

INVESTIGATION: Teachers, parents reconstructing classrooms in Plateau school 'abandoned' by govt



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Classrooms in RCM primary school, Dawaki, obviously, count among the 8,981 bad classrooms which the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) confirmed in Plateau state in 2010.

The school, established in 1945, and standing at the entrance of Dawaki, Kanke local government area, is now, structurally, a shadow of itself.

The last time the school benefited from government's special intervention was in 2003, TheCable can confirm. Three blocks of classrooms were renovated by the educational trust fund (ETF), and, 14 years after, the renovated classrooms are now tearing apart.

"This used to be a Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) school before the local government education authority (LGEA) took over, following a government's policy for missionary schools to be managed by the government," Gopep Inuwa, the school's head-teacher told TheCable when the newspaper visited.

Inuwa— who has been a teacher, an assistant head-teacher and now, a head-teacher in the school — said the RCM primary school is the main, mother of all, public school serving the entire community.



3 blocks of classrooms renovated in 2003 by ETF

Both UBEC and the state’s universal primary education board (SUBEB) — and even the LGEA— had, in recent time, visited the school but nothing significant has come out of their visit.

“They (UBEC and SUBEB) are aware that this school is in a horrible condition,” Inuwa said. “For years, we’ve been struggling with this poor structure and we continue to write the authorities, but it appears no one is ready to come to our aid.”

School Code **P T P 0 1 6 3 2**

E. CLASSROOMS

How many classrooms are there in the school? **9** Number. Yes No
 How many classes held outside (because classrooms are unusable or insufficient)? **1** Number. Yes No
 How many play rooms are there in the school for ECCD? **NONE** Number.

Information on all classrooms/play rooms

For each individual classroom, regardless of whether or not they are in use. Each row must correspond to a different classroom (not a block).
 Number of classrooms is more than the space provided, photocopy this page and attach to the questionnaire.

Condition	1 - Good	2 - Needs minor repairs	3 - Needs major repairs	4 - Under construction	5 - Unusable
Floor	1 - Mud/Earth	2 - Concrete	3 - Wood	4 - Tile/Terrazzo	
Wall	1 - Mud	2 - Cement/Concrete	3 - Wood/Bamboo	4 - Burnt bricks	5 - Iron sheets 6 - Stone 7 - No walls / dwarf walls
Roof	1 - Mud	2 - Cement/Concrete	3 - Wood/Bamboo	4 - Ceramic tiles	5 - Iron sheets 6 - Asbestos 7 - No roof
Seating	Are there enough seats for the children in this classroom?				1 - Yes 2 - No
Blackboard	Does the classroom have a good blackboard that children can read from?				1 - Yes 2 - No

1976	1	7	5	3	3	3	1	1	Example	1976	1	7	5	3	3	3	1	1
177	3	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	10									
177	3	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	11									
180	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	12									
180	3	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	13									
185	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	14									
186	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	15									
2001	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	16									
2001	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	17									
2001	2	9m	7m	2	2	5	2	2	18									

Number of rooms other than classrooms are there in the school by type of room

Staff rooms	NONE Number.	4	Laboratories	NONE Number.
Office	1 Number.	5	Store room	NONE Number.
Library	NONE Number.	6	Others	NONE Number.

Classrooms are unusable, insufficient

A document— federal ministry of education 2015/2016 school census form— obtained by TheCable showed classes are held outside because ‘classrooms are unusable or insufficient’.

Money realised from levy placed on parents and teachers was spent on plastering some of the cracking walls.

“I wouldn’t wait until the walls start falling on my pupils,” the head-teacher explained. “So, I called my teachers, and we put money together, added it to what we got from PTA levy and we fixed the little things we could fix.”

In 2016, a group of people who identified themselves simply as ‘contractors’ came to the school. They told the school management that they were sent from the ‘office of the speaker’ to reconstruct the school. The school management was told that they were going to get three blocks of classrooms, office and toilets. However, after many months of waiting, the ‘contractors’ are yet to return for the reconstruction.

Again, on May 29, 2017, another set of contractors came from Abuja, informing the school that the ministry of power, works and housing sent them to reconstruct the school. Unlike the first set of contractors, the ‘Abuja contractors’ showed the school management a copy of the reconstruction plan that ‘was approved by the ministry’. They went further by digging

the foundation for two new blocks of classrooms, and since they left, the foundation dug has been sprawled over by clump of shrubs.

In the 2017 appropriation bill, the ministry budgeted N1.2b to construct public schools across the states.

“I have called these contractors many times, and they wouldn’t answer my calls,” the frustrated head-teacher told TheCable.

“When they came here, they said the project is from the federal ministry in Abuja, and I was so excited. We were instructed to clear the area, and out of the excitement, we used our money and energy to clear the area of the land where the classrooms would be built. They, then, gave us N15,000 to hire labourers for the digging of the foundation. It is just as if the N15, 000 and our efforts have been wasted because they never returned to complete the work and everywhere has been taken over by bush.”



Abandoned foundation of classrooms

Inuwa, who is also the secretary of Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) in the local government, said apart from his school, some other schools within the local government area were also visited and left with foundations that had since been abandoned.

There is another uncompleted block of classrooms at RCM primary school. TheCable gathered construction work started there in the 90s.

“We don’t really know why that one, too, was abandoned,” the head-teacher said.

“We don’t know where the project came from, but we understood an architect from this community was contracted and when he wasn’t paid, he left it.” The head-teacher claimed he once saw a recently written document where the completion of this particular abandoned structure was approved.

“Pupils don’t even have good chairs to sit,” one of the teachers told TheCable. “Most of them sit on the floor, and this has greatly affected their writing,” the teacher added.

When TheCable contacted a contractor simply identified as Kunle, he blamed the abandonment on government’s non-payment.

“They (federal ministry of works) are yet to release money to us,” he said. “As soon as we get the money to work, you will see us there. They, however, promised to mobilise us this month, and so, we are waiting,” said theman fromm Westfield construction company.

He was identified as the project supervisor from Abuja. Kunle confirmed that projects in three other schools in the area have been abandoned.



Dilapidated school toilet

In a document— titled, ‘Project Executed in 2006’— seen by TheCable, the Plateau State Universal Education Board (PSUBEB), constructed 18 classrooms and two offices with N31.7m in Kanke local government area in the said year. In a similar document, PSUBEB spent N36.2m to construct 43 classrooms in Kanke in 2007, and in 2008, the board constructed 23 classrooms with N50m. 40 classrooms were renovated and 10 offices constructed in Kanke local government area for N57m in 2009. Between January to December, 2016, the board spent N1b on capital expenditure, getting over N2b approval for same purpose in 2017.

Details of schools in Kanke where these classrooms were constructed weren’t available in the documents. It is, however, surprising that an old and popular school like RCM primary school, Dawaki, did not benefit from the construction and renovation of classrooms.



A classroom

“In the entire Kanke local government area, this is the most popular public primary school,” one of the locals said.

“How would they have claimed to have constructed and renovated many classrooms leaving RCM behind?” he added.

“So, government has constructed that number of classrooms here?” a teacher asked when shown the documents.

“But, they (people in government) have always told us that there is no money to construct classrooms now.”

Meanwhile, in the 2017 constituency project, the ministry of power, works and housing will use N15m to renovate the palace of the Dawaki village head.

When contacted, Eno Olotu, director of press at the housing department of the ministry, said she did not know any thing about the ministry’s projects. Earlier, an aide to Babatunde Fashola,

minister of power, works and housing had told TheCable that there are thousands of ongoing projects at the ministry and could be difficult to identify the ones abandoned.

None of the officials of Kanke LGEA and PSUBEB responded to calls and messages put across to them.

Another academic session just ended with pupils and teachers of RCM primary school, Dawaki not having what's required for proper learning and teaching. If this is not urgently attended to, pupils may drop interest in coming to school, the teachers now fear.

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