

# KUZHAKO COMMUNITY

CHARTER OF  
DEMAND



■■■ HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
ABUJA

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Implementing the  
local Solution Lab  
Workshop

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# PREAMBLE:

Poverty reduction and economic growth is a priority task facing the Nigerian government today. It is for this reason that government is stratified into three (3) tiers of federal, state and local government. While emphasis and much attention is paid to the federal and state, the local government being the closest tier of government to the people is rarely scrutinized.

In Abuja, there is a growing disconnect between the people and the area councils alongside their elected representatives. Visits to many rural communities across the six area councils gives a lucid understanding of the dimensions of poverty across these communities.

While government make claims to the challenges of governance such as lack of funds, citizens are also accusing government of being inaccessible and dividends of governance non-existent.

The local government as the third tier of government and the closest to the people has not lived up to its statutory obligations to the people in understanding the incidence, depth and severity of poverty bedeviling its constituent and developing an inclusive and participatory strategies that will drive economic growth and development to the people that they govern.

In many communities across the area councils in Abuja such as Kuzhako; there is little or nothing desirable about the situation/condition of living of the people. Many of these communities do not enjoy any of the basic services that government should provide.

The urgency to bridge the gap in terms of communication between duty bearers and right holders is the reason why HipCity Innovation Centre is supporting communities to document and prioritize their community needs and also support government with the right information to guide them in their budgeting and deployment of resources to improve the living conditions of the people.

# Background

Kuzhako is a farming community in the Kuduru Ward of Bwari Area Council. The village “Kuzhako” is named after a shea butter tree, as a reminder to the people of their ancestry. The present settlement used to be farmlands as the ancient men of Kuzhako lived in Guto and started settling on their farmlands when population grew some 50 years ago.

The estimated population size of the community is about 1000 people.

Kuzhako is an indigenous gbagyi community with mixture of Nigerians of other ethnic groups like the Hausa, Yoruba, Tiv, Numana etc. and they have all lived harmoniously in the last 30 years.

The governing council in the community is made up of the Etsu (Chief), Madaki (Assistant Chief), Nyakanyakayi (Secretary), Sarkin Samari (Youth Leader), Makama (Reporter), Dogori (Chief Palace Guard).

The people mostly cultivate Acha rice, Wheat, Banana, Plantain, Yam, Maize, Rice, Cassava, Groundnut, Millet, Beans, Soyabeans, Cowpeas, Okra and Sweet Potatoes most of which they consume within their households and very little for commercial sale. The average household size is 10.





# Implementing the Local Solution Lab Workshop:

Due to the corona virus pandemic and federal government guidelines for public gathering, the local solution lab was constituted in three batches of 20 individuals for each group of men, women and youths.

After exhaustive discussions of the community social and infrastructural deficiencies, the people of Kuzhako community unanimously agreed on 5 key priority needs and demand urgent fix of these issues. The issues highlighted and the priority needs identified from the local solution labs are captured in this document known as Community Charter of Demand for Kuzhako. It outlines the issues, local solutions proposed by the people and a pathway towards solving these problems by all concerned stakeholders.

Key stakeholders in both public and private sector will be mentioned and areas where their interventions are needed identified so they can provide support towards reducing the sufferings of the people of Kuzhako in Bwari Area Council.

## DECLARATION

The Community Charter of Demand for Kuzhako 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 Centre with funding from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation-Nigeria.

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



## Problems

### Infrastructural problems

1. **Lack of Access to Water:** There are 5 boreholes drilled in Kuzhako community of which only one situated at the Chief's compound is currently functional. One (1) of the borehole never worked since installation, 1 worked for a year and 2 others stopped working two years after installation.

The insufficiency and lack of access to water has pushed the people to return back to drinking from surface streams which is far away from their homes. According to the people, they depend solely on these surface streams for all their water needs (bathing, cooking, washing, drinking).

These water sources are also shared with animals like cows who are led to the stream by herders and they sometimes defecate in the water body making it unfit for them to utilize the water as it will be contaminated for a few hours/days before natural filtration takes place.

During dry seasons, the surface streams dry up completely and community members have to go as far as Guita or Guto communities (4 and 6 kilometres away from Kuzhako) to get water with 5 rubbers of 20 litres costing 500 naira and they spend over a 1000 naira on transportation. The implications of this situation is better imagined than experienced for women and girls during their menstrual cycle, as they require water to maintain proper hygiene.



*Abandoned water project in Kuzhako*



*Non functional borehole*

**During dry seasons, the surface streams dry up completely**



2. **Lack of an Access Road(s):** The road leading to Kuzhako community takes a turn from Bwari town and runs through several communities before emerging in Kubwa one of the most development satellite town in the Bwari Area Council/Abuja. Roads drive development and it remains the only physical project that has multiplier economic effect across rural communities.

The benefits of a well-paved road to community cannot be overemphasized or overstated. For emphasis sake, if the road leading into Kuzhako and other neighboring communities are paved, it will drive economic development into these communities and also decongest Kubwa satellite town as people will prefer to acquire lands/property in these communities. Unfortunately, the road is untarred, dusty during dry seasons and muddy during rainy season such that vehicular movement is extremely difficult.

The nature of the road makes movement difficult with corresponding hike in transportation fare into the community. A motorcycle ride to the community from Bwari town can be as high as N500 per trip and about a N1000 naira during rainy days due to the poor condition of the road network.



*State of the road leading to Kuzhako Community*



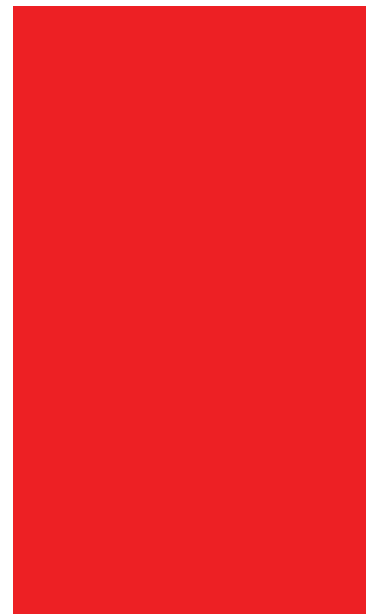
3. **Lack of a Junior Secondary School/ No Educational Scholarship:** The community is without a Junior Secondary School and parents go as far as Junior Secondary School Bwari (over 10 km away from the community) and Junior Secondary School Guto (6 km away from kuzhako) to enroll their children in school to continue their post-primary education.

In Nigeria, primary and post-primary education is free according to the UBEC Act (2004) however, parents and guardians complain of paying high levies which they feel is school fee being collected in disguise. Several parents reported of paying up to 20,000 naira as registration fee into Bwari Junior Secondary School among other exorbitant levies that are charged before a child is allowed into school. In a country of over 13 million out-of-school children, conditions placed on parents by schools can be a factor why poor parents do not send their children to school as they cannot afford to pay these charges, provide books and educational materials alongside paying daily transportation for their school children.

Many children in Kuzhako are orphans and are unable to afford such amounts hence the need for an educational scholarship.



Newly constructed block of class room in Kuzhako (Primary School)



Newly constructed block of class room in Kuzhako (Primary School)

**4. Lack of a Primary Health Centre:** Kuzhako Community has never had a Primary Health Centre. Community members, especially women go as far as Kuchibuyi (a neighboring community which is about 1hr 30 minutes' hours on foot or pay a motorcyclist who charges 500 naira for a round trip). At other time when the PHC at Kuchibuyi cannot meet their needs, the villagers travel to Sabon geri clinic which is about 1 hour from the community and costs 600 naira for a bike fare; in some rare occasion they have to call a medical practitioner to treat them at home which cost them even more. The lack of a PHC in Kuzhako is responsible for complications during childbirth especially at night when birth pangs begin or there is a health emergency and the continued dependence on traditional medicine by the people. Beyond this, it also means that the people of Kuzhako are not able to build resilience against preventable diseases that primary health care should help address.



**5. Lack of a Skills Development Centre (Technical/Vocational Training):** The young people of Kuzhako are eager to learn livelihood skills asides farming. Many of them are interested in learning new technical and vocational skills such as catering, hairdressing, tailoring, soap making, cream making, baking, bead making, knitting and welding but the lack of a Skills Development Centre makes that difficult and many of the people cannot afford to pay the fees required to learn from other professionals outside of the community.



# SOCIAL PROBLEMS



**KUZHAKO  
COMMUNITY**  
*CHARTER OF DEMAND*



# Social Problems

6. **Unemployment and Lack of Job opportunities:** Most individuals in Kuzhako community are Senior School Certificate (SSCE) holders. Many of whom are without jobs and end up falling back heavily on farming which is practiced in the community on a very small scale. The lack of employment in Kuzhako means that young people are idle and unable to engage their brains creatively and the dangers of an unproductive/unengaged mind leaves the youths vulnerable to mischief makers who may choose to exploit their idleness for negative vices.

7. **Open defecation:** In Kuzhako community, many of the people still practice open defecation. At the primary school, one of the old toilets was converted to a classroom with the remaining toilet rooms permanently sealed up and not in use. Very few households have improved toilets. The practice of open defecation is borne out of ignorance, as the people are unaware of the grave consequences their actions of open defecation have on the environment and their general well-being. The people also complain that they do not have money to build a safe improved toilet.

8. **Land Grabbing:** As an indigent community, the people of Kuzhako continue to grapple with the problem of land grabbing from both individuals and government agencies. Where it concerns the government, their lands are taken over forcefully without any form of compensation or settlement. The people of Kuzhako complain of not having enough land to farm anymore due to the increase in land grabbing which caused them to experience food scarcity last year.

9. **Pressure on Girls to Get Married:** During our close-group meeting with the female youths of the community, they revealed that due to poverty and the high rate of unemployment among the youths especially women, parents of female children are constantly pressurizing their children to get married after their secondary education as they see it as an avenue to reduce their responsibility of fending for their children. Narrating their experience, one of the girls said “I am afraid of what life has for me, some days I contemplate running away from home, as I do not wish to get married to a man I do not love and end up not continuing my education, I desire to be a professional female lecturer someday”. The young girls said that they understand the situation of their parents as some of their sisters who went to college of education are still unemployed years after obtaining their certificates and that it seems true that education is no longer the key to success.

“I am afraid of what life has for me, some days I contemplate running away from home, as I do not wish to get married to a man I do not love and end up not continuing my education, I desire to be a professional female lecturer someday”



#### 10. **Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights:**

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene is considered a human right according to the UN resolution; unfortunately, women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by the lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in their communities and even schools. In Kuzhako Community, during dry season where the seasonal streams around the community dry up, the hygiene condition of these women and girls is badly affected. Due to the scarcity of water, women and girls are unable to maintain proper menstrual hygiene, the women and girls recounted how they manage 1 bag of sachet water (which is about 12 litres) at N 150 to bath daily and are unable to change their period clothes and pad as often as they ought to.

Many of the young girls complain that they are unable to afford menstrual pad monthly so they cut their old clothes to use as pads or request from tailors to spare them some unused fabrics in their shops.

**In order to subdue the foul smell associated with poor hygiene during menstrual periods due to the unavailability of water, the women and girls confess to using a cream called 'Fressia' (costs 200 naira) which has a very strong scent to mask the odor, a practice they term "RUB and SHINE".**

11. **Energy Problem:** Kuzhako community members use fire-woods for cooking. The people claim to have very few trees left to fell. At the moment they buy firewood from neighboring communities to cook with a truckload of firewood costing as much as 30,000 naira. The people say they are open to other energy alternatives such as clean cookstoves which is healthier for individuals and the environment. Some of the women complained that the firewood business is no longer thriving as they do not get supply in time and no longer have firewood for sale and this has rendered most of them jobless as they have spent out of their business capital leaving them alongside Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in need of livelihood support.

#### 12. **Lack of Trained Teachers/Learning Conditions at the LEA Primary School Kuzhako:**

Primary education is the basic foundation for individuals to develop their learning skills. Primary education is considered the most important building block of a child's development and where the educational foundation of a child is faulty, that child will continue to struggle through his/her lifelong learning experience.

The provision of quality education involves having qualified professional primary school teachers who are skilled in the art of teaching children in their formative years. Many of the community members complained that the teachers deployed to the school are not well skilled and doubt their professionalism. The women complain that their children go to school but do not learn anything new as they continue to be taught using Gbagyi language instead of English language. This further discourages parents from enrolling their children in the community primary school.

Parents also complained about overcrowded classes, they reported that the teacher-to-pupil/student ratio is about 1:50 against the national standard of 1:35 according to the minimum standards for basic education in Nigeria by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) which translates that the school is understaffed.

The primary school is also without a perimeter fence, which poses a serious threat to the security of children within the learning environment. The primary school also lacks good sanitation facilities as the two boreholes in the school premises are non-functional with the toilet remaining under lock and key. Other infrastructural deficits in the school are; lack of school library, electricity etc.

13. **Access to Market(s):** In Kuzhako community, there is no market so the people of Kuzhako are unable to engage in buying and selling, neither are they able to invite and engage with traders from other parts of Bwari to come sell their wares in Kuzhako.

The few residents in the community who sell, do so at retail scale, they commute to Bwari town to purchase their products and only go back when they have exhausted what they purchased.

One of the most common staples of the Kuzhako people are wheat, millet etc, which requires grinding, unfortunately there are no grinding machine in the entire village, hence the people travel to Bwari to have their grains processed which is 1hour 30 minutes on foot and 400 naira on bike or as much as 1000 naira with extra load.



*State of the road leading to Kuzhako Community*



THE ISSUES AND ACTIONABLE  
**DEMANDS**

# The Issues and Actionable Demands

## PRIORITY NEEDS

### 1) **Access Road**

For any community to experience all-round development especially its economy, having accessible roads that aid transportation of humans and resources to and from the community is of great importance as a lack thereof is often the beginning of economic poverty. As a community whose indigenes are predominantly farmers, the lack of well-paved, accessible roads has not allowed community members to scale-up their farming from small-scale to mechanized farming. In rainy seasons, transportation becomes awfully expensive and more dangerous as people—including ‘bike men’ risk falling into the mud along with the passengers who boarded the bike. This makes having accessible road(s) a priority need of Kuzhako people.



### **Demands**

- Bwari Area Council Chairman and Kuduru ward Councilor should ensure that the road leading to the community is properly paved as by law it is the obligation of the area council to construct community roads.
- The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) should add paving of Kuzhako road to its 2021 budget.



### 2) **Primary Health (PHC) Clinic**

At Kuzhako community, community members make trips to neighbouring communities like Kuchibuyi and as far as Bwari hospital to get medical treatment. According to the community women, they are forced to sometimes call medical personnel to come meet them at home but the situation of the road leading to Kuzhako does not make this any easier. Having a PHC in any community is meant to be the first point of contact community individuals have with the health system of any nation as it is designed to cater to their mental, physical and social wellbeing through the promotion of health, prevention of diseases, treatment, rehabilitative and palliative care. Unfortunately, Kuzhako community is deprived this care as no PHC has ever been erected in the community since it has been in existence and the people in past and present time continue to suffer as a result of this.



## **Demands**

- The Chairman of Bwari Area Council and the Councilor for Kuduru ward consider the construction of a Primary Health Care Centre a priority.
- The National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) should endeavor to visit Kuzhako community to do a needs assessment and provide them with accessible healthcare.
- Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) should ensure that a proper health facility is built in Kuzhako community with trained medical personnel, medical supplies, security, water, toilet and other sanitary requirements.
- Development agencies such as ActionAid with health as their core mandate should look into the Kuzhako community healthcare situation.

### **3) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene are basic human and health rights as stipulated by UN Resolution 64/292 necessary for any given population. For the people of Kuzhako, they have been unable to enjoy this fundamental human right for the over 50 years it has existed. There is a lack of water, forcing the populace to resort to an open contaminated stream for all their water needs. There is also no properly built toilet in the community as households use leaves to put together bathing areas which is not properly covered or well-lit for night-use while still practicing open defecation. This is a pathetic situation because the open stream is often visited by cows who drop their faeces in the water. Also, human faeces are also washed into same stream when it rains as surface-water runoff.

Ingesting contaminated water poses serious health risks to the people of Kuzhako, especially children living in the community and research shows that contaminated water leads to diarrhea which in turn kills 8% of under 5 children world over.

## **Demands**

- The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASSA) in line with its mandate should ensure that Kuzhako community has access to potable water.
- Development organizations such as Water Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF Nigeria who have Water, Sanitation and Hygiene as one of their thematic areas should come to the aid of the people of Kuzhako.
- Federal Ministry of Water Resources should engage other stakeholders in bringing water to Kuzhako community.



*Kuzhako woman drinking from surface stream.*



*Kuzhako woman drinking from surface stream.*

- Multinational and Corporate Organizations should consider building a standard community toilet in Kuzhako community as one of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects.
- Bwari Area Council through the department of environment and sanitation should sensitize Khuzhako community members on the ills of open defecation while engaging with various organizations to have a proper toilet built in the community and ensure proper waste management in the community.

4) **Education (Junior Secondary School/Educational Scholarships/Perimeter Fence at community primary school)**

There are numerous reasons why education is important. It promotes independence, confidence, peace and security, promotes equality and contributes to community stability because when people are educated, it rubs off on their family members and society. More so, when women and girls are educated, it has ripple effects on the familial, communal relationships. Fortunately for the people of Kuzhako, there exists a community primary school albeit with inadequate and properly trained teachers to cater to the needs of the children who attend the school. However, this primary school is without any form of security as it is without a fence leaving children at risk of abduction or animal grazing during school hours. There is also no secondary school in the community, thus when children graduate from the primary school, they have to go to Guto and Bwari Secondary schools (junior secondary schools in other villages) on foot or spend as much as 600 naira to get to and return from school on a daily basis.

Most families are unable to bear the transportation costs alongside enrollment fees at most of these secondary schools as well as purchase educational materials needed by the school children. Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in the community do not have these amount for an education so these children and adolescents end up falling back solely on farming while the females are pressured into marriage without an education or skills hence the need for educational scholarships for the young people of Kuzhako. As it currently stands, majority of the community population are primary school leavers which further contributes to the level of poverty in the community.



*Non functional hand pump borehole in Kuzhako*



*Abandoned Primary School Toilet in Kuzhako*



*Toilet under lock and key at the L.E.A Primary School Kuzhako*



## Demands

- The Federal Ministry of Education and the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) should set up a secondary school in Kuzhako community and consider the peculiarity of the community to make provision for afternoon schooling and reduce the risk of having children walk long distances to get to school and subsequent loss of concentration at school due to fatigue.
- The Bwari Area Council should see that a well-equipped vocational and technical center is constructed in Kuzhako. This will help reduce the unemployment rate in the community.
- Philanthropists with a heart for education should consider giving OVCs in the community scholarships.
- Bwari Area Council should engage relevant stakeholders to teach the young people of Kuzhako relevant skills and see that the community primary school is well fenced.

5) **Job Creation/Skills Development Centre:** Job creation for young people in underserved communities is a very important aspect of rural development and should be greatly encouraged and the building of a skills center can help fast-track the growth and progress of the community. For the youths of Kuzhako, they have not harnessed any other skill outside farming which unfortunately does not present them with a lot of options to make an income neither does it give them the confidence to compete for skilled jobs outside their community with other young people as they sit idle doing nothing during non-planting period. Learning a skill is also a great way to keep young minds creatively engaged and out of trouble.

### Demands

- The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development should consider employing indigenous women as cooks in the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) in order to provide jobs for them and in turn ensure that households have a sustainable source of income.
- The Federal Ministry of Agriculture should support Kuzhako community with improved seedlings, fertilizers and machinery like tractors to aid farmers scale up their farming and make more money to sustain their families.
- Individuals and Organizations considering going into mechanized farming should collaborate with members of Kuzhako community in setting up their farms and building necessary structures, this way, job opportunities are made available for community members in these farms.



- Development organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Dangote foundation, Coca Cola, ActionAid and other well-meaning organizations to build a technical and vocational training center in Kuzhako with skilled individuals as trainers on various skills. This way, the community youth in Kuzhako are presented with more money-making options.

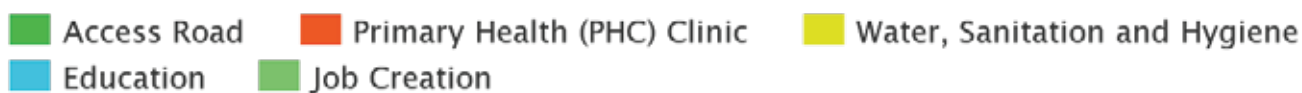
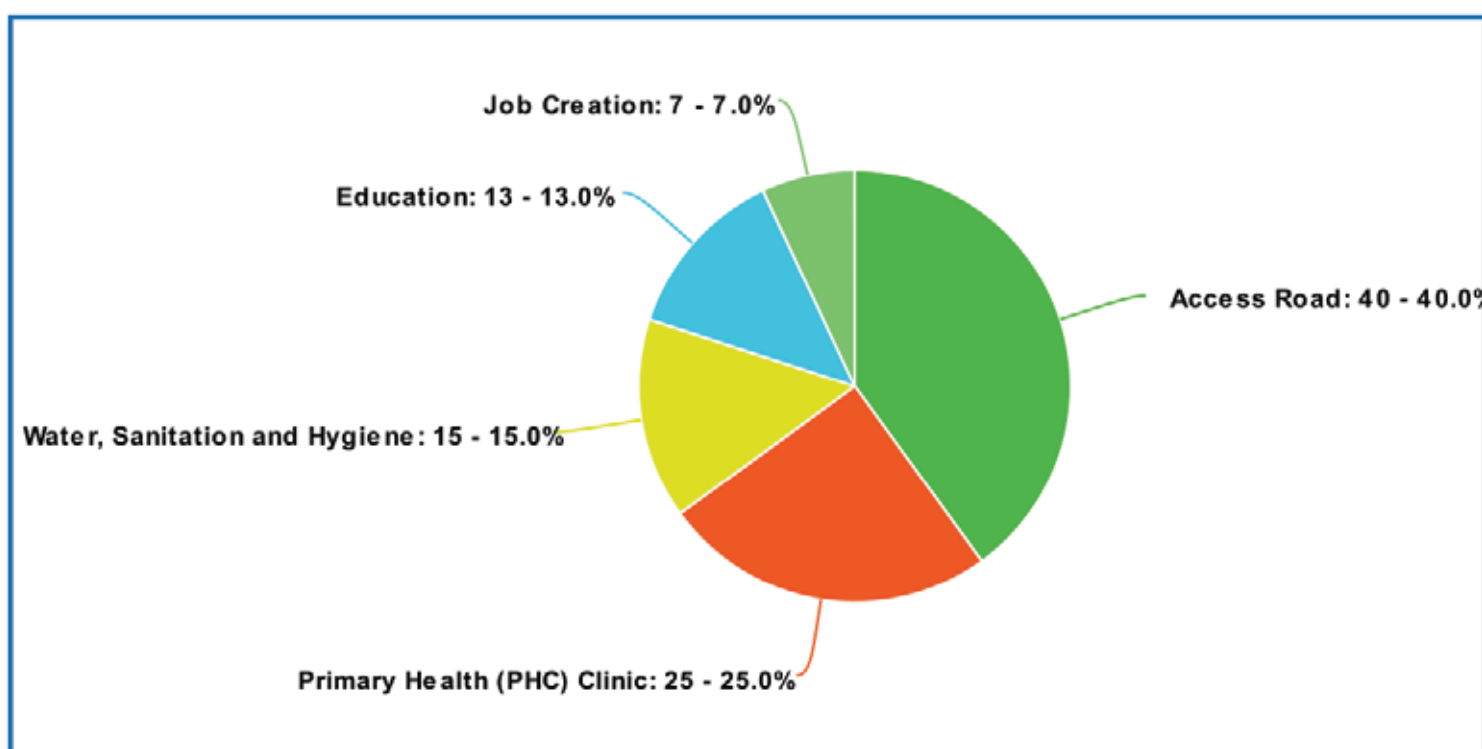


*In order to subdue the foul smell associated with poor hygiene during menstrual periods due to the unavailability of water, the women and girls confess to using a cream called 'Fressia' (costs 200 naira) which has a very strong scent to mask the odor*



# THE PRIORITY NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF KUZHAKO COMMUNITIES IN SUMMARY ARE:

Priority needs of the people of Kuzhako Community



meta-chart.com

# Pictures from Kuzhako Community





# Pictures from the Local Solution Lab



# GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

I ..... of .....  
(Name of Political Party)

do hereby acknowledge receipt of the Kuzhako community people's Charter of Demand.

I pledge that if and when elected into office as ....., I will do the best within

(mention office contested)

my powers as their elected representative to meet these demands.

Dated this Day .....

.....  
Aspirant Signature

.....  
Kuzhako Village Head Signature

.....  
Kuzhako Village Secretary Signature



# 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.

2.3 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



**KUZHAKO COMMUNITY  
CHARTER OF DEMAND**

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