



POLICY BRIEF

ON NEGLECT OF
PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS
INFRASTRUCTURE
IN ABUJA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning does not exist in a vacuum or in an abstract environment but in an environment structured with physical facilities and material resources to promote teaching and learning outcomes, these include school buildings, classrooms, playgrounds, sports facilities, access to water, access to electricity, assembly halls, laboratories, libraries, teaching aids and devices (1).

Education is an enabler capable of transforming a society and within the hierarchy of learning; basic education is the most important. It is the foundation upon which all life-long learning is predicated upon, therefore the importance of educational infrastructure in the educational system cannot be overemphasized which is why learning and teaching activities are structured to take place in a given environment and building for effective teaching and learning to achieve expected learning outcomes. Adequate education infrastructure creates interest for learning in school children and also significantly helps teachers achieve learning and education goals.

A deficiency in educational infrastructure and equipment severely impacts learning outcomes for school children. This has been confirmed by a research study carried out by the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University. The study concluded that the quality of education given by any

institution can be attributed to the provision of adequate educational facilities which include well-planned and purposeful school buildings. (4)

Infrastructure for primary and junior secondary schools in Nigeria's capital, Abuja which should be matching international standards have been found wanting by several research findings and independent monitoring. A research study conducted by the Public and Private Development Centre revealed that many public primary and secondary schools in the FCT were in deplorable conditions, and had no access to electricity, toilet facilities and adequate access to potable water. (2)

This infrastructural decay in basic education in the FCT is more pronounced among primary schools located in indigenous communities in the FCT evidenced by a baseline study conducted by HipCity Innovation Centre. The 2022 research found that most physical infrastructure and educational facilities in primary schools across communities occupied by the indigenous people of the FCT are in a worse state of disrepair. This includes leaking roofs, decrepit buildings, lack of adequate classroom blocks and toilet facilities as well as poor access to water and electricity (3). The absence of standard school environment which also includes playgrounds and sports facilities in most primary and junior secondary schools across FCT indigenous communities impacts negatively on schoolchildren in these areas.

What this means for the already marginalized original inhabitants of the FCT is that they are experiencing even more neglect in a critical development sector such as

education. This also means school children from indigenous communities in the FCT are at the receiving end of substandard education due to the decay in educational infrastructure in these communities. Standard basic education is a right for every school child, there needs to be a major policy implementation shift to right this ongoing wrong in the interest of equity, justice and fairness.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Historically, the plight of Nigeria's original inhabitants in the FCT is one that has received minimal national attention which has contributed to the denial of basic social services to indigenous population living in remote communities away from the glitz and glamour of the Abuja city centre. This includes lack of basic educational infrastructure, health services and access to clean water. Also, the absence of a defined state-status for the FCT has further heightened the discrimination of the rights and privileges of the indigenous people to be duly represented (5).

Primary schools domiciled in the 17 indigenous chiefdoms inhabited by the original inhabitants such as the L.E.A primary school Kungumi Kundu, science primary school Kuje central ward at Angwan Gade community and Wako primary school are inundated with outdated learning school buildings, zero wash facilities and restrooms for schoolchildren which includes leaking roofs, cracked classroom buildings, lack of classroom furniture such as desks and board, lack of adequate classroom blocks and toilet facilities as well as access to water and electricity.





KUJE CHIEFDOM: LEA GAWU PRIMARY SCHOOL
Report: Inadequate learning and wash facility



The junior secondary school in Karshi is lacking functional toilet facilities for both school children and teachers. In Jiwa, Pai and Gomo chiefdoms (LEA Gawu primary school), findings from HipCity's research survey confirms that the primary schools in these chiefdoms have missing roofs, falling classrooms and inadequate buildings. These schools also lack standard playground, recreational and sports facilities which have been proven to help stimulate schoolchildren interest to learning.



KARSHI CHIEFDOM: HAURA PRIMARY SCHOOL KARSHI

MONITOR: No wash facility, no restroom, inadequate learning facility and playground.




KARSHI CHIEFDOM: HAURA PRIMARY SCHOOL KARSHI

MONITOR: No wash facility, no restroom, inadequate learning facility and playground.

The available functional classroom buildings in these indigenous communities are often over populated with students, grossly unequipped, lack desks and other furniture. These available classroom blocks are also ageing and have been ill maintained which then poses a problem to teachers, students and their abilities to achieve learning outcomes in such uncomfortable environment.

Classrooms are overflowing with large number of students with no class furniture or proper class fittings. Consequently, we have seen primary school pupils and junior secondary school children across primary and junior secondary schools in indigenous FCT communities having to sit down on bare floors to learn. Most primary and secondary schools located in indigenous FCT communities which are usually remote and peri urban



communities also lack basic water and sanitation (WASH) facilities. Essential learning boosting amenities such as access to electricity, standard learning environment (including playgrounds) and information communications technology (ICT) equipment amongst others are in short supply and in most cases totally non-existent in schools located in indigenous FCT communities.

The clear absence of these very key education infrastructure in primary and junior secondary schools across FCT indigenous communities has made thousands of schoolchildren in FCT indigenous communities susceptible to a wide range of dangers ranging from the educational standard deficit to health-related hazards and the social cum emotional development of schoolchildren in these neglected schools.

The immediate consequence of the neglect of indigenous communities in the FCT specifically as it relates to basic education and school infrastructure is the enormous drop in learning outcomes, quality of education and attendance rate. Lack of a conducive environment and buildings for education disrupts learning outcomes for schoolchildren. Teachers are also discouraged as the lack of basic infrastructure, facilities and equipment needed to make teaching and learning easy, comfortable and interesting are either in short supply or not available at all.

Schoolchildren who have to sit on bare floors without

proper and adequate classroom furniture for lessons are bound to learn little to nothing due to how uncomfortable the environment is. Experts have argued that children who attend classes with little or no furniture are exposed to bullying from their classmates who are more physically developed than others and begin to develop anti-social behaviors as a survival trait. Furthermore, schoolchildren who sit on floors are easily distracted from the lessons and tend to always miss out on what is being taught in class thereby defeating the aim and purpose of education. These persisting deficit in educational infrastructure and facilities also destroys the interest of school children in learning and even coming to school thereby fueling truancy in primary and junior secondary schools located in indigenous FCT communities.

Schoolchildren who know that they have to contend with other students for class space and most likely have to sit on the floor for class lessons naturally becomes disinterested in attending school due to the uncomfortable learning environment.

The lack of standard playgrounds and sports infrastructure across schools in indigenous FCT communities also impacts on learning outcomes for schoolchildren. The availability of playgrounds and sports infrastructure in schools has always raised interest and excitement in schoolchildren, reduces learning apathy and truancy. The lack of these quality educational infrastructure and facilities across primary and junior secondary schools in indigenous FCT communities has

contributed significantly to the high rate of truancy and low standard of learning outcomes in these communities.

In addition to the enormous negative impact that inadequate infrastructure has had on learning outcomes in primary and junior secondary schools across FCT indigenous communities, schoolchildren who are the most affected are also exposed to severe health risks as a result of inadequate educational infrastructure in FCT indigenous communities.

Research has shown that most primary and junior secondary schools across FCT indigenous communities lack basic water and sanitary services (WASH) and so female schoolchildren are starved of adequate toilet and water facilities. What this means is that proper menstrual health management for female schoolchildren is lacking in primary and junior secondary schools across FCT indigenous communities.

Lack of proper menstrual health management for schoolchildren and female teachers naturally means females who are on their period automatically skip school thus reinforcing low attendance rate. Those who are unfortunate to be in school when their period starts are faced with the health implications of lack of proper menstrual health management in schools.

Schoolchildren who also have to sit on bare floors during classes are also exposed to several sickness from being made to sit on unsanitary environs during classes. These unsanitary classroom floors expose schoolchildren to various tropical diseases and illnesses that would



incapacitate and maim schoolchildren for life.

Getting sick from going to school should not be a natural occurrence for schoolchildren in FCT indigenous communities, however this threat is very real because of the lack of basic education infrastructure for primary and secondary across FCT indigenous communities. Poor school infrastructure also retards the physiological, psycho-social and emotional growth of pupils including learning outcomes. Pupils who have to sit on bare floors for lessons or who do not have access to standard playgrounds find it harder to socialize and also cultivate disinterest in schooling.

STATE OF BASIC EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE FCT

The FCT Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) is responsible for providing quality basic education through management of early child care, primary, junior secondary and nomadic education to provide the highest quality of basic education to the teeming school age population in the FCT as defined by the 2014 national policy on education. (6)

FCT UBEB stated vision is to serve as a model and set the standard for the actualization of the nation's universal basic education programme while its mission is to provide accessible quality basic education in partnership with all stakeholders, to all school age population in the FCT.

To achieve its mandate, vision and mission, the FCT UBEB says it is working to ensure that primary and junior secondary schools across the FCT are equipped with standard school buildings to elevate the achievement of teaching and learning outcomes. (7)

Over the years, some primary and junior secondary schools in the FCT have been equipped with standard classroom blocks and other educational facilities, nonetheless; they are mostly concentrated in the urban and peri-urban such as Jikwoyi and Karu. Several primary and junior secondary schools in the FCT have high rise buildings and an array of classroom blocks to meet student needs.



KARU CHIEFDOM: L E A AYENAJEYI PRIMARY SCHOOL
Monitor: Reports about the decay in infrastructures in the community especially, learning facility, wash, fences, playgrounds and restrooms.



However, most of these school buildings are aged and are not adequately maintained. It is imperative that more attention be paid towards maintenance and repairs of derelict school buildings especially in remote indigenous communities in the FCT as many of such buildings have fallen into avoidable disrepair due to the poor maintenance culture.

In remote and sub urban areas in Abuja, mostly populated by indigenous communities, primary and junior secondary schools located in these areas are lacking several school infrastructures ranging from adequate classroom blocks, library building, toilet and water facilities to electricity and standard learning environment. The tendency to concentrate attention to the city centre and urban schools has led to the dearth of educational infrastructure across primary and junior secondary schools located in FCT indigenous communities.



KARU CHIEFDOM: L E A AYENAJEYI PRIMARY SCHOOL
Monitor: Reports about the decay in infrastructures in the community especially, learning facility, wash, fences, playgrounds and restrooms.

Classroom blocks across several primary and junior secondary schools located in indigenous FCT communities have been observed to be insufficient with many more not functional. A lot of classrooms blocks have cracked walls, damaged roofs and bare floors. Other schools in remote indigenous communities across Nigeria's capital city lack WASH and toilet facilities, ICT laboratories and convenient learning school environment. The current state of school and educational infrastructure across indigenous communities in the FCT paints a gloomy picture for the standard of education in these communities and quality of learning received by the pupils. The infrastructural lacuna is breeding a generation of schoolchildren who are exposed to substandard education at a foundational stage of their life leading to disinterest in education and confidence in the government.

The current lack of adequate learning environment and infrastructure for schoolchildren also impacts not only their interest in learning but also retards social intelligence and learning. In our ever-increasing interconnected world, social intelligence and quotient is highly rated. The extant state of infrastructure across basic education in FCT indigenous is creating schoolchildren who will be deficient socially and emotionally except urgent action is taken to revamp existing school infrastructure and initiate new ones across primary and junior secondary schools in indigenous communities in the FCT.



GAPS IN PRESENT POLICY

The current policy towards basic education in the FCT since 2005 has involved FCT UBEB embarking on primary and secondary school renovation towards the successful execution of the universal basic education (UBE) policy. Various primary school and junior secondary schools (JSS) structures in the six area councils of the FCT have been renovated in partnership with the Education Trust Fund (ETF) in addition to the construction of new blocks of classrooms across all the area councils facilitated by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Secretariat in Abuja.


UBEC from some of its news reportage claims that additional primary schools have been established in the six area councils of the FCT and more are in the process of being established in many underserved communities across the FCT. The board also reports that it has purchased essential school equipment and distributed same to all primary schools in the FCT in a bid to enhance effective teaching and learning.

While it is very commendable that UBEB and other public education agencies within the FCT are carrying out wholistic renovation of classroom buildings and erecting new schools across the FCT, it has become glaringly clear that a more specialized project that focuses on renovation and maintenance of classroom buildings and erecting new schools across indigenous communities in the FCT is needed if schoolchildren in indigenous communities are to feel the impact and dividends of quality basic education.

Due to urban concentration in the FCT, primary and junior secondary schools in rural and inner city communities including the already marginalized indigenous FCT communities are often overlooked and underfunded which is why a specialized project geared towards renovating school buildings and erecting new ones across indigenous communities in the FCT is needed to ensure that schoolchildren in underserved indigenous communities in the FCT are afforded the basic and fundamental right to quality basic education.

Data from FCT UBEB website shows that e-learning platforms can be found in selected schools across FCT such as junior secondary school (JSS) Jabi (11). It is unfair and unjust that the e-learning platforms have not cascaded down to primary and junior secondary schools in FCT indigenous communities. Many primary and junior secondary schools in FCT indigenous communities do not have ICT centres and in some where they have computer labs, there are no experts/ qualified teachers to teach and guide pupils in learning new skills. The continued infrastructure dearth in indigenous FCT communities if not quickly corrected will expand and deepen the level of marginalization and neglect already being suffered by FCT original inhabitants.

The lack of adequate infrastructure including for ICT activities for primary and junior secondary schools located in FCT indigenous communities also means schoolchildren in these areas are not fully exposed to modern learning methodologies, best teaching practices and standard learning environment. Additionally,



teachers in these remote and sub urban areas do not also have the requisite expertise and capacity if though these infrastructures were to be deployed in their schools. Although the initiative is one that is commendable and an offshoot of the COVID-19 era, the sustenance is questionable. It is also imperative to mention that the E-learning platform should be focused more on rural schools to close the digital literacy gap and to place the children in a near equilibrium with their urban counterpart who have more opportunities to interact with these digital tools as a function of their location, but the rural children are already disadvantaged by their location.

Summarily, FCT UBEB will need to wholistically tackle the physical infrastructural deficit among primary and junior secondary schools in FCT indigenous communities and also the human capacity of teachers as this is also sacrosanct to effectively and efficiently achieving learning outcomes and maximizing learning environment for the benefit of schoolchildren.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following from objective research and analysis, this policy document recommends that the FCT UBEB and FCT education secretariat in conjunction with the FCTA, area councils and all sister public education agencies organize and implement a special education project aimed at specifically renovating classroom buildings and erecting new schools across all indigenous communities and the 17 chiefdoms in the FCT.

Full compliance to UBEB's monitoring mechanisms, which is to ensure policies and standards in schools across the FCT is maintained by sending seasoned inspectors to schools thrice every school term to evaluate and inspect teachers and teaching standards. This policy document also recommends that FCT UBEB incorporates evaluation of school buildings and educational infrastructure in primary and junior secondary across the FCT as part of termly evaluation and inspection of schools, taking into special consideration indigenous communities that need improved infrastructure.

Speedy provision of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in primary schools.

Construction of new classrooms blocks to meet current realities. It is on record that some primary schools in Abuja now share classrooms with junior secondary schools and as such need to vacate on time for the junior secondary students to take over, leaving no room for extra-curricula activities for the students.

CONCLUSION

The dearth of adequate physical educational infrastructure and school buildings in basic education schools across indigenous communities in the FCT is greatly affecting the quality of education offered in schools located in these communities. Allowing substandard education to continue in FCT indigenous communities and the 17 chiefdoms not only goes against the right to quality basic education, equity, fairness and justice but also negates the mission and vision of FCT UBEB.

It is clearly very imperative that a special education infrastructure renovation project targeted solely towards primary and junior secondary schools domiciled in FCT indigenous communities is needed. This will ensure that every public primary and junior secondary school located in the 17 original inhabitants' chiefdoms in the FCT feels the touch of UBEB and ultimately adds value to the quality of education being dished out in these school; a cardinal function of UBEB.

By also incorporating the infrastructural need of schools as part of its termly school evaluations, UBEB will be kept up to date on the gaps in basic education infrastructure in indigenous communities across the FCT as a long-term measure towards providing school children in these communities with the adequate school buildings and other educational infrastructure they need for quality educational empowerment.

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Photo Fact



ZUBA CHIEFDOM: L.E.A. AGORA ZUBA GWAGWALADA LGA
Monitor: reports on the conditions of primary schools especially in Zuba



ZUBA CHIEFDOM: SHENAGU L.E.A PRIMARY SCHOOL
MONITOR: Reports the decay in learning facility, wash facility, restrooms and playground



PAI CHIEFDOM
LELE BARSA PRIMARY SCHOOL
Monitor: Reports about the state of infrastructure in the community especially the primary schools in the community. The monitor talks about the lack of adequate wash facility, learning facility and recreational facility.



WAKO CHIEFDOM: Wako primary school
Report: No wash facility, restrooms and playground



RUBOCHI CHIEFDOM
Model Primary School Rubochi
Monitor; Report on inadequate wash facility, learning facility, playground and fences.



YABA CHIEFDOM
YABA SCIENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Monitor: Reports the lack of adequate infrastructures for learning



KUJE CHIEFDOM: LEA GAWU PRIMARY SCHOOL
Report: Inadequate learning and wash facility



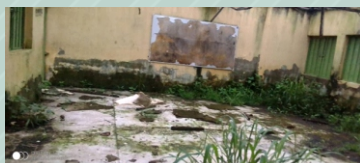
KARU CHIEFDOM: LEA AYENAJEYI PRIMARY SCHOOL
Monitor: Reports about the decay in infrastructures in the community especially, learning facility, wash, fences, playgrounds and restrooms.



GWARGWADA CHIEFDOM LEA PRIMARY SCHOOL GWARGWADA
 Monitor: Report on the lack of wash facility, learning facility, restroom and playground.



KARSHI CHIEFDOM: HAURA PRIMARY SCHOOL KARSHI
 MONITOR: No wash facility, no restroom, inadequate learning facility and playground.



GORMANI CHIEFDOM
LEA PRIMARY SCHOOL KUNGUMI KUNDU
 Monitor: This school lacks basic structures such as
 1. they lack adequate number of Teachers.
 2. infrastructures need urgent repairs.
 4. lack of wash facility on the School premises.
 5. No working toilet facility within the school premises.
 6. And no well-equipped playground.



BWARI CHIEFDOM
 LEA Primary School Bwari near jamb quarters
 Monitor: Reports of the lack of wash facility and inadequate classrooms.

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

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