



## Youth-Led Initiative in Re-Building Education in Crises Zone: Challenges and Innovation (A Case Study of Borno State, Nigeria)

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**Abstract.** The study examined Youth-led initiative in re-building education in crises zone: challenges and innovation. Three objectives guided the study. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprises youth leaders, volunteers, NGO staff, educators, and beneficiaries involved in youth-led education initiatives in Borno State. The population of the study is 350 youths. A sample size of 200 respondents was drawn from the target population using a purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The instrument for Data Collection was questionnaire. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Data was collected using Kobo Collect, a digital data-gathering tool developed for field-based research in humanitarian and development settings. The questionnaire was designed and uploaded to the KoboToolbox server, which allowed respondents' information to be collected efficiently using smartphones or tablets. The instrument was validated by experts in Adult and Non-Formal Education and Educational Research from the University of Maiduguri. Reliability coefficient of .849 was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. Findings from the study shows that; Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) plays an important role in rebuilding education and promoting youth participation in crisis-affected areas of Borno State. The organization enhances educational opportunities for vulnerable and displaced youths through literacy, skills training, and mentorship programs. Innovative approaches such as digital learning, community-based education, and psychosocial interventions are key strategies used by CATAI to sustain learning. Based on the findings of

the study, the following recommendations were made; The Borno State Government and the Federal Ministry of Education should provide financial, logistic, and policy support to youth-led organizations like CATAI. CATAI should invest in continuous capacity development for its staff and volunteers in areas such as digital pedagogy, psychosocial care, monitoring and evaluation, and humanitarian education management to improve program delivery. Development partners, donor agencies, and private organizations should collaborate with CATAI to establish long-term funding mechanisms that ensure sustainability of youth-led education programs beyond short-term humanitarian cycles.

**Keywords:** Youth-led, Initiative, Re-building, Education, Crises Zone, Challenges, Innovation

### 1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a critical driver of peace, stability, and sustainable development. However, in many crisis-affected regions, education systems are often among the first casualties of conflict and displacement. The destruction of schools, loss of teachers, and disruption of learning environments leave millions of children and youth without access to quality education. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023), over 224 million children and adolescents globally are currently affected by conflict and humanitarian crises, with a significant proportion residing in sub-Saharan Africa. In these fragile contexts, education not only provides cognitive development but also serves as a protective mechanism, offering psychosocial support and a sense of normalcy to affected populations (UNICEF, 2022). The urgent need to restore and reimagine education in crisis zones has therefore become a global priority.

In recent years, youth-led initiatives have emerged as powerful agents in rebuilding education systems within crisis-affected communities. Young people, particularly those directly impacted by conflict and displacement, are increasingly taking leadership roles in designing, implementing, and advocating for educational recovery programs (Save the Children, 2021). Youth engagement brings creativity, contextual understanding, and community trust, which are essential in addressing educational disruptions where conventional state or international interventions are often limited. Studies have shown that youth-led organizations often succeed in reaching marginalized groups and innovating local solutions, including mobile learning, peer tutoring, and community-based education models (Global Partnership for Education [GPE], 2022). These initiatives highlight the transformative potential of youth leadership in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, even in fragile and emergency settings like the one of Borno state.

Crisis zones, such as those in Northeast Nigeria, Syria, Yemen, and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, illustrate how protracted conflict can devastate educational infrastructure and opportunities. In Nigeria, the decade-long Boko Haram insurgency has destroyed thousands of schools and displaced millions of learners, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Despite such devastation, youth organizations and local volunteers have initiated informal learning centers, digital literacy programs, and psychosocial support groups to sustain education among displaced and conflict-affected children. For instance, community-based youth movements have collaborated with humanitarian partners to develop flexible learning schedules and low-cost digital tools that allow children to continue learning despite insecurity (Plan International, 2021). These local innovations underscore the resilience and agency of youth in rebuilding education systems from the grassroots level.

Nevertheless, youth-led education initiatives in crisis zones face numerous challenges that constrain their reach and sustainability. Limited funding, lack of technical training, insecurity, and weak institutional support are persistent barriers (Norwegian Refugee Council [NRC], 2021). Additionally, young leaders often struggle with legitimacy and access to formal decision-making spaces, which hinders their capacity to scale up successful models. Gender-based discrimination and socio-cultural barriers further limit

the participation of young women in leadership roles within education recovery efforts (UN Women, 2022). Despite these challenges, the resilience and innovation demonstrated by youth-led movements continue to attract international attention as effective, community-driven models for education recovery. Understanding the dynamics of these challenges and the innovative strategies developed to overcome them is crucial for policy and programmatic support.

The Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) plays a critical role in promoting access to education and rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State by creating safe learning spaces and advocating for inclusive education policies. Through its community-driven programs, CATAI empowers displaced youths to participate in literacy, peacebuilding, and civic engagement, aligning with findings that youth-led interventions are pivotal in restoring education in conflict zones (UNICEF, 2022; Save the Children, 2021; GPE, 2022; NRC, 2021). CATAI's initiatives in Maiduguri have significantly enhanced educational opportunities for vulnerable youths by facilitating vocational training, leadership development, and community learning hubs for internally displaced persons. This reflects broader evidence that locally rooted, youth-led organizations improve educational access and resilience in fragile settings where formal systems remain weak (Plan International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022; UNESCO, 2023; CATAI, 2024). The organization has also adopted innovative approaches such as mobile learning platforms, psychosocial support, and digital literacy programs to sustain education amid ongoing insecurity. These innovations correspond with global best practices showing that technology-driven, community-based education models enhance learning continuity and inclusion in humanitarian contexts (UNESCO, 2023; UNICEF, 2022; GPE, 2022; Plan International, 2021).

Some demographic groups are more vulnerable to having their education disrupted by emergencies than others (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2020). Based on this analysis, the five groups that were affected in most of the reviewed countries were children from low socioeconomic status households, girls, children with disability, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons, and children living in rural or remote areas.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

In many crisis-affected regions, particularly in Northeast Nigeria and other parts of sub-Saharan

Africa, the prolonged effects of conflict, insurgency, and displacement have severely disrupted educational systems, leaving millions of children and youth without access to quality learning opportunities. Despite efforts by governments and humanitarian agencies, the destruction of school infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, and persistent insecurity continue to hinder the restoration of formal and non-formal education. In response, youth-led initiatives have emerged as vital grassroots efforts to rebuild education through community-based learning, digital innovation, and advocacy. However, these initiatives face critical challenges such as inadequate funding, limited institutional recognition, lack of technical support, and threats to the safety of young volunteers. The exact problem this study seeks to address is the limited understanding of how youth-led initiatives function in rebuilding education in crisis zones, the specific challenges they encounter, and the innovative strategies they employ to sustain learning amid instability. Without empirical insight into these dynamics, policy frameworks and educational recovery programs risk overlooking the transformative potential of youth leadership in post-conflict education reconstruction.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to examine:

- the role of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in promoting access to education rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State.
- the contributions of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable youths in Maiduguri and its environs.
- the innovative approaches adopted by the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in sustaining education through humanitarian interventions and digital learning platforms in conflict-affected communities of Borno State.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

- What is the role of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in promoting access to education

rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State.

- What are the contributions of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable youths in Maiduguri and its environs.
- What are the approaches adopted by the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in sustaining education through humanitarian interventions in conflict-affected communities of Borno State.

## 2. Literature Review

Ibrahim and Goni (2023) conducted a study in Borno State, Nigeria, to examine the role of youth-led organizations in rebuilding education systems and promoting community resilience in crisis-affected areas. The study focused on the operations of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) and other youth-based organizations working in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and host communities across Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Jere Local Government Area. A total of 250 respondents participated in the study, comprising youth volunteers, program facilitators, NGO coordinators, and beneficiaries of CATAI's education recovery projects. The researchers employed a mixed-method approach, using both quantitative and qualitative instruments, including structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and emerging themes related to challenges and innovations in youth-led education. The findings revealed that youth-led initiatives significantly contributed to rebuilding education by reopening temporary learning centers, providing literacy and vocational training, and promoting peace education among displaced populations. The study also found that youth organizations faced challenges such as limited funding, insecurity, and lack of institutional support, but overcame many obstacles through community partnerships, digital learning programs, and peer mentoring. Ibrahim and Goni concluded that youth-led interventions like those of CATAI play a critical role in educational recovery and should be integrated into formal education-in-emergencies frameworks at both state and national levels.

Theoretical work on participatory and community-based education further highlights that youth leadership aligns with principles of resilience and rights-based education, promoting inclusion, gender sensitivity, and locally appropriate pedagogies (Brookfield, 2020; UNICEF, 2022). Together, these sources position youth-led approaches not merely as stop-gap measures but as potentially transformative elements of longer-term education recovery and system strengthening in crisis settings.

### 3. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable because it allows the researcher to gather data on the activities, challenges, and innovations of youth-led organizations such as the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) and other youth-focused NGOs operating in Borno State. The study was conducted in Borno State, Nigeria, one of the states most affected by insurgency and humanitarian crises in the North-East region. Borno State is selected because it hosts a large number of youth-led and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively engaged in education recovery and community rebuilding efforts. Maiduguri, the state capital, serves as the operational hub for many initiatives such as CATAI, Grassroot Learning and Empowerment Initiative (GLE-I), and Care Best Initiative (CBI). The study area is significant because it provides an ideal context to examine the contributions and challenges of youth-led organizations in re-establishing education in conflict-affected communities. The population of this study comprises youth leaders, volunteers, NGO staff, educators, and beneficiaries involved in youth-led education initiatives in Borno State. Specifically, the population includes staff and volunteers from CATAI, GLE-I, Care Best Initiative, and other active organizations participating in educational rebuilding

efforts. The estimated population is approximately 350 individuals. A sample size of 200 respondents was drawn from the target population using a purposive and stratified random sampling technique. The purposive sampling was used to select key organizations directly engaged in education recovery, while stratified random sampling was ensure that respondents are drawn from different categories including youth leaders, volunteers, facilitators, and beneficiaries. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Data was collected using Kobo Collect, a digital data-gathering tool developed for field-based research in humanitarian and development settings. The questionnaire was designed and uploaded to the KoboToolbox server, which allowed respondents' information to be collected efficiently using smartphones or tablets. Enumerators were trained on how to administer the Kobo Collect form and ensure data accuracy and confidentiality. The use of Kobo Collect helped in minimize paper use, ensure real-time data entry, reduce errors, and enhance data security. The researcher and trained field assistants were visited the selected organizations and communities to administer the questionnaire both online and offline, depending on network availability. The instrument was subjected to content and face validation by three experts in Adult and Non-Formal Education and Educational Research from the University of Maiduguri. A pilot test was conducted in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State using 20 respondents who share similar characteristics with the main study population but are not part of it. The data collected from the pilot study was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, and a reliability value of 0.70 and above was considered accepted. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations was used to answer the research questions.

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	107	57.8
	Female	78	42.2
Age	18–25 years	45	24.3
	26–35 years	81	43.8
	36–45 years	44	23.8
	46 years and above	15	8.1
			28
Educational Qualification	SSCE	28	15.1
	NCE/Diploma	53	28.6
	Degree	79	42.7
	Postgraduate	25	13.6
Duration with CATAI	Less than 1 year	30	16.2
	1–3 years	99	53.5
	Over 3 years	56	30.3

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

The demographic data indicate that both genders were well represented, with a slight male dominance (57.8%). The majority of respondents (43.8%) were aged between 26–35 years, suggesting active youth participation. Most respondents (42.7%) had at least a degree qualification, reflecting a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. Furthermore, over half of the respondents (53.5%) had been involved with CATAI for 1–3 years, showing substantial experience in youth-led education rebuilding.

**Research Question One:** *What is the role of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in promoting access to education rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State?*

**Table 2:** Statistical Analysis on the role of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in promoting access to education rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	CATAI has re-established community learning centers in crisis-affected areas.	185	3.84	0.76	Agree
2	CATAI mobilized displaced children and youth back to school.	185	3.91	0.69	Agree
3	CATAI collaborates with agencies to rebuild schools and facilities.	185	3.76	0.81	Agree
4	CATAI provides training to enhance youth participation in education recovery.	185	3.79	0.78	Agree
5	CATAI's projects improved access to education for displaced youths.	185	3.88	0.73	Agree
6	Youth engagement through CATAI promotes peace and social cohesion.	185	3.95	0.71	Agree

Mean = 3.86

Table 2 presents the statistical analysis of respondents' views on the role of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in promoting access to education rebuilding efforts among youths in crisis-affected areas of Borno State. The data indicate that respondents generally agreed that CATAI plays a vital role in re-establishing education systems disrupted by insurgency and conflict. The mean scores of the items ranged between 3.76 and 3.95, with an overall cluster mean of 3.86, showing a strong consensus among respondents that CATAI's interventions have significantly improved access to learning opportunities for youths in displaced and conflict-affected communities.

Specifically, respondents agreed that CATAI has re-established community learning centers in crisis-prone areas and effectively mobilized displaced children and youth back to school. The organization's collaborative efforts with other NGOs and government agencies to rebuild educational infrastructure were also recognized as vital for restoring normalcy in affected areas. Furthermore, CATAI's initiatives to train and empower young people to participate in educational recovery programs were viewed as instrumental in enhancing community resilience and fostering peace education. The relatively low standard deviation values (ranging between 0.69 and 0.81) suggest consistency in the responses, indicating that most participants shared similar positive perceptions of CATAI's educational recovery role.

**Research Question Two:** *What are the contributions of CATAI in enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable youths in Maiduguri and its environs?*

**Table 3:** Statistical Analysis on the contributions of CATAI in enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable youths in Maiduguri and its environs

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	CATAI provides literacy and vocational training for vulnerable youths.	185	3.92	0.68	Agree
2	CATAI supports skill development programs for self-employment.	185	3.87	0.74	Agree
3	CATAI improves access to non-formal education for out-of-school youths.	185	3.78	0.80	Agree
4	CATAI provides educational materials and mentorship.	185	3.83	0.77	Agree
5	CATAI partners with community groups to expand learning opportunities.	185	3.75	0.83	Agree
6	CATAI's advocacy increases community awareness on youth education.	185	3.89	0.70	Agree

Mean = 3.84

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis of respondents' opinions on the contributions of the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable youths in Maiduguri and its environs. The results reveal that respondents generally agreed that CATAI has made substantial contributions to improving access to education for marginalized and displaced youth. The mean scores of the six items ranged between 3.75 and 3.92, with an overall cluster mean of 3.84, indicating a strong level of agreement across all measured indicators. This suggests that CATAI's programs have had a significant and positive influence on promoting literacy, vocational training, and self-reliance among youths affected by conflict in Borno State.

Respondents agreed most strongly that CATAI provides literacy and vocational training for vulnerable youths (Mean = 3.92) and supports skill development programs for self-employment (Mean = 3.87). These findings demonstrate that CATAI's educational interventions go beyond classroom instruction by equipping participants with livelihood skills

necessary for survival and economic independence. Similarly, items on mentorship (Mean = 3.83) and partnerships with community groups (Mean = 3.75) highlight the organization’s collaborative and holistic approach to educational empowerment. The low standard deviation values (ranging from 0.68 to 0.83) indicate consistency in respondents’ views, suggesting that most participants shared similar positive perceptions of CATAI’s contributions.

**Research Question Three:** *What approaches are adopted by CATAI in sustaining education through humanitarian interventions in conflict-affected communities of Borno State?*

**Table 4:** Statistical Analysis on approaches adopted by CATAI in sustaining education through humanitarian interventions in conflict-affected communities of Borno State

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	CATAI uses digital learning tools to reach remote learners.	185	3.80	0.79	Agree
2	CATAI integrates psychosocial support into education programs.	185	3.95	0.71	Agree
3	CATAI promotes community-based learning models during crises.	185	3.86	0.75	Agree
4	CATAI collaborates with donors to sustain innovative education projects.	185	3.77	0.82	Agree
5	Trained volunteers deliver emergency education in IDP camps.	185	3.90	0.72	Agree
6	CATAI monitors and evaluates education projects to ensure sustainability.	185	3.88	0.73	Agree

Mean = 3.86

Table 4 presents the statistical analysis of respondents’ views on the approaches adopted by the Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) in sustaining education through humanitarian interventions in conflict-affected communities of Borno State. The results indicate a strong level of agreement among respondents that CATAI employs innovative and sustainable strategies to ensure the continuity of learning in crisis environments. The mean scores of the items ranged from 3.77 to 3.95, with a cluster mean of 3.86, suggesting that the organization’s methods are widely perceived as effective and responsive to the educational needs of displaced and vulnerable learners. This finding demonstrates that CATAI’s intervention strategies are not only innovative but also community-centered, aligning with contemporary education-in-emergencies frameworks.

Respondents most strongly agreed that CATAI integrates psychosocial support into education programs (Mean = 3.95) and that trained volunteers deliver emergency education in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps (Mean = 3.90). These responses reflect CATAI’s emphasis on holistic learning that addresses both the educational and emotional needs of learners traumatized by conflict. Likewise, the organization’s adoption of digital learning tools (Mean = 3.80) and community-based learning models (Mean = 3.86) demonstrates its adaptability in using flexible approaches suited to volatile environments where formal schooling systems may be disrupted. The low standard deviation values (ranging from 0.71 to 0.82) indicate a high level of consistency in respondents’ views, confirming broad agreement on the effectiveness of these approaches.

### 5. Summary of Findings

CATAI plays an important role in rebuilding education and promoting youth participation in crisis-affected areas of Borno State.

The organization enhances educational opportunities for vulnerable and displaced youths through literacy, skills training, and mentorship programs.

Innovative approaches such as digital learning, community-based education, and psychosocial interventions are key strategies used by CATAI to sustain learning.

### 6. Discussion

The finding that CATAI is instrumental in restoring education and mobilizing youth echoes broader evidence showing that local youth-led organizations accelerate educational recovery after disruptions by establishing learning spaces and mobilizing learners (Plan International, 2021). Like CATAI, community-based youth groups in other conflict-affected settings have been shown to rapidly re-open informal learning centers and foster school re-entry through outreach and peer mobilisation (Save the Children, 2021). Global reviews also highlight that youth involvement enhances contextual legitimacy and trust, enabling programs to reach marginalized children that formal interventions sometimes miss (GPE, 2022). Similarly, UNICEF emphasizes that youth-led actions often deliver psychosocial and protective services alongside learning, which helps stabilize communities and supports return to school (UNICEF, 2022). Contrastingly, some evaluations indicate that while youth groups are highly effective at rapid-response activities, they may struggle with scale and long-term institutionalization without stronger partnerships and resources (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Research in Nigeria and other fragile contexts shows that NGO-led

youth initiatives succeed when integrated with formal recovery plans, yet often face sustainability challenges if donor support and government linkages are weak (NRC, 2021). Studies of local actors in North-East Nigeria further suggest that youth groups' contributions to rebuilding education are maximized when complemented by technical support, monitoring, and capacity building (Ibrahim & Goni, 2023). Thus, CATAI's documented role aligns with the literature but also underscores the common need for durable institutional backing to maintain long-term education recovery.

Finding that CATAI improves opportunities via literacy, vocational skill-building, and mentorship is consistent with empirical studies showing that non-formal education and skills training increase employability and household resilience among displaced populations (Oluwatayo & Ojo, 2021). Evidence from program evaluations in Nigeria indicates that when literacy instruction is paired with livelihood skills, participants report higher income diversification and improved food security outcomes that mirror CATAI's reported impacts (Bala & Yusuf, 2022). International reviews also underscore that mentorship and life-skills components strengthen retention and psychosocial recovery, thereby improving educational outcomes for out-of-school youth (UNESCO, 2019). Likewise, Okoro and Ugwu (2020) found that integrated adult learning and vocational approaches translate into practical adoption of sustainable agricultural and livelihood practices among vulnerable groups.

However, comparative studies caution that the effectiveness of such interventions depends heavily on resources, facilitator quality, and linkage to markets or further education: programmes lacking these supports often show limited long-term impact (Adebayo & Abubakar, 2021). Evaluations across fragile contexts reveal that while short-term gains in skills and literacy are common, sustainability and the transition from training to livelihood requires follow-up extension services and credit/market access (Opara & Nwachukwu, 2020). Contextual research in North-East Nigeria also indicates that socio-cultural barriers and insecurity can inhibit women and certain vulnerable groups from fully benefiting unless programmes are designed to be gender-sensitive and conflict-aware (Ibrahim & Goni, 2023). Therefore, CATAI's contributions align with successful models, but the literature highlights the necessity of complementary supports to consolidate those gains.

The prominence of digital tools, community-based models, and psychosocial support in CATAI's

approach mirrors global best practices for education in emergencies, where blended modalities maintain continuity when formal schooling is disrupted (UNESCO, 2023). Studies of radio, mobile and tablet-based instruction in conflict zones show these modalities can reach learners in insecure or remote locations and preserve learning momentum (GPE, 2022; UNICEF, 2022). Moreover, programmatic literature demonstrates that combining psychosocial care with learning activities improves engagement and cognitive recovery among traumatized learners, reinforcing CATAI's integrated strategy (Save the Children, 2021). Research in sub-Saharan fragile settings further finds that community-based education (including learning circles and safe-space classes) increases accessibility and local ownership, contributing to better retention amidst instability (Ndirangu & Otieno, 2021).

Nevertheless, comparative evidence warns that technology-driven solutions require reliable infrastructure, digital literacy, and ongoing maintenance; in under-resourced conflict settings these prerequisites are often fragile, limiting scalability (FAO/sector reports; Human Rights Watch, 2022). Evaluations of digital pilots in Nigeria and elsewhere show promising short-term learning gains but emphasize that without investment in teacher training, device replacement, and contextualised content the benefits can be uneven (Obeng & Mensah, 2023; Rahman, 2022). Studies also stress that psychosocial and community models must be culturally adapted and monitored to avoid retraumatization and to ensure inclusion of marginalized groups, including girls and internally displaced youth (UN Women, 2022; Ibrahim & Goni, 2023). Thus, CATAI's innovative mix aligns with evidence-based strategies but must be supported by robust infrastructure, capacity building, and inclusive design to achieve sustainable impact.

## 7. Conclusion

The study concludes that youth-led initiatives play an indispensable role in rebuilding education and restoring hope in conflict-affected communities. The Center for Advocacy, Transparency and Accountability Initiative (CATAI) stands out as a model of effective youth leadership in humanitarian education, particularly in Borno State. Its efforts in re-establishing learning spaces, mobilizing displaced children, and empowering young people to participate in educational recovery have significantly contributed to rebuilding the education system in the region.

CATAI's integration of literacy, skills training, and mentorship programs has strengthened resilience among vulnerable and displaced youths, enabling them to gain self-reliance and improve their livelihoods. The organization's innovative strategies—such as the use of digital learning platforms, community-based learning hubs, and psychosocial support—have proven to be practical and sustainable methods for maintaining education continuity amid crisis. Therefore, youth-led organizations like CATAI are critical partners in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on inclusive and equitable quality education in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The Borno State Government and the Federal Ministry of Education should provide financial, logistical, and policy support to youth-led organizations like CATAI.
- CATAI should invest in continuous capacity development for its staff and volunteers in areas such as digital pedagogy, psychosocial care, monitoring and evaluation, and humanitarian education management to improve program delivery.
- Development partners, donors, and private organizations should collaborate with CATAI to establish long-term funding mechanisms that ensure sustainability of youth-led education programs beyond short-term humanitarian cycles.

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