



REPORT ON dRPC'S VISIT TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND POVERTY REDUCTION, PROF. NENTAWÉ YILWADA

Date of Visit: May 29, 2025 | Location: Minister's Conference Room

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Introduction

On May 29, 2025, the development Research and Project Center (dRPC) team had the privilege of meeting with the Honourable Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Prof. Nentawe Yilwada. The meeting aimed to disseminate the research outputs discuss collaborative efforts between the ministry and civil society in addressing poverty and implementing effective humanitarian strategies nationwide.

Minister's Opening Remarks

The Minister began the meeting by welcoming the dRPC team and expressing his gratitude for their willingness to respond promptly to his plea for collaboration. He emphasized the importance of partnerships with civil society organizations, highlighting their role in enhancing the effectiveness of governmental efforts in humanitarian affairs.

Prof. Yilwada outlined his priorities since assuming office last year, particularly validating the data related to the nationwide capturing of poor households. He acknowledged the skepticism surrounding the accuracy of the collected data and expressed his determination to investigate and verify the claims empirically. In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the ministry initiated a thorough verification process in late 2024 aimed at ensuring the authenticity of the identified poor households across the country. From this empirical investigation, the minister reported that 96% of the captured households were confirmed as real and accessible. This validation enabled the ministry to commence efficient disbursement of conditional cash transfers to these households. He contrasted this achievement with the previous eight years, during which only a limited number of recipients had received assistance, pointing out that substantial progress had been made within just six months, largely due to collaborating with the National Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) banking clearinghouse, which maintains comprehensive data on account holders.

The minister also informed the team about the innovative geo-tagging initiatives aimed at assessing poverty status based on household bank transactions and communication patterns. This approach allowed the ministry to identify populations that were truly impoverished, characterized by minimal bank transactions and sparse phone communication.



dRPC Team's Presentation

In response to the minister's remarks, the dRPC team provided an array of documents detailing their findings and studies conducted over the past year. The first document showcased a comparative study on the efficacy of donor fund utilization between international NGOs and local NGOs. Dr. Walker highlighted that the findings revealed a higher effectiveness of fund utilization when directed towards local organizations compared to international counterparts.

Dr. Walker then introduced a body of research developed in partnership with the **Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN)** under the **BASIC (Better Assistance in Crises)** initiative. This project explores how complex and overlapping crises armed conflict, displacement, climate shocks, economic instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic affect poverty dynamics in Nigeria. It also examines how social assistance can help mitigate these impacts, using both quantitative data and the lived experiences of affected communities.

Since 2023, the BASIC/CPAN collaboration has produced a series of knowledge products to inform more inclusive and resilient social protection policy. These include:

Issue Brief

- *Social Assistance Programs in Nigeria Before, During and After Covid-19 Pandemic: A Stakeholders' Perspective for Inclusive Delivery*

Policy Briefs

- *Beyond Social Protection: Growth from Below in Nigeria*
- *Social Assistance and Poverty Reduction in the Context of Multiple Crises*

Political Economy Analysis

- *Social Assistance to Mitigate the Poverty Impact of Fiscal and Monetary Policy Shocks in Nigeria*

Research Briefs

- *Poverty Dynamics and Social Protection Amidst Complex Crises in Nigeria*
- *Poverty Dynamics and Social Protection Amidst Complex Crises in Borno, Anambra, Jigawa, Benue, Akwa Ibom, and Ekiti States*

These outputs contribute timely and context-sensitive evidence to strengthen poverty reduction programming in fragile settings. All products were shared with the Honourable Minister as part of dRPC's broader commitment to supporting data-driven, locally grounded humanitarian and poverty alleviation efforts.

One standout study under the BASIC initiative explored how individuals in each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones perceive poverty and upward mobility. The findings highlighted significant regional differences in aspirations and constraints. For example, in the conflict-affected North East, aspirations were shaped by insecurity and displacement, whereas in the more stable South West, economic opportunity played a more dominant role.

Building on this, the dRPC team emphasized that poverty alleviation must go beyond monetary assistance. They echoed the Minister's earlier observation that small cash transfers may not be impactful especially if household decision-making affects how funds are used. Ensuring that social protection reaches its intended purpose requires more nuanced program design.

Finally, the team touched upon the issue of sustainability in humanitarian interventions, emphasizing their capability to provide qualitative data that complements the quantitatively focused data the ministry has been utilizing. This qualitative approach would better inform policies and interventions tailored to the nuanced realities of impoverished households.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to foster collaboration between the ministry and dRPC. Both parties highlighted the need for ongoing dialogue to explore further avenues for cooperation, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian strategies and ensure that assistance reaches those who need it most.

The dRPC looks forward to supporting the ministry's efforts with qualitative research that can provide deeper insights into the complexities of poverty in Nigeria, as well as the development of more effective and sustainable humanitarian support mechanisms.