 January 2025
7. UNICEF Social Protection (<https://www.unicef.org/social-protection>) Accessed 10 January 2025
8. Jide Ajia Economic empowerment strengthens families, minister tells women, *Punch Newspaper*, 18th December 2024 <https://punchng.com/economic-empowerment-strengthens-families-minister-tells-women/> Accessed Wednesday, January 22, 2025
9. UNICEF Legal Advocacy (<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights>) Accessed 15 January 2025
10. *Ibid.*
11. UNICEF Child Protection (<https://www.unicef.org/protection>) Accessed 15 January 2025
12. UNICEF Child Helplines (<https://www.unicef.org>) Accessed 15 January 2025
13. A UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation - Making a Difference. http://library.cphs.chula.ac.th/Ebooks/ReproductiveHealth/A%20UNICEF%20Guide%20for%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation_Making%20a%20Difference.pdf Archived 2020-02-27 at the Wayback Machine Accessed 20 January 2025

14. 14. Joel E. Oestreich “UNICEF and the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, *Global Governance A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 4(2):183-198
15. Yves Beigbeder, “Advocating Children’s Rights”, *New Challenges for UNICEF*, 2001, pp.145
16. *Ibid*, 146
17. *Ibid*, 147
18. Foreword by Thomas Hammarberg in J. R. Himes (ed.), *Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource Mobilization in Low-Income Countries*, UNICEF, International Child Development Center, Florence (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1995), p. vi.
19. Glenn Mower, A., *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut London, 1997
20. *Ibid*.
21. A UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation - Making a Difference. http://library.cphs.chula.ac.th/Ebooks/ReproductiveHealth/A%20UNICEF%20Guide%20for%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation_Making%20a%20Difference.pdf Archived 2020-02-27 at the [Wayback Machine](#) Accessed 20 January 2025
22. Interview with Mrs Mary Amandi, 53 years, A Manager of Amadin Orphanage Home, Benin City.
23. *Ibid*
24. “Sahara Reporters”, 2024. Accessed February 15th, 2025
25. Interview with Mrs Mary Amandi, 53 years, A Manager of Amadin Orphanage Home, Benin City.
26. *Ibid*

27. United Nations development programme evaluation office - Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/handbook/me-handbook.pdf> Accessed 20 January 2025
28. UNICEF MICS (<https://mics.unicef.org>) Accessed 8 January 2025
29. UN Res. 54/263, 25 May 2000; <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/00pr44.htm> and IHT, 7 July 2000. Accessed 6 January 2025
30. UNICEF Doc. E/ICEF/1999/10, 13 April 1999. Accessed 12 January 2025
31. UN Res. 54/263, 25 May 2000; <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/00pr44.htm> and IHT, 7 July 2000. Accessed 6 January 2025

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has achieved a lot since its founding in 1947. It has successfully lowered child mortality rates, increased sex ratio, decreased malnutrition considerably and created awareness around hygiene and nutrition practices. Financing aside, the UNICEF has done a commendable job in woman and child welfare, proven by its reception of the Nobel Peace Prize on 26 October 1965. It has utilized its limited resources effectively by contributing its technical expertise to programmes hosted by national governments. This is one of the reasons why UNICEF always remains invisible, although it's omnipresent and is an indispensable partner of the governments.¹

Focusing on child poverty is based on the notion that poverty being a multidimensional phenomenon and its experience goes beyond just lack of income/low consumption, as it manifests itself in malnutrition, poor health, poor education and capability to maintain livelihood or participate in society. For children, this multidimensional aspect of poverty is especially important as deprivation in early life puts them at a disadvantage throughout their life, increases vulnerability to exploitation and abuse and limits future prospects, which further harms communities and societies.²

Globally, UNICEF overarching interventions to address monetary and multidimensional child poverty are as follows:³

Expand child-sensitive social protection programmes: Social protection is a key instrument to address child poverty and build human capital of children. Evidence from across the world shows the power of cash transfers, in particular cash plus programmes in improving health, nutrition and education of children, in addition to addressing income poverty of the family. Beyond provision of cash benefits to children, governments need to build and strengthen evidence-based, child-sensitive and shock responsive social protection systems as a whole, so that they can protect children in poverty and vulnerable to poverty and prevent them from the permanent harms of poverty.

Improve access to quality social services: Child poverty is multidimensional, and a wide variety of public services are relevant for children's survival, development and growth. These include early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, health care, clean water and adequate sanitation, among others. Because the foundation of children's future is laid in the early years, specific attention should be made to improve

access and usage of services that help children get the nutrition, care and protection they need during the early years, ages 0-5.

Promote adolescent development: A growing population of youth brings incredible potential to reap demographic dividend – if right investments are made for them. These include investments in quality education, skills development opportunities, sexual and reproductive health services, which altogether support adolescent boys’ and girls’ successful transition to adulthood and help unlock their full potentials.

Ensuring successful implementation of these interventions requires sustainable funding by governments and effective and meaningful engagement with key stakeholders. As such, comprehensive policy package to combat child poverty will not be complete without the following:⁴

Engagement in budget processes: To move from planning to implementation, it is essential that child poverty reduction policies and programmes are part of government budgeting and plans.

Actively involve children, adolescents and youth: especially the poorest and most vulnerable in local and national planning processes through consultation and other participatory means, and as part of ongoing efforts to make children, adolescents and youth aware of these issues, inspire their positive action and expand the space for their participation in accountability mechanisms and activities.⁵

Choosing the right mix of these and other interventions to tackle child poverty can be determined by consultation with key actors or through using evidence and research

that can help identify interventions with highest impact. According to the research of the nationwide household survey, children are 1.5 times more likely to be poor than adults. At the same time only 17% of children live in the households that receive either Childcare or Family Allowance schemes. Due to insufficient financing, the impact of these has been minimal, reducing national poverty by only 8 per cent.⁶

UNICEF's role in Nigeria is to protect children's rights and help them overcome challenges caused by poverty, violence, disease, and discrimination. UNICEF works with the Nigerian government, civil society, and families to achieve this goal.⁷

In order to conclude this research, it should be noted that UNICEF has played vital role in the development of various countries in the world including Nigeria. UNICEF has contributed to the promotion of campaign necessary for the reduction of child poverty, formulation of policies for curbing child abuse and sexual molestation of children, promotion of standard health and standard of living of people, advocating the rights of children, monitoring of human rights, etc. In the course of this research, it was found out that UNICEF has challenges such as human resource, funding, public awareness, etc.⁸

Recommendations

The government should ensure that proper awareness campaign is carried out to make people to be aware of the programme offered by UNICEF, human and materials resources should be provided by the government of the day to assist the organization in effectively discharging their duty.

On a concluding note, I would like to make an appeal to the philanthropic souls deep inside us to contribute to these social welfare agencies and NGOs, whether monetary, technical or physical and contribute in making the world a better place.

Endnotes

1. Yves Beigbeder, “Advocating Children’s Rights”, *New Challenges for UNICEF*, 2001, pp.145
2. Foreword by Thomas Hammarberg in J. R. Himes (ed.), *Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource Mobilization in Low-Income Countries*, UNICEF, International Child Development Center, Florence (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1995), p. vi.
3. Yves Beigbeder, “Advocating Children’s Rights”, *New Challenges for UNICEF*, 2001, pp.145-176
4. Strategies for Individual Organizations, Annex to the Plan of Action for Active Multilateralism', [Danish] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1996, p. 17.
5. UNICEF Doc. E/ICEF/1993/CRP.8, 24 February 1993. Accessed 10 January 2025
6. Yves Beigbeder, “Advocating Children’s Rights”, *New Challenges for UNICEF*, 2001, pp.145-176
7. UNICEF for every child. <https://www.unicef.org/> accessed January 10, 2025
8. UNICEF Annual Report 2021, retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

List of Informant

Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Mary Amandi,	53 years,	A Manager of Amadin Orphanage Home,	Benin City.	17 th February, 2025

Official Documents

Archival Materials

"Child Abuse". *Florida Performs*. Archived from the original on 13 January 2010.

"Child maltreatment: Fact sheet No. 150". *World Health Organization*. December 2014. Archived from the original on 17 July 2015.

Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and UNICEF, Monetary Child Poverty in Nigeria, 2021.

"Forced Adoption Case Against Norway Hits European Rights Court". *Sourthousenews*, 3 December 2024.

"International and national legislation – Child Labour". *International Labour Organisation*, 2011. Archived from the original on 9 February 2012. Accessed 2 December, 2024.

International Labour Organisation, "What is child labour?", 2012. Archived from the original on 14 July 2017. Accessed on 30 November 2024.

Leeb R.T., Paulozzi L. J., Melanson C. and. Simon T. R, Arias, I.. Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0., *Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*, 2008. Archived (PDF) from the original on 29 August 2017. P.11

National Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index November 2022.

National Bureau of Statistics, Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q3 2022.

The World Bank. "Fact Sheet: An Adjustment to Global Poverty Lines."

The World Bank. "Global Progress in Reducing Extreme Poverty Grinds to a Halt."

UN Res. 54/263, 25 May 2000; <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/00pr44.htm> and IHT, 7 July 2000. Accessed 6 January 2025

UNDESA, World Population Prospects, 2022.

UNICEF. Nigeria and the Convention of the Rights of the Child Lagos: UNICEF Country Office, 2000.

"United Nations Resources for Speakers on Global Issues – Child Labour". *United Nations*, 2013. Archived from *the original* on 7 August 2013. Retrieved 30 November 2024.

U.S. Census Bureau. "How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty."

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. "Programs that Use the Poverty Guidelines as a Part of Eligibility Determination."

Secondary Materials

Books

Amrit Virk ,Ediomo-Ubong Nelson and Ini Dele-Adedeji *The Challenge of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria* (Published online by Cambridge University Press, 2024)

Beresford P., & CPAG (Great Britain) *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves*, London: CPAG, 1999.

Comcec Coordination Office "CCO Brief on Poverty Alleviation, November 2016,

Duncan G. J., & Brooksgunn J., (eds.) *Consequences of Growing Up Poor*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997.

Foreword by Thomas Hammarberg in J. R. Himes (ed.), *Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource Mobilization in Low-Income Countries*, UNICEF, International Child Development Center, Florence (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1995).

Freeman Michael. *"Beyond conventions—towards empowerment"*. The Moral Status of Children: Essays on the Rights of the Child, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997.

Frontiers. "Poverty, Racism, and the Public Health Crisis in America."

Garcia, Rose Mary; Richard Kohl; Ann Ruengsorn; and Julia Zislin, *Nigeria: Economic Performance Assessment*, (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2006.

Gavin H., Sticks and stones may break my bones: the effects of emotional abuse, *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment and Trauma*, 20(5), 2011.

Gbosi A., and Philip C. O. *The Nigerian Economy and Current Problems*, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Pack Publishers, 2004.

Glenn Mower, A., *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut London, 1997

Hansen K., Joshi H., & Dex S., *Children of the 21st century*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 2010.

Harris J., Treanor M. C., & Sharma N., *Below the breadline: a year in the life of families living in poverty*, London: Barnardos. NICHD (2005) Duration and developmental timing of poverty and children's cognitive and social development from birth through third grade. *Child development*, 2009.

Hirsch D., "Chicken and Egg: child poverty and educational inequalities", *CPAG Policy Briefing*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, 2007.

World Health Organization and International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, "1. The nature and consequences of child maltreatment", *Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence*. Geneva, Switzerland, 2006. ISBN 978-92-4-159436-3.

Strategies for Individual Organizations, Annex to the Plan of Action for Active Multilateralism', [Danish] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1996.

Wells K., *Childhood in Global Perspective*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009.

Whewell Tim, "Norway's hidden scandal". *BBC News*, 2018. Retrieved 3 December 2024.

WHO"Child abuse and neglect by parents and other caregivers". World Health Organization. Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 30 December 2024.

World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001—Attacking Poverty* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Yves Beigbeder, "Advocating Children's Rights", *New Challenges for UNICEF*, 2001, pp.145

Articles in Journals

Adedeji O., Ezenagu N., & Ajepe F. I., "The Nigerian girl-child and sexual abuse: The plight of victims in Bayelsa State Nigeria", *International Journal of Gender & Women's Studies*, 2019, 7(2):123-135.

Ajisafe L. B., Ohaeri B., Ojo L. O., and Babarimisa O., "Child Abuse: A significant contemporary community problem", *International Journal of Public Health, Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, 2023, 8(1):18 26.

Amakoromo W. T., Asiegbu V. I. , & Okafor C. O., in their articles title declared that "Poverty Alleviation Programmes and the Prevailing Challenges for Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: An Assessment" , *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 2024, 8 (4), p.107

Bugaje M. A., Ogunrinde G. O., & Faruk J. A., "Child sexual abuse in Zaria, Northwestern Nigeria", *Nigerian Journal of Paediatrics*, 2012, 39(3):110-114.

Bunting L., Davidson G., McCartan C., Hanratty J., Bywaters P., Mason W., and Steils N., "The Association between child Maltreatment and Adult Poverty: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Research", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 77:121-133.

Casey P., Goolsby S., Berkowitz C., Frank D., Cook J., Cutts D., Black M. M., Zaldivar N., and Levenson S., "Maternal depression, changing public assistance, food

security, and child health status", *Pediatrics*. 113 (2), 2004, pp.298–304. doi:10.1542/peds.113.2.298. ISSN 1098-4275. PMID 14754941. S2CID 40550743.

Chiamaka O. A., and Adeniran A. F., Perceived Effects of Child Sexual Abuse on Psychological Wellbeing and Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Students in a Higher Institution at Ogun State, Nigeria, *World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research*, 2017, 3(8), 36-42.,

Chimobi Ucha, "Poverty in Nigeria: Some Dimensions and Contributing Factors", *Global Majority E-Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 2010).

Conron, Kerith J.; Beardslee, William; Koenen, Karestan C.; Buka, Stephen L.; Gortmaker, Steven L., "A Longitudinal Study of Maternal Depression and Child Maltreatment in a National Sample of Families Investigated by Child Protective Services". *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. 163 (10): 2009922–30. doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2009.176. ISSN 1072-4710. PMID 19805711.

Coulton C.J. *et al.* "How Neighborhoods Influence Child Maltreatment: A Review of The Literature And Alternative Pathways", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2007

David M. Smolin. "Intercountry Adoption as Child Trafficking". *Valparaiso Law Review*. 39 (2), 2005, Archived *from the original on 2 April 2015*. Retrieved 2 December 2024.

David N., Ezechi O., Wapmuk A., Gbajabiamila T., Ohihoin A., Herbertson E., & Odeyemi K., "Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South Western Nigeria: a community based study", *African Health Sciences*, 2018, 18(2), 199-208.

Djeddah C., Facchin P., Ranzato C., and Romer C., "Child abuse: current problems and key public health challenges". *Social Science & Medicine*. 51 (6), 2000, 905–915.

Herrenkohl R. C., "The definition of child maltreatment: from case study to construct". *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 29 (5), 2005.

Isangedighi A. J., Child abuse in R. O. Nnachi & P. S. E. Ezeh (eds.) Child Abuse and Neglect. Awka: Erudition Publisher, *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 3, 2005.

- Jaffee S. R., & Maikovich-Fong A. K., Effects of Chronic Maltreatment and Maltreatment Timing on Children’s Behavior and Cognitive Abilities. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 52, 2011.
- Joel E. Oestreich “UNICEF and the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, *Global Governance A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 4(2):183-198
- Jonson-Reid M., Drake B., J. Kim and S. L Porterfield, “A Prospective Analysis of the Relationship Between Reported Child Maltreatment and Special Education Eligibility Among Poor Children” *Child Maltreatment*, 9(4), 2004, 382-94
- Kim H. *et al.* “Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment among US Children”, *American Journal of Public Health*, 2017.
- Leiter C. and Johnsen G., “Child maltreatment and school performance declines: An event-history analysis”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(3), 1997, 563–589.
- McCoy M.L and Keen S.M., "Introduction". *Child Abuse and Neglect* (2 ed.). New York: Psychology Press, 2013.
- Mehnaz Aisha, "Child Neglect: Wider Dimensions". In RN Srivastava; Rajeev Seth; Joan van Niekerk (eds.). *Child Abuse and Neglect: Challenges and Opportunities*. JP Medical Ltd., 2013, p. 101. ISBN 978-93-5090-449-7. Archived from the original on 28 December 2024.
- Milletich, R. J., et al, Exposure to interparental violence and childhood physical and emotional abuse as related to physical aggression in undergraduate dating relationships, *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(7), 2010.
- Fontana V. J., "The maltreatment syndrome of children". *Pediatric Annals*. 13 (10), 1984, 736–44. PMID 6504584.
- NIH, “New Directions in Child Abuse and Neglect Research.”, *National Centre for Biotechnology Information*, n.d

- Norman R. E., et al. The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *PLOS Medicine* 9(11), 2012.
- Nseababi A. & Abiodun J., “The manace of Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Case Study of Hawking in Uyo, Akwaibom State”, *Journal of Social Science*, 24 (3), 2010.
- Nwozor A., and Okhillu B., "Child's Right and the Challenges of Educating the Girl-Child; Assessing the Contributions of UNICEF in Nigeria", *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, 18, 2022.
- Olusegun O. O., & Idowu A. A., "Child abuse in Nigeria: Dimension, reasons for its persistence and probable", *Child and Family Law Journal*, 4(1), 2016.
- Onwe S.O., "Championing the Campaign against Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Call to Save the Needy", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(10), 2014.
- Pelton L.H., “The Continuing Role Of Material Factors In Child Maltreatment And Placement”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2015.
- Perez C. M., & Widom C. S, “Childhood victimization and long-term intellectual and academic outcomes”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(8), 1994.
- Ross S., "Risk of physical abuse to children of spouse abusing parents". *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 20 (7), 1996.
- Shaffer A., and Yates T. M., “Egeland, The relation of emotional maltreatment to early adolescent competence: developmental processes in a prospective study”, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33(1), 2009.
- Skinner G.C.M., Bywaters P.W.B., & Kennedy E., "A Review of the Relationship between Poverty and Child Abuse and Neglect: Insights from Scoping Reviews, Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses". *Child Abuse Review*, 2022.
- Theoklitou D., & Kabitsis N., “Physical and Emotional Abuse of Primary School Children by Teachers, *Child abuse Neg*, 26 (1), 2012.
- Thompson R. A., “Wither the pre-conventional child? Toward a life-span moral development theory”, *Child Development Perspectives*, 6, 2012, 423–429.
- Twentyman C. T. and Plotkin R. C., "Unrealistic expectations of parents who maltreat their children: an educational deficit that pertains to child development". *J Clin Psychol*. 38 (3), 1982.

News Papers/Magazines

Hughes S., "Child Abuse Spikes During Recession". *CBS News*, 2009. Archived from the original on 19 September 2009.

Unpublished Materials

Edu, & G.O Edu, Child Abuse in Nigeria its impact on child development, A paper Presented at the First Zonal Conference of the National Association of Women in Academics in the University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 1999.

Online Sources

"Violence against children". www.who.int. Retrieved 29 December, 2024.

“Sahara Reporters”, 2024. Accessed February 15th, 2025

A UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation - Making a Difference. http://library.cphs.chula.ac.th/Ebooks/ReproductiveHealth/A%20UNICEF%20Guide%20for%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation_Making%20a%20Difference.pdf Archived 2020-02-27 at the [Wayback Machine](http://www.waybackmachine.org) Accessed 20 January 2025

<http://www.unicef.org/child-protection>"

<https://oacas.libguides.com/c.php?g=702168&p=499014220> Accessed 10 January 2025

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z2rxsbk/revision/3> Accessed 12 January 2025

<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm> accessed on 30 November 2024

International Labour Office (ILO) “Every child counts: new global estimates on child labour”, 2002. ISBN 978-92-2-113113-7. Retrieved 28 November 2024.

Jide Ajia Economic empowerment strengthens families, minister tells women, *Punch Newspaper*, 18th December 2024 <https://punchng.com/economic-empowerment-strengthens-families-minister-tells-women/>

empowerment-strengthens-families-minister-tells-women/
Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Accessed

- UNICEF Annual Report 2021, retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org>
- UNICEF Cash Transfers for Education (<https://www.unicef.org/reports>) Accessed 10 January 2025
- UNICEF Child Helplines (<https://www.unicef.org>) Accessed 15 January 2025
- UNICEF Child Protection (<https://www.unicef.org/protection>) Accessed 15 January 2025
- UNICEF Doc. E/ICEF/1993/CRP.8, 24 February 1993. Accessed 10 January 2025
- UNICEF Doc. E/ICEF/1999/10, 13 April 1999. Accessed 12 January 2025
- UNICEF for every child. <https://www.unicef.org/> accessed January 10, 2025
- UNICEF Legal Advocacy (<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights>) Accessed 15 January 2025
- UNICEF MICS (<https://mics.unicef.org>) Accessed 8 January 2025
- UNICEF Nutrition Programs (<https://www.unicef.org/nutrition>) Accessed 8 January 2025
- UNICEF Social Protection (<https://www.unicef.org/social-protection>) Accessed 10 January 2025
- UNICEF, "Child trafficking", 2011. Archived *from the original on 1 March 2015*. Retrieved 2 December 2024.
- United Nations development programme evaluation office - Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/handbook/me-handbook.pdf> Accessed 20 January 2025
- United Nations Statement of June 1998, which was signed by the heads of all UN agencies; see: <http://www.helium.com/items/1587576-poor-service-delivery>. Accessed 8 January 2025

APPENDIX

Child Labour



Source:<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm>



Source:<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/child-labour-gm175527039-20919251?searchscope=image%2Cfilm>

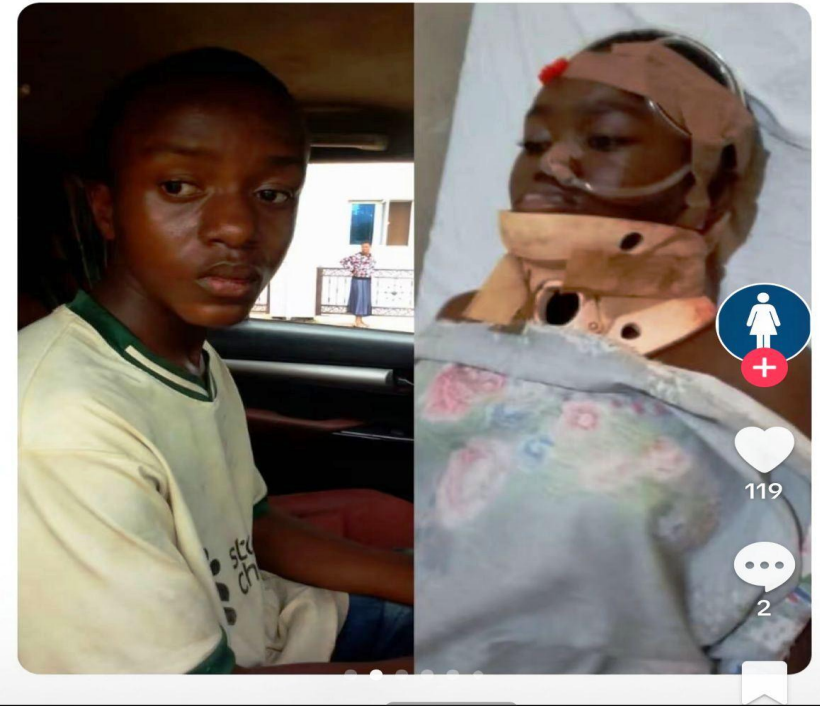
Achievement of UNICEF



Source: The Sun Nigeria, 2022. Accessed February 15th, February, 2025



Unicefforeverychild.org Accessed February15th 2025.



Source: Sahara Reporters, 2024. Accessed February 15th, 2025