

# RIJE

## COMMUNITY

### KUJE AREA COUNCIL

### CHARTER OF DEMAND







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# Introduction

**I**N THE OVER THIRTY (30) YEARS OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT) EXISTENCE A LOT OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS HAS TAKEN PLACE, HOWEVER THESE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATED WITHIN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL CITY (FCC), WITH LITTLE APPRECIABLE DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS MANY SUBURBS AND AREA COUNCILS.

The Area Councils just like every other local government area in Nigeria are created to bring good governance to the people, allow democratic participation of local citizens in governance. The area councils are expected to effectively mobilize resources for the meaningful development of their jurisdiction in a manner that promotes sustainable wealth creation and the overall improvement of the lives of the people.

Though the service delivery role played by area councils cannot be downplayed, the pace of development within the area councils and citizen's outcry suggests that a lot still needs to be done. In many of the Area councils there is little to show for the years of local governance presence in terms of physical development apart from bad road network, the persistent problem of water shortage, poor rural electrification, health, education and lack of social amenities among others are the challenges faced by citizens living within the area councils.





# Declaration

**T**he Community Charter of Demand for Rije community is a collection of the people's voices and aspiration for the growth and development of their community, this effort is supported by HipCity Innovation with funding from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation-Nigeria.

The Rije community charter of demand reflects their concerns in its entirety and serves as an accountability tool, which the people of Rije will use to engage their elected representatives and all concerned development partners.

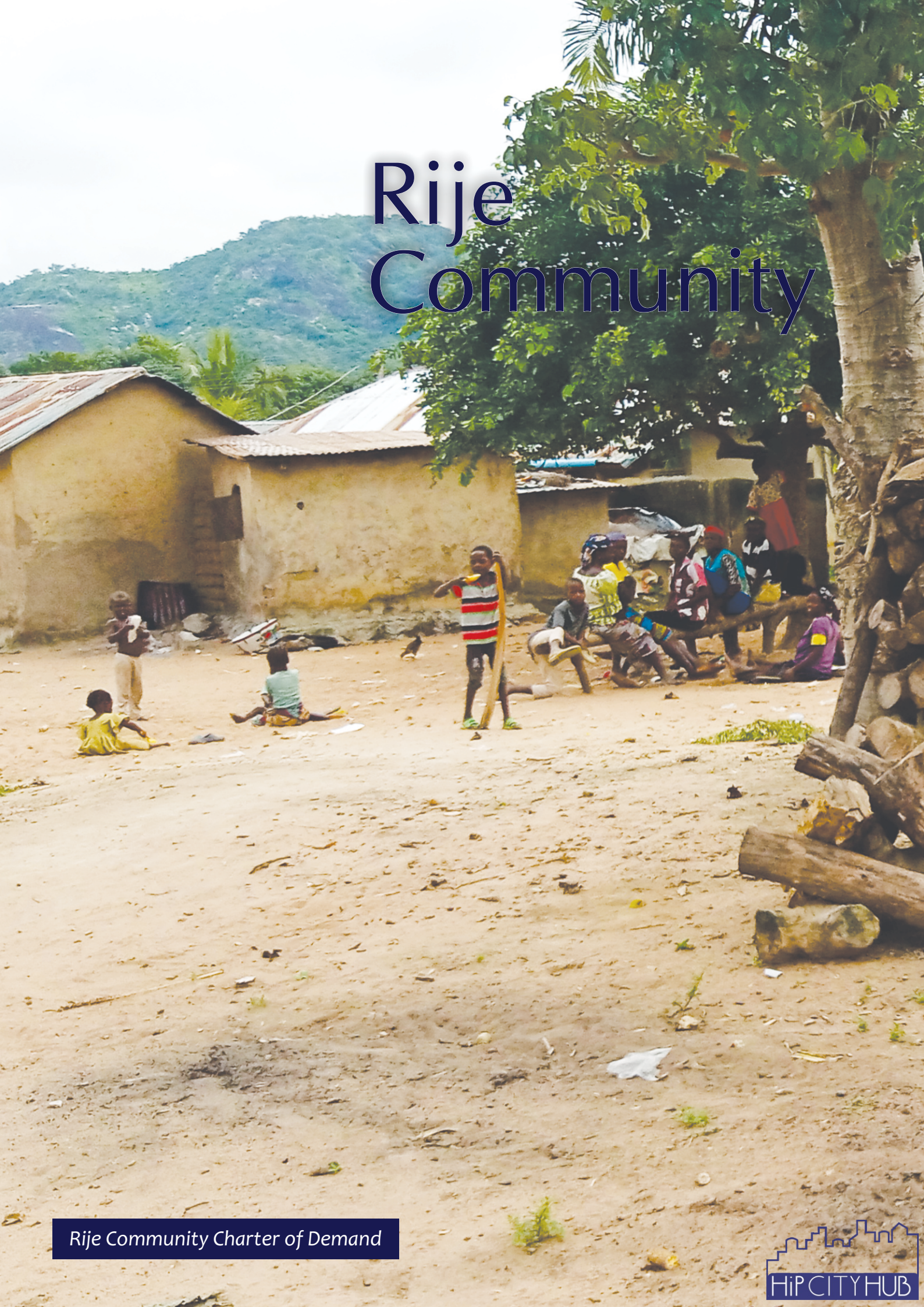


*the people of  
Rije Community,  
Kuje, Abuja*





# Rije Community





# Background

**R**ije is one of the local communities located in Kuje Area Council and has been in existence for over 50 years way before the geographical space known as the Federal Capital Territory became Nigeria's capital.

Rije translates as “sewn clothes” in Gbayi, history has it that the earliest people of Rije were into hand-made fashion designing and they were referred to as Rije community. The community is led by a leader called “Osu” who is assisted by the Madaki (assistant chief), Alkali, Nyaka-nyakayi (Council secretary).

Rije is a gbayi community but also has infiltrations from other ethnic groups like the Bassa, Bashama, igbos who have lived with them for over 20 years harmoniously without strife or rancor.

The population size of Rije is about 600 people; The low human density in Rije is attributable to the migration of the people to neighbouring communities following the forceful takeover of their ancestral land by the government and onward allocation of this lands to wealthy individuals. In the neighboring communities of Dafara, Kwiyzhi, Bamishi, indigenes of Rije are scattered amongst them, while others have migrated to the city centre in search of greener pasture.

The people of Rije are predominantly farmers and the incessant land grabbing by the area council is driving many into poverty with women and children suffering the most.

The community is greatly underserved and marginalized as they cannot boast of any government project that is targeted towards lifting them out of poverty. The people are without electricity even when transmission lines passes through their community transmitting high current of electricity to the neighboring farms and one of the ivy-league school in Abuja “Capital Science Academy” that shares boundary with the community.

According to Mr Ibrahim Atakunya the Village head of Rije ***“politicians will surmount every obstacle to access the community during the election campaign in order to solicit for votes but immediately after the elections, they are immediately forgotten and all promises made are never fulfilled”.***

**Population:** Over 600 people



**Average Household Size:** 70



**Ward:** Gaube

**Area Council:** Kuje

# Common Agricultural activities of the people of Rije:

**C**rop Plants- Rice, Beans, Melon, Soya Beans, Groundnut, Sesame seeds, Millet, Tomatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Garden-egg, Animal Husbandry (Cow, Goat, Chicken, Turkey, and Dog).

The people of Rije are small holder farmers who only farm in small scale due to unavailability of land and little income to purchase agricultural input. Thus, majority of them are subsistence farmers with harvest only enough to feed their families and very little to sell at the market for extra income to meet other pressing needs.

We the people of Rije are Nigerians who every 4 years demonstrate faith in the Nigerian state through elections and have in several ways contributed to national development have on these days 11th to 13th August with the support of Hip City Innovation Centre itemized and prioritize our social and infrastructural needs and come up with possible actionable solutions, we call on the Kuje Area Council, Council of Gaube Ward and other stakeholders to play their part in actualizing our demands.





A group of approximately 15 men are seated in a room with yellow walls and a corrugated metal roof. They are all wearing light blue surgical face masks. The men are dressed in various casual and traditional attire, including t-shirts, button-down shirts, and traditional robes. Some are wearing headwraps. They are seated on white plastic chairs, arranged in rows. The room has several windows and a doorway, with natural light coming in from the right. A dark blue banner with white text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

# LOCAL SOLUTION LAB

Rije Community Charter of Demand



# Local Solution Lab

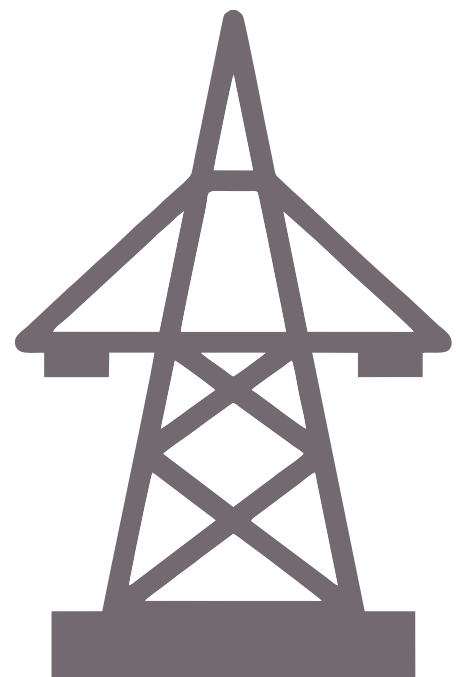
During the local solution lab, the following were identified:

## **INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEM**

- **Poor Access Road:** As an agrarian community, the importance of having a well tarred access road cannot be overemphasized and to the people of Rije, the lack of one is a problem. This is because, well paved roads allow for the easy transportation of farm produce to the market and the state of the road especially during rainy seasons have caused them to incur more losses than gains from their farm produce. The poor condition of the road is also a contributing factor to the little development that exists in the community. The unpaved road that currently leads to the community is narrow and this is because most of the lands around the community have either been grabbed or sold by the government. Most of these lands have been turned to commercial farms which sometimes extend their fences to the road leaving little space for mobility.



- **Electricity:** In the same way access roads make for developed and economically buoyant communities, electricity also plays an important part in such growth but unfortunately, in its over 50 years of existing within the Federal Capital Territory, Rije community still lacks electricity despite having electricity distribution polls installed in the community since 2003 without a transformer. These distribution poles pass through the community to Capital Science Academy, Kabbi, one of the farmlands in Rije. There is a waste to energy (Biomass) plant donated to the community by the United States of America Development Fund (USADF) in 2016. However, the biomass has not served the community to installed capacity, as the people do not generate enough waste to power the plant and the surrounding poultry farms rather sell off their animal waste to bigger farms who purchase at a higher price than what the community people can afford.



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)





Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

- **Primary Health Care (PHC):** As the popular saying goes, “Health is Wealth”, and the health of a people goes a long way to determine their productivity and output. There is no primary health care centre in Rije community and the people have to go all the way to Kwiyzhi or Dafara—a neighboring communities to access medic-care. The long distance to accessing medicare has led to several deaths and complications to pregnant women who have to endure the tormentous ride on motor-bikes during labor.



- **WATER:** Water scarcity is a constant nightmare for the people especially during dry seasons where the streams around the community gets dried. Women and girls can only manage a bath once in two days as they would rather conserve water bought from neighboring Dafara junction for drinking and cooking. There are a few failed water projects in the community. Senator Philip Aduda's water project in the Community only served for a few months and stopped functioning. The community have contributed money to fix and service the water machines in the past, but the machines have since failed and it has been abandoned. The only functional borehole is the one drilled by a Turkish Muslim philanthropist group, however this borehole can barely pump up to 100 litres of water into the water tank. The water poverty in Rije disproportionately affects women and children more as they use more water and the burden of water collection is their responsibility. Due to the inadequacy of the only functional borehole the community dwellers resort to open streams which are contaminated as the people wash, bath and drink from the same source making them vulnerable to health challenges like diarrhea and other water related diseases.

- **Toilet Facility:** In Rije most of the households do not have toilet facility and there is no public toilet facility except for one at the Biomass plant which is far away from the community so no one uses it; this has led to high level of open defecation in the community, during rainy period surface runoff washes away these faeces into the open stream and they people in turn ingest the water directly without any form of purification.

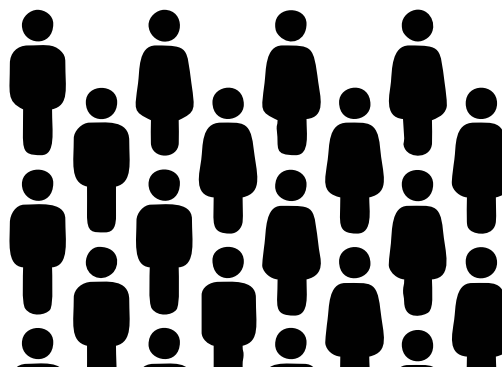


- **Education:** Access to education is a human right universally and in Nigeria, however the parents complain that their children are still compelled to pay several levies which appears as a back approach to collection of tuition fees even though the UBE Act guarantees free education for all Nigerian children up to junior secondary school. Though Rije community is a small community, the people are excited to send their children to school to acquire education but then again these school children have to trek over 12 kilometres daily on foot to school and back as the closest school accessible to them is at Kwizyi and Dafara.





# Social Problems



## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

**Rural-Urban Migration:** Despite being a small community that has been in existence for over 50 years, the people of Rije often migrate to neighboring communities like Kwiizhi, Bamishi, Dafara, Kuje town, federal capital city in search of better living options and farm land as their land have been forcefully taken by government..

**Unemployment:** There is high rate of unemployment in Rije, many of the youths sit idly during the day as there are no enough farm lands for many of them to cultivate as their land have been sold to wealthy individuals by government who now operate large mechanized farms. The expectation would be that the presence of these big farms would rub-off on the community through direct job creation for the youths but the reverse is the case. The people complain that the owners of the farms prefer hiring people from other communities to work in their farms, while the few who have been employed in the past have all suffered delayed payment of salaries/wages, theft accusations etc. The youths recounted that at several occasions the owners of the farms have arranged with some security agents to illegally arrest and detain many of them based on false accusations of theft as a ploy for them to evade paying wages after they have worked in the farms for months.

Due to these unsavory experiences, indigenes avoid seeking for jobs at these farms and would rather take on menial jobs or remain idle.



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

**Open Defecation:** Majority of the people practice open defecation and this can be attributed to low level of exposure, knowledge about the dangers of open defecation.



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

**Land Grabbing:** Land grabbing has become a major issue of concern for the people of Rije community. The government has taken over great portion of the community land without any compensation or dialogue for resettlement. The people are worried that very soon the younger generation of the community will grow up as displaced people without land to call their own. As a farming community they are also running out of farm land which have led to drastic decrease in crop production. The people through the Chief have written a letter of complaint to the Kuje Area Council on several occasions to put an end to the land grabbing in Rije and/or conduct a proper survey of the entire land area with adequate demarcation of land belonging to the people but they never got any feedback from the government.

**Attendees of the local solution lab were able to identify 5 priority needs and demand urgent attention around these issues. The issues identified and solutions proposed from the local solution lab were used to develop this charter of demand. It highlights strategic solutions and a pathway to solving these problems. Key stakeholders in both the public and private sector will be mentioned around issues where they can provide supports towards improving the living conditions of the people of Rije.**



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)



# The Issues and Actionable Demand

## ACCESS TO WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:

According to UN Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly now recognizes that access to water and sanitation and hygiene are basic human rights important to ensure the health of any population. Unfortunately, Rije community cannot boast of enjoying this right as they lack access to sufficient and affordable potable water as well as sanitation and hygiene facilities which in turn culminates to adverse effects on the health and well-being of the populace. Rije community has three existing boreholes, out of which only one is functional but not sufficient to cater to the needs of the community as it does not produce enough water so

they fall back on using and ingesting water from open streams in the community. The consumption of this unsafe water from the open stream poses serious health challenges to the people especially among children who are frequently down with diarrhea. Research has shown that Diarrhea is a leading killer of children, accounting for approximately 8 per cent of all deaths among children under age 5 worldwide. Open defecation continues to be largely practiced in Rije due to a lack of personal and/or public toilets caused by a lack of water and lack of funds to construct household toilet facility.

### DEMAND

- The Kuje Area Council to provide water for the people of Rije.
- Senator and House of Representative Members representing Abuja at the National Assembly should make efforts to include the drilling of water borehole, construction of public toilets etc. as key priorities in their 2021 constituency projects.
- The Chief and his Council to enforce compliance among community members when toilet is built.
- The Department of Environment and Sanitation in the Kuje Area should sensitize the people on the dangers of open defecation
- The Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Clean Nigeria Secretariat and other WASH CSOs to lead the campaign against open defecation in Nigeria to Rije and also to activate the community led total sanitation (CLTS) strategy in the community to trigger behavioral change in the area of sanitation and hygiene.
- The Kuje Area Council and Councilor representing Gaube Ward where Rije is under should support Rije community to set up a gender-friendly and energy efficient public toilet with solar powered borehole and accompanying services which will serve as a new business model for the community youths and reduce the high rate of unemployment among the youths in the community.

- That Development Partners such as UNICEF Nigeria, World Bank Water, WaterAid Nigeria, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Guinness Nigeria, Nestle Nigeria, Coca Cola and other international, local and private organizations to consider Rije for a water intervention project.
- For the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASSA) to ensure that Rije community has access to clean, safe and affordable water source.
- The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and RUWASSA to conduct a water needs assessment in the community to ascertain the degree of damage to the existing boreholes, carry out repairs or drill new boreholes.
- Community youths are to sensitize other community members on the importance of owning and using a toilet and the environmental risks associated with open defecation.



## ELECTRICITY

The electricity situation in Rije community is pathetic. The people have lived with electricity poles transmitting current through their community since 2003 to other communities and big establishments around them yet not able to benefit from it. This is a great cause for concern by Rije people, making them feel neglected and forgotten. With the existence of transmission lines already, all that is needed for Rije people to enjoy electricity is a transformer.





**DEMAND:**

- The Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) should undertake an audit / needs assessment to determine what needs to be done to get the people of Rije connected to the national grid.
- The Nyakanyakayi (the community secretary) should write to the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC), Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and the Ministry of Power on behalf of the people of Rije concerning their electricity situation.
- Private sector investors in the renewable energy space such as the renewable energy association of Nigeria (REAN) should consider the community as a potential market to deploy their services.
- Rural Electrification Agency (REA) should consider assessing Rije to understand what workable options will best suit the community.
- The surrounding farms should consider donating their waste (animal droppings) to the community as part of their CSR to enable the people power their biomass plant.

**ACCESS ROAD**

Access to good road is vital to economic and general community development. Any community that lacks access road will automatically remain in poverty because economic activity will be crippled in such location. Rije as an agrarian community requires good road in order for the people to transport their farm produce to the market and to enable easy access to potential buyers as well as those who prefer to come into the community to buy directly from the farmers. The bad and narrow road network of Rije community has been a major hindrance to agricultural products marketing. For a productive livelihood in Rije community access to good road is a necessity.

**DEMAND:**

- The owners of the commercial farms located in Rije community should contribute in ensuring the construction of a wide, well paved access road for the entire Rije community and should stop carrying out remedial repairs on the road to suit entry and exit into their farms alone.
- The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) should consider the construction of the Rije Community Road.
- The Kuje Area Council is statutorily mandated by law to construct rural roads; hence we call on the area council to commence plans for the construction of the Rije road.
- Rije community people as a matter of duty, should continue to perform remedial maintenance of the road leading to the community.

## PRIMARY HEALTHCARE (PHC) FACILITY

The primary healthcare centre is the basic structural and functional unit of the public health system designed to attend to the physical, mental and social well-being of individuals in communities. It is the first point of contact with the health system in the community and is largely people-centred. The presence, benefits and critical functions of a primary health care centre in any community cannot be overstated and its absence cannot be ignored.

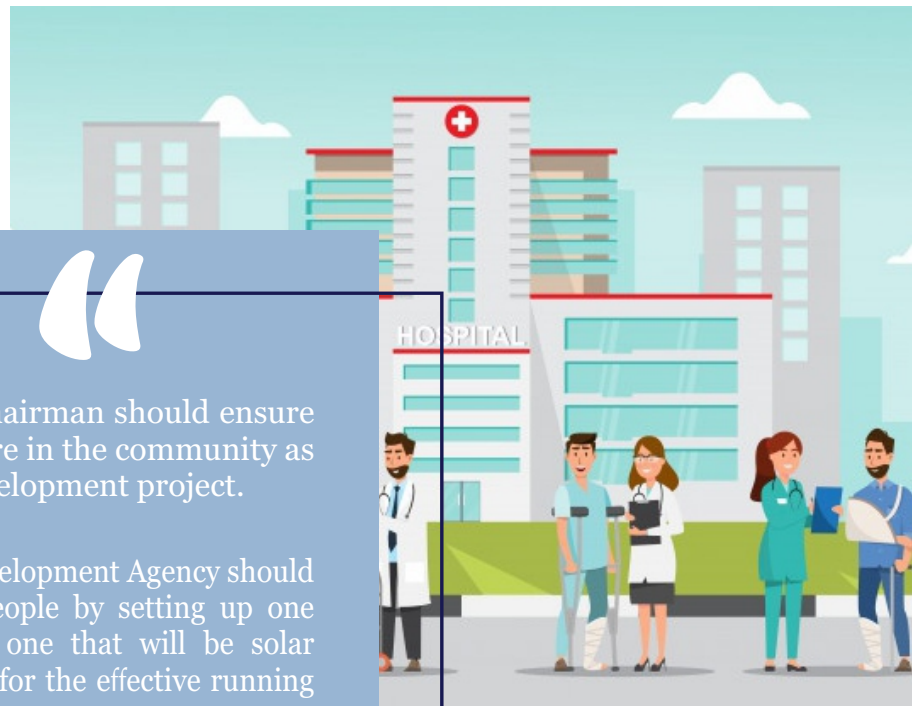
Rije community have greatly been cheated for not having one because for the over 50 years Rije has been in existence, the people have lived without healthcare facility within the community and resort to neighboring communities like Kwyizhi and Dafara to access healthcare services. Most times in the case of emergencies like child delivery, these women are carried on motorcycles to access healthcare centre in Kwyizhi or Dafara, coupled with the pains and discomfort, which has led to complications among women during child delivery and sometimes death.

### DEMAND:

- The Kuje Area Council Chairman should ensure access to quality healthcare in the community as part of its community development project.
- The Primary Healthcare development Agency should come to the aid of Rije people by setting up one PHC close to the people, one that will be solar powered, with water pump for the effective running of the facility.



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)



Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)



## EDUCATION

No nation or community can experience positive development in the absence of education. Education remains one of the most useful means to fight poverty. The people are enthusiastic about learning and have come to agree that it will be the only legacy they will bequeath to their children when government finally displaces them from their ancestral land, however; the cost of sending their children to school is becoming burdensome on both the parent and school children.

Community children who are enrolled in schools have to walk over 10 kilometres daily to and from school in Kwyizhi—a neighboring community.

This daily exercise also has its risks, as parents are afraid of their children being kidnapped on their way to and/or from school in a period where the rate of kidnapping of school children has increased. The alternative means of paying a motorcyclist to convey the children to school daily is also expensive and not something the parents can sustain, so often time, the children have to miss schools. The number of out-of-school children in Nigeria will not reduce if issues like this are not given consideration and new ways of making education more accessible left unaddressed.

## DEMAND:

- The Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) should consider siting a primary school closer to the community to reduce the walking distance for school children.
- Crystal Science Academy as part of its CSR should offer scholarships to deserving indigenes of Rije who wish to acquire secondary education.
- The Nyakanyakayi (the community secretary) should write letters on behalf of the community to the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB), Kuje Area Council requesting for the establishment of a Government Primary and secondary school close to the community. It will ensure that more community children are enrolled in school.
- Education focused civil society organizations (CSOs) like Slum2School, Areaai etc should consider setting up schools in communities like Rije to drive mass literacy among the people.
- Kuje Area Council should construct a skill development and/or digital literacy centre in Rije community to help youths learn new skills that will help them compete for skilled jobs outside their communities as the world is in need of vocational skills technicians and experts. This will in turn reduce the rate of unemployment in Rije.

# Water Situation in Rije Community



The people of Rije battle with water poverty daily, the above pictures show their water sources. These unclean surface waters are what the people survive on daily for drinking, cooking, bathing, washing etc.





Some non-functional hand operated pumps in Rije



The only functional borehole in Rije community constructed by a Turkish Muslim Philanthropic Organization. This borehole functions sub-optimally as it has never pumped water into water tank above 100 litres. The borehole is operated only when the community people contribute money to buy fuel as they do not have electricity to power the water pump.

# Access to Energy



Rije community people depend solely on firewood for their domestic needs, with no alternative this practice is contributing to rapid deforestation in the community. The community is not connected to the national grid although distribution lines pass through the community to the big farms around them; government has not seen the need to energise this community.

The Biomass off-grid plant constructed by USADF is hardly utilized as the people do not generate enough waste to power the plant. The poultry farms around the community sell off their waste (animal droppings) at high prices to other off-takers rather than donate to the community or sell at subsidized prices.



# Pictures from Local Solution Lab





# Pictures from Rije Community





## A BRIEF OF HIPCITY INNOVATION CENTRE

The realization that daily the inequality gap keeps widening, with the civic space shrinking due to sundry reasons, more women and young persons are locked in poverty and need for want, we therefore recognize that for global peace to be sustained and migration curtailed, young people and women must be trained and equipped with the right attitude, skills set and capacity to create wealth, speak up against all forms of violence and victimization and most importantly play critical role in decision making process.

Therefore at HipCity Innovation Centre we commit ourselves to ensuring free and democratic access to information, sharing with groups that have difficulty to access. We accept the responsibility to influence and cooperate with governmental institutions so long as the actions are approved in a democratic manner and are not in any used as a tool for victimization of the people. We recognize education as an inherent right of each human being.

We defend the principle of free and public education so as to guarantee the accessibility of education to all in order not to impede the privatization of knowledge. We commit ourselves to promoting skills, knowledge transfer to help guide more youths and women into sustainable businesses, while engaging with policy shapers to make legislations that would guarantee that every human has equal rights and opportunities to become the best they can be through their imagination and innovation without any impediments or exclusion.

Vision - We envision a world where everyone irrespective of the circumstances surrounding their existence have equal access to opportunities that would ensure that they attain self-actualization without fear of marginalisation, victimization or outright exclusion from issues that concern them.

Mission - Our mission is to help everyone especially women and youths have the right mind-set to create wealth through skills, coexist, value human rights, respect the rule of law, realise their full potential, and meaningfully become tools for positive sustainable development.

HipCity Innovation Centre is registered in Nigeria with the Corporate Affairs Commission with CAC No: CAC/IT/116821

**This Charter of Demand  
was compiled by  
HipCity Innovation Centre-Abuja  
with support from the  
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