

Islamic Philanthropy as a Mechanism to Improve Agricultural Products and Sustenance in Refugees Camps in the Sub-Region of Lake Chad Basin

Muhammad Auwal Sulaiman

School of General Studies, Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Wuntin Dada, Jos Road, Bauchi, Nigeria

Corresponding Author E-mail: abufatima25@yahoo.com

Abstract

Insecurity of crossing Lake Chad Basin and Northeast Nigeria has seriously affected activities of farming, fishing, and other agricultural programs in the region. The lake provides water for irrigation, fishing activities, water for cattle, and water transportation across four counties that share the lake. The paper has discovered that many communities have abandoned their agricultural activities and relocated to IDPs for their safety of life. As a result, the affected communities increasingly suffer from great loss, unemployment, and poverty. Using the descriptive and analytical method, this study discussed the socioeconomic role of Islamic philanthropy in funding the agricultural sector to restore sources of livelihood of the refugee camps in Northeast Nigeria. Philanthropy, known as *waqf*, is a voluntary charity in terms of land and property. Moreover, philanthropy is a strong instrument to reduce various burdens of life. Meanwhile, this study recommends a design to reach the targeted communities.

Key Words: Philanthropy, Agricultural Products, Sustenance, Challenges, Lake Chad

INTRODUCTION

UNDP doctrine states that individuals and institutions must become allies with a common goal of increasing the chances of life for present and future generations (Nations et al., 1994). On the other hand, SDG UN No. 3 advocates good health, individual health, and environmental well-being. To complement the idea of UN SDG number 3, the *waqf* institution can be an additional way to fund the community's socio-economic problems applied to address issues, such as poverty, overcome challenges of the high cost of living, and promote scarcity of agricultural products. Islam is very concerned about human welfare as mentioned in the Qur'an.

“And in their wealth (there are portions determined to be given) to the poor who beg, and the poor yet who refrain (from begging)” (Qur'an 51:19).

It is known that the activities of insurgency in Northeast Nigeria raise many refugee camps. These new settlements are in need of basic foods, clean water, livestock, and other related agricultural products. To support the government's effort in these critical situations, Islamic philanthropy (*waqf*) as an Islamic social fund can be considered an important source to overcome some identified problems (Raji, Adekayaoja, Agaku, Akujobi, & Hamzat, 2021; Umar, Abideen, & Yusuf, 2018). This research provides many new perspectives from previous research (Abubakar, 2019; Muhammad, 2019; Obaidullah & Manap, 2017), especially in outlining strategies for the government and society to solve the occurring social problems, such as poverty that occurred in the Sub-Regional Refugee Camp in Lake Chad Basin.

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RESEARCH METHOD

Using descriptive and analytical methods (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018), this study examined the socio-economic role of Islamic philanthropy in funding the agricultural sector to restore the livelihoods of refugees in Northeast Nigeria. Islamic philanthropy (*waqf*) is a voluntary charity in the form of land and property and can powerfully reduce various burdens of life. The research started by explaining the definition of (*waqf*), the history of *waqf*, *waqf* institutions, refugee camps in Lake Chad Basin, application of *waqf* to improve agricultural products, challenges in agricultural sectors faced by the refugees in Lake Chad Basin, place of *waqf* as a scheme in Nigerian legal systems, and the establishment of *waqf* to improve the food and agriculture of internally displaced people (IDPs).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Waqf

Islam considers charity (*waqf*) as a spiritual gift (Ambrose, Aslam, & Hanafi, 2015; Kahf, 2016). *Waqf* refers to a private asset or private property that is prohibited from being sold, inherited, or other undergone types of transactions (Masruki & Shafii, 2013). One of the charitable deeds established by Islam on a voluntary basis since the time of the Prophet Muhammad is *waqf*. The word 'waqafa' is derived from an Arabic root verb that means 'detention, confinement, prohibition,' or 'forcing something to stop or stand still' (Nahar & Yaacob, 2011). Abu-Hanifah officially defines *waqf* as the retention of a particular thing under the founder's ownership and the dedication of *waqf's* income for beneficial causes (Ibrahim et al., 2013). *Waqf* has additionally demonstrated its effectiveness as a potent tool to ease different difficulties of life, both in economic and social aspects. Furthermore, *waqf* has helped a lot of ill and underprivileged individuals in many different places. Its *shadaqah jariyah* contains a voluntary charity (Abdullah, 2020). *Ijtima'iyah*, or the act of worship performed for the benefit of others out of devotion to Allah, is another name for one of the Islamic commandments pertaining to people's daily life (Rusydziana & Devi, 2018).

History of *Waqf*

Waqf can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and it is well-known in Muslims countries. However, layman perceives that *waqf* is a form of charity in the form of land and property (Brahim & Ibrahim, 2013). Meanwhile, the *waqf* institutions once flourished in Nigeria during the defunct Sokoto Caliphate and were founded by Usman Dan Fodio in 1817 (W. M. Ahmad, 2010). Although *waqf* practices faced many challenges over the decades due to colonial interruption, North Nigeria followed the Zamfara State to implement Shariah and Endowment Board Law 2000, the first law on zakat and *waqf*. These actions were conducted at the end of colonial authority when there were fresh efforts to convert the zakat council into a commission. Other North Nigerian states were impacted by this progress (Philip, 2007). This development has become necessary because *waqf* practices among Muslims in every society are pivotal. *Waqf* has helped and devolved the status of the poor and needy in society (Singer, 2013).

On 29 May 1999, Nigeria resumed democratic rules, which introduce Shariah (the Islamic legal system) in many North Nigerian states. 12 states, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara, have adopted the Shariah legal system. Moreover, they have established important arrangements and institutions, such as Shariah commissions, da'awah committees, the Hisbah groups, and *zakat* (endowment) and *waqf* bodies (Abubakar, 2019).

The Institution of *Waqf*

The Holy Quran urges Muslims to give charity but does not define *waqf* specifically or make any specific references to it. Allah has promised individuals who freely spend their riches in His way with numerous rewards (Lawal, 2019). This is supported by the following verse.

“They ask you what they should spend. Say: Whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and *al-masakin* and the wayfarer and whatever you do of good deeds, truly Allah knows it well (Q2:215)”.

Similarly, other verses Q2: 254, 270, and 280 explain the above condition. Meanwhile, a hadith clarifies it. Abu Hurairah reports Allah’s messenger saying as follows.

“that all of a man's deeds cease with his death, with the exception of three: recurrent charity, knowledge (from which people get benefit), and a devout child who prays for him.” Sahih Muslim 1631, No.20.

However, since non-Muslims also practice *waqf* during the Ottoman period, the idea of *waqf* is not wholly new for non-Muslims (Shaham, 1991 in Lawal, 2019), The necessity of generosity has been emphasized in several Bible texts, including Hebrew 13:16, Proverbs 19:17, and II Corinthians 9:7 (Lawal, 2019). Based on this justification, this study concludes that *waqf* is acceptable for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the Islamic social order, *waqf* is regarded as an essential institution (Lamido & Haneef, 2021), can effectively leverage the potential of selfless altruism and give greater economic impact to the targeted social sectors of the society. According to Shaikh et al. (2017), A moveable or immovable asset has been donated and dedicated under *waqf* for the long-term to create societal good. The usufruct and/or income are permanently enjoyed by the recipients. *Waqf* can be established in the modern sense by pledging real estates, furnishings, other movable property, and other types of liquid wealth, such as cash and stock. It is customary for an owner to give and dedicate a property—movable or immovable—for the ongoing good of society. The usufruct and/or income are permanently enjoyed by the recipients. *Waqf* can be established in the modern sense by donating farm products, real estate, libraries, furniture, fixtures, other moveable goods, and liquid assets, such as cash and stocks.

Waqf, an organization dedicated to Islamic philanthropy, can be utilized to offer a variety of welfare services to Muslims, non-Muslims, and other living things (Ambrose et al., 2015). For instance, *waqf* can be used more flexibly to fund expenses for famine relief, animal protection, and environmental preservation. *Waqf* institutions can create social and public infrastructure out of social capital. Meanwhile, perpetual *waqf* offers the beneficiaries with a long-term social safety net.

A *waqf* institution, where non-Muslims predominate and governments are largely secular and uninterested in funding religious infrastructure like mosques, is an interesting source for Muslims in Europe, America, and Australia to expand their religious infrastructure. Muslims can use public facilities, such as hospitals and schools created by the government for all inhabitants. However, they are unable to share their infrastructure with non-Muslims; in such secular nations, the government is unlikely to pay attention to the religious demands of the minority of the Muslim population (Shaikh et al., 2017). Scholars also emphasize the significance of competent management and transparent administration of *waqf* to create effective results and transform *waqf* into an institution (Haneef, Pramanik, Mohammed, Amin, & Muhammad, 2015).

The Refugee Camps in Lake Chad Basin

Displaced people are those who have been forced to relocate in search of a safer and better quality of life. They include refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). In contrast, refugees refer to victims of political violence who have traveled across international borders in search of safety in another country. Meanwhile, internally displaced persons (IDPs) are citizens of a country who have lost their homes, properties, or sources of livelihood as a result of the local insurgency and have sought refuge in other parts of the country (Baqtayan & Mahdzir, 2018).

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement define displacement as being forced or required to flee or leave one's home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters (The UN Refugee Agency, 1998)

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) is made up of four nations and is home to ethnic groups from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The region's residents share a language, culture, and history. Religious extremists, poverty, and a lack of basic amenities in North Nigeria have contributed to the rise of Boko Haram and its spread into neighboring countries. The LCB's borders are poorly manned, and all governments' efforts to restore peace and provide meaningful developments have failed. In recent years, the region has become a battleground for the insurgency of Boko Haram, which begins in Nigeria (Agbiboa, 2013; Ayoola & Segun-Olufemi, 2022).

People have been relocated from Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States as a result of the Boko Haram sect's actions in Northeast Nigeria. Consequently, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has increased. According to a report, women and children make up the majority of those who have fled Lake Chad Region (Hoinathy & Tayo, 2022).

"The number of IDPs in Nigeria has increased considerably. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that the number of IDPs from the three most affected States of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa has steadily risen. For instance, IDPs rose to 100,000 people from 2009 to 2010, 130,000 people from 2010 to 2011, 200,000 people from 2011 to 2012, and 290,000 people from 2012 to 2013. Between May and December 2014, the number of IDPs from the region drastically rose to over 600,000 (UNOCHA, 2014). This number consists of 1.6 million IDPs in Maiduguri (the 'safest' part of Borno State), 144,000 IDPs in Yobe State, 135,000 IDPs in Yola of Adamawa State, 44,800 refugees in Cameroon, 15,000 refugees in Chad, and 105,000 refugees in Niger (Abbani, 2021).

The trends from the six states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe) record that 1,948,349 people have been displaced in January 2019, and most of them are affected by the Boko Haram insurgency (Abbani, 2021).

Application of *Waqf* to Improve Agricultural Products

Waqf is a unique category of charitable act that lasts forever. It entails giving away a fixed asset that potentially generates income or offers benefits (Abdur-Rashid, 2021). Specific beneficiary categories are then served by the created revenue or benefit. Muslims who give *waqf* frequently do not intend to recoup the value they receive from the property, building, or money they donate. The donated assets may be kept in a charitable trust. A cash *waqf* can be established by a *waqf* to raise money. This implies that the value of the *waqf* fund is used to create a lending portfolio based on Islamic principles.

Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him demonstrates that *waqf* is an ongoing charity because the beneficiary does not own the *waqf* assets and cannot dispose of them accordingly. Moreover, during the time of the Prophet, Umar is reported to donate his piece of land in Khaybar as *waqf* upon the advice of the Prophet. Consequently, the harvest and profits of this land are then donated to the poor and the needy. Another striking example of an ancient *waqf* was Uthman, who is popularly known as *Bir-Rumah* in Medinah (Shaikh et al., 2017). Once, Medina suffered from a serious drought and scarcity of water. Meanwhile, a well belonging to a Jew seems to be the only well available with a sufficient quantity of water in it. This Jew sold the water at a considerably high price. Then, the Prophet assured paradise to those who will buy the well and endow it to the people of Madina. Uthman bought this well, paid a huge sum, and donated the well as a *waqf* to the entire community.

The idea of *waqf* essentially implies Islam's recognition of the non-profit sector. *Waqf* is meant to operate independently from private and government-regulated sectors. Muslim societies in the past relied heavily on *waqf* assets to develop their economic sectors.

Challenges in Agricultural Sectors Faced by Refugees in Lake Chad Basin

The Agriculture Food Organization of the United Nations (2017) reports that 6.9 million people experienced food insecurity during the lean season from June–August 2017. 80–90% of the population relies on agriculture, fishing, and cattle as their source of income. There are 2.4 million displaced individuals. The conflict in the Lake Chad Basin has become worse over the past few years because Boko Haram attacks civilians and do suicide bombings that targeted them. These attacks caused widespread trauma, drove millions of people from their homes, disabled people to access their fields, and destroyed crucial infrastructure and services. The violence has driven millions of people to be displaced from their homes across four nations surrounding Lake Chad Basin, such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. In addition to the continued cross-border violence, a significant influx of Nigerians has arrived in border regions of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, placing the vulnerable host communities under tremendous pressure. As a result, the restoration and safeguarding of food production and livelihoods in host communities are urgently needed. Humanitarian access to some places where food security and nutrition are at risk has been hampered by insecurity. However, in recent months, a sizable area has been accessible for humanitarian aid and provided an opportunity to step up actions in the region (Food Organization of United Nations Agriculture, 2017). The Food Organization of United Nations Agriculture (2017) proposes six challenges.

1. Seriously reduced access to farming activities has sharply increased food insecurity in the affected areas.
2. Most of the displaced people rely on the scarce resources of host communities to fulfill their basic needs, including food.
3. Host families' and other crisis-affected households' inability to use their land due to fear of attacks has removed their productive assets, decreased incomes, and created food shortages.
4. Inflation has excessively escalated crop prices. Transhumance migrations and international livestock trade have been hampered by insecurity and mobility restrictions. Large-scale disruptions in local agricultural systems have damaged farming and irrigation infrastructure as well as decreased access to extension services.
5. It is anticipated that more people would return, and the need to reestablish better lives and resuscitate the agricultural industry will increase.

6. The crisis has worsened the condition of vulnerable farmers who have been exposed to natural disasters, such as recurrent floods and droughts, over the past ten years. The concentration of herds as a result of altered transhumance flows is severely taxing pastoral resources and may endanger animal health. Following the pastoral lean season, the health of cattle should receive special attention.

The Place of *Waqf* as a Scheme in Nigerian Legal Systems

Nigerian Constitution specifically recognizes Islamic law as an independent source or part of Nigerian law; Islamic law has a separate administration of its justice systems (Oba, 2002). More strongly, Islamic law has been widely recognized, and its subjects which the court may be invited to adjudicate upon are also inestimable. The Constitution has specially recognized some aspects of Islamic law empowered by the court to exercise jurisdiction. These conditions are termed Islamic Personal Law. As *waqf* is expressly listed as an Islamic personal law in the Constitution, the law confers constitutional legality on *waqf* in the country (Ishola, 2019). The aforementioned condition bases *waqf* in the Nigerian Legal system.

Waqf is established as a subject of Islamic personal law within the constitutional framework; therefore, there would always be persons versed in the field of *waqf* among the Justices in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal in the country. This constitutional recognition significantly creates an impressive legal basis for *waqf* in the nation (Ishola, 2019). The permissibility of *waqf* by the Māliki School gives *waqf* all the necessary legal backing and strengthens the legal basis for the scheme in the nation (Ishola, 2019).

In other words, since the Māliki School is the official school of thought (*madhhab*) in Nigeria, and the school approves *waqf* as a legal scheme. As a result, *waqf* is legally founded in the country. Moreover, the provisions of the constitution on Islamic personal law are interpreted according to the views of the Māliki School.

Establishment of *Waqf* to Improve the Food and Agriculture of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The goal of *waqf* is to support the less fortunate members of society, including the underprivileged, the needy, orphans, widows, travelers, and students. Additionally, *waqf* aims to raise their standard of living, financial situations, health, and educational levels; thus, their actual living and merely existing can be distinguished (Alaro & Alalubosa, 2018). Similarly, Sadeq (2002) argues that *waqf* successfully creates income-generating enterprises suitably handled by disabled individuals, single moms, uneducated workers, and unskilled workers. These people will greatly benefit from income-generating activities because they could have trouble finding other work (M. Ahmad, 2019).

Mustapha & Muneeza (2020) suggest five points to effectively establish *waqf* institutions.

1. *Waqf* institutions must be revived to properly fulfill their goals and serve their purposes in the 21st century. To make *waqf* mostly beneficial, it is necessary to assess the administrative and organizational structure of *waqf* institutions.
2. Cash *waqf* should be encouraged because it potentially and significantly plays a role by sponsoring education and financing small-medium enterprises.
3. *Waqf* property administration should be improved. In carrying out their responsibilities and managing the *waqf* property, the supervisors (*Mutawalli Nazir* or *Qayyim*) must be pious and trustworthy. Moreover, the coadministration should have clear guidelines about where, how, and

at what rate *Awqaf Mutawallis* should invest the funds and manage the invested funds. Moreover, the guidelines should clearly describe the integrity of the Mutawallis.

4. Scholars should educate the public and launch campaigns on *waqf* to persuade Muslim business owners to donate a portion of their profits to the needy. As a result, they will gain Allah's favor, and their bonds with the underprivileged will be strong. There is a lot of room for advocacy to gather support from the public and private sectors to comprehend the functions and benefits of *waqf*. Thus, urgent challenges of social security and cohesiveness can be solved. The clergy, members of civil society, and religious groups can all take on this responsibility.
5. To prevent unauthorized occupation and theft of *waqf* property, there should be a body that charges proper and ongoing oversight of the *waqf* property and describes how the Nazir manages it.

A country with a majority of Muslims should also have a Ministry of *Awqaf* to oversee the administration of *waqf* donations.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempts to highlight the relevance of *awqaf* to promote food and agriculture in the refugee camps so that each household will benefit from a *waqf* program scheme. In particular, this paper attempts to explore the potential of *awqaf* to improve the food security and nutrition of IDPs and the need of improving the quality of life in refugees' camps. The scheme will supplement the government effort to minimize the shortage of healthcare facilities in the camps.

Waqf should support IDPs during the current rainy season by providing cereal seeds, fertilizers, as well as small-scale livelihood starter kits. Cash *waqf* could be founded by trade associations and/or merchants, and government workers should donate one percent of their income. This policy would bust the project. The government should recognize the use of *awqaf* funds in public budgets to regulate and provide philanthropists by enabling legal frameworks, such as tax exemptions. As a result, donations to *awqaf* can be encouraged. The poor's participation in civil society organizations, as the third sector, should be strengthened and involved in poverty alleviation programs. There should be Muslims who can effectively run non-governmental organizations, such as *awqaf*, as well as men and women who are trustworthy and knowledgeable. The government must create well-functioning political institutions to empower the poor, overcome social forces, and develop institutions that are largely responsible for their poverty.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muhammad Auwal Sulaiman Ph.D. was born on 15 July 1973 in the local government area of Bauchi State, Nigeria. He earned a Diploma in Sharī'ah & Civil Law from the College for Legal and Islamic Studies in Misau in 1993, a B.A. degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Maiduguri-Nigeria in 2005, and a M.A. degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Jos-Nigeria in 2011. He passed the one-year induction course for a Professional Diploma in Education from Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi in 2013. Auwal obtained a Ph.D. degree in Islamic Studies from Nasarawa State University, Keffi in 2020. Subsequently, He participated in several courses and obtained certificates and skills in information and technology. In addition to his academic qualifications, He is a registered member of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, a full-time member of the Nigerian Qur'ānic Society (NQS), and the Nageria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS).