



HCD Program

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SPECIAL EDITION

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Nigeria's Human Capital Drive: Why It Matters Now More Than Ever – Rukaiya El-Rufai **PG 5**

Koroma Calls For Stronger Data-Driven Human Capital Investments **PG 13**



Nigeria Rethinks Growth Strategy With Localised Human Capital Blueprint In Akwa Ibom

A decisive step toward reshaping Nigeria's developmental trajectory comes with the recent launch of the Akwa Ibom State ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy, marking a critical moment in the country's long-term economic planning. Vice President Kashim Shettima has decided to take the HCD initiatives beyond political leanings and affiliation, having believed so much in the national development as was the focus of the program in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. For him, the federal government's development actions must spread across the different states in Nigeria. Prioritising measurable outcomes, this localised blueprint aligns with the national HCD goals, placing people at the centre of the governance. Below, Enam Obiosio writes on the key aspects of the launch.

The Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Bassey Eno, with the entire state functionaries, had recently gathered to launch of the Akwa Ibom State ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy. The HCD programme is the federal government's initiative also ensured for the subnational, as it is often the emphasis of the Vice President.

At the official flag-off in Uyo precisely on April 14, 2025, Vice President Kashim Shettima, described the moment as a landmark for Nigeria's second phase of the National Human Capital Development Programme—HCD 2.0.

The revised strategy aims to consolidate and accelerate progress made in the first phase by integrating cross-sectoral, data-driven solutions that place people at the centre of governance.



Vice President Kashim Shettima at the recent launch of the ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy in Akwa Ibom State.

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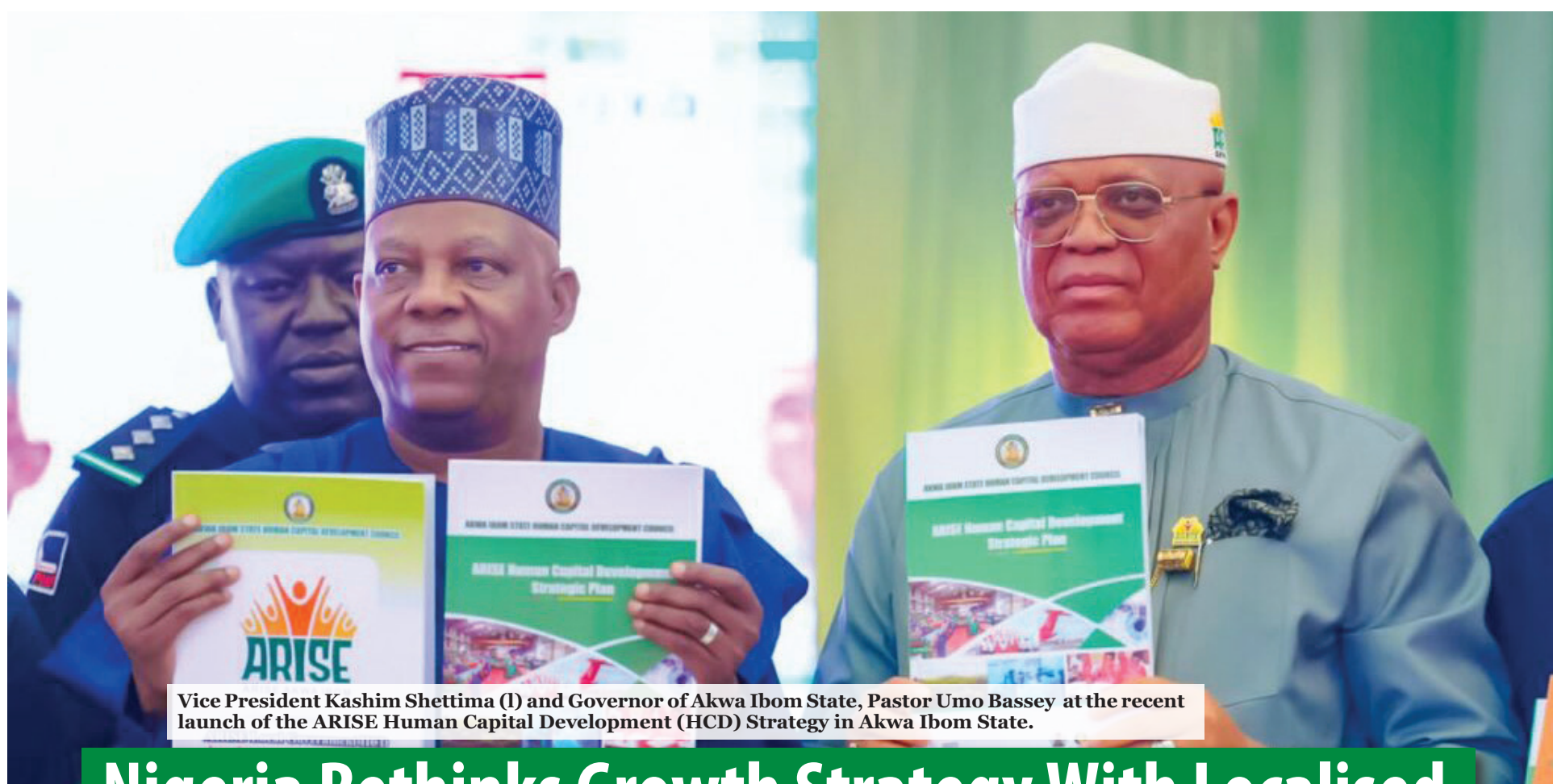


...driving sustainable economic growth, boosting productivity and reducing poverty

Human Capital Development in Nigeria



Human Capital Development in Nigeria



Vice President Kashim Shettima (I) and Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Bassey at the recent launch of the ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy in Akwa Ibom State.

Nigeria Rethinks Growth Strategy With Localised Human Capital Blueprint In Akwa Ibom

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The Vice President lauded this move as more than symbolic leadership—it is, he said, a deliberate step towards measurable impact. Backed by data, the state's performance speaks volumes. While Nigeria's national under-five mortality rate stands at 110, Akwa Ibom records a significantly lower rate of 80. With just 3.5 percent of primary school-aged children out of school—well below the national average of 25.6 percent—the state has proven itself as a model of proactive governance and policy localisation.

The launch of the ARISE HCD Strategy was also coupled with the continuation of the National HCD Accelerator Project on Clean Cooking—Project Fuuku. Introduced in Nasarawa State and now extended to Akwa Ibom State, the project brings safe, clean cookstoves to vulnerable households. The initiative addresses a multidimensional challenge: reducing maternal health risks, mitigating environmental degradation, and easing the burden on rural women.

According to the Vice President, this gender-sensitive and climate-conscious intervention is more than an energy policy—it is a tool for equity and resilience.

What makes the current momentum particularly promising is the real-time data tracking now embedded in the HCD programme. The HCD Dashboard launched by the federal government allows for state and local governments to track indicators such as immunisation rates, child malnutrition (stunting), maternal mortality, learning outcomes, and youth unemployment.

"We cannot solve what we do not measure," the Vice President said. "Behind every statistic is a human being, a life that either flourishes or falters based on our policies."

To ensure the sustainability of this reform agenda, the federal government is institutionalising the HCD Fund. The idea is to buffer these investments from political turnover, ensuring that the gains made today are not undone tomorrow. With plans to reach a Human Capital Index (HCI) of 0.6 and rank among the world's top 80 nations by 2030, Nigeria's strategy now hinges on smart financing, swift implementation, and data-backed governance.

Vice President Shettima summed it up clearly: "There is no legacy greater than investing in people." And in a country where human potential remains the most underutilised resource, this legacy is not only welcome—it is long overdue.

In his statement particularly at the launch on the roadmap, Governor Umo Eno emphasised that real

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The launch of the ARISE HCD Strategy was also coupled with the continuation of the National HCD Accelerator Project on Clean Cooking—Project Fuuku

prosperity in the 21st century lies not in infrastructure or natural resources, but in the people—their skills, their health, and their potential. He described the plan as a practical manifestation of inclusive growth, where every citizen, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully to the society. He called on the stakeholders at all levels to rally around the vision of building a more equitable and empowered Akwa Ibom.

Structured in four detailed chapters, the roadmap begins by laying out the background of the HCD initiative in the state. It underscores the establishment of local steering committees tasked with overseeing implementation and ensuring that community needs are at the heart of every intervention.

Akwa Ibom State, by localising this framework across all its local government areas, has become the first state in the federation to align its sub-national development blueprint fully with the national HCD priorities.

Also, Her Excellency, Madam Finda Koroma, Former Vice President ECOWAS Commission and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Africa Human Capital Development Plus (HCD+), has thrown her weight behind the ARISE initiative of Akwa Ibom State, describing it as a strategic blueprint for transforming human potential into economic power.

While addressing stakeholders at the launch, she commended the state government's deliberate positioning of human capital development (HCD) as the nucleus of governance and a lever for long-term prosperity.

"This mission reflects a deliberate commitment to improving citizen well-being—something that aligns strongly with our work across Africa," she said.

At the heart of HCD+'s approach is a five-pillar model that cuts across health and health security; nutrition and food security; education, skills development, and labour participation; entrepreneurship and digital transformation; and gender-transformative policies. These pillars, she noted, are not just abstract ideals—they are actionable levers for real change.

She also commended Akwa Ibom State's leadership for launching the ARISE Local Government HCD Implementation Roadmap, which maps out a bottom-up approach to development by embedding critical interventions at the grassroots. With an emphasis on early childhood development, adolescent health, youth skilling, and women's empowerment, the roadmap mirrors international best practices in lifecycle-based human capital planning.

"This effort offers a compelling example of how local ambition can align with national and continental HCD goals," she said, stating that the blueprint has potential to serve as a model for other subnational governments in Nigeria and across Africa.

Drawing on its engagements in Lagos, Kaduna, and Nasarawa States, HCD+ has, according to the HCD team, provided technical support, capacity-building, and small grants aimed at enhancing subnational HCD interventions. These programs have strengthened local data systems, empowered communities, and promoted gender-responsive policy frameworks that are already translating into real-world impact.

"Evidence must be our compass," Madam Koroma, emphasising the need for real-time data and adaptive policymaking that meets people where they are—geographically, economically, and socially.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Nkechi Obi, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Techno Oil limited, while speaking at the same event expressed deep appreciation to the Vice President and his team for spearheading the HCD initiative, describing it as a timely and necessary intervention aimed at transforming the socio-economic realities of Nigerians, particularly residents of Akwa Ibom State. She emphasised that no society can achieve meaningful progress or sustainable development without a deliberate and actionable roadmap that addresses the critical gaps stalling human capital growth.

Hadejia Upholds The Crucial Role in Driving Nigerian HCD

By Jennete Ugo Anya

In Nigeria's ambitious journey to reshape its economic future through people-focused policies, the Core Working Group (CWG) of the Human Capital Development (HCD) programme sits at the very heart of the transformation—quietly orchestrating one of the nation's most consequential socio-economic strategies in decades.

Following the inauguration of the National Economic Council (NEC) HCD Steering Committee in May 2024, the CWG emerged as the technical brain trust tasked with operationalising Nigeria's HCD vision. Charged with a responsibility that stretches far beyond traditional advisory functions, the CWG has become the primary mechanism through which Nigeria aims to add 24 million healthy, educated, and economically productive citizens to its population in the coming years.

At the centre of the HCD programme lies the CWG—a technical powerhouse investing in people to power national prosperity. Chaired by Mr. Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President in the Office of the Vice President, the CWG is embedded within the NEC-approved governance structure. It functions as the programme's operational nerve centre—translating national policy into measurable, subnational outcomes across health, education, and labour force participation.

The Backbone of Nigeria's HCD Architecture

The Human Capital Development programme is built on a robust three-tier governance structure: an Apex Body, a Steering Committee, and the Core Working Group. While the Apex Body provides political oversight and the Steering Committee aligns federal and state-level priorities, the CWG drives day-to-day coordination, technical design, implementation support, and performance monitoring.

Made up of sector experts, development partners, and focal points from states across the federation, the CWG brings a multi-disciplinary lens to solving Nigeria's human capital challenges. Its mandate is focused and clear—build



Sen. Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Chairman, National Human Capital Development Core Working Group

a cohesive, accountable system that enables states to implement and deliver human development outcomes in line with national goals.

Turning Strategy into Action

At the inauguration of the Committee in May 17, 2024, Vice President Kashim Shettima highlighted the significance of the CWG's role, describing it as a national responsibility that goes beyond government bureaucracy. He reminded members that millions of Nigerians are looking to the programme for real, measurable improvements in their daily lives—whether in access to healthcare, quality education, or pathways to meaningful employment.

"The task ahead is immense, and so are the stakes high," the Vice

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The Human Capital Development programme is built on a robust three-tier governance structure: an Apex Body, a Steering Committee, and the Core Working Group

President noted. "We are going to rely on your insights, data-driven approaches, and

innovative solutions to ensure our targets are not just met, but exceeded."

Data-Driven Execution in the Field

What distinguishes the CWG is its unwavering commitment to evidence-based execution. The group actively tracks over 50 HCD indicators in real time, enabling state and federal actors to assess performance, identify gaps, and adjust strategies quickly. From deploying diagnostics and analysing implementation bottlenecks to recommending resource allocations, the CWG ensures that policy is not only implemented but also measured for impact.

In a results-oriented development environment, the CWG serves as the accountability engine behind Nigeria's human capital goals. It plays a critical role in addressing disparities across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, ensuring that no state is left behind in the push for inclusive growth.

Bridging Federal Vision with Local Realities

Perhaps the most strategic function of the CWG is its role as a bridge between federal ambition and subnational implementation. While the NEC provides direction and political commitment, the CWG ensures that this vision is translated into frameworks and tools that can be effectively deployed at the state and local government levels.

This dual responsibility—maintaining national coherence while enabling local adaptation—positions the CWG as both a central intelligence hub and a frontline support system. It coordinates across ministries, departments, and agencies to foster collaboration, streamline efforts, and accelerate results.

As Nigeria works toward achieving a Human Capital Index (HCI) of 0.6 by 2030, the importance of the CWG cannot be overstated. It is the engine room of the country's people-first development strategy—ensuring that policies do not remain on paper but translate into improved lives for millions.

From expanding access to education and reducing child mortality to equipping youth with skills for the future, the CWG is building the scaffolding for Nigeria's long-term socio-economic stability. It exemplifies what is possible when technical expertise, political will, and data converge with purpose.

Human Capital
Development
in Nigeria



Advancing Nigeria's Human Capital:

HCD 2.0 Strategy, and Structure



Nigeria's Human Capital Drive: Why It Matters Now More Than Ever – Rukaiya El-Rufai

By Jennete Ugo Anya

Considering the sobering revelations from the 2018 Human Capital Index, Nigeria is committed to charting a new course with the launch and evolution of its National Human Capital Development (HCD) Programme. Now rebranded and revitalised as HCD 2.0, this transformative agenda represents more than just policy continuity—it signals a new era of intentional investment in the lives, skills, and future productivity of Nigerians.

The HCD 2.0 is the product of rigorous introspection. It follows a comprehensive reassessment of the first phase of the programme, identifying implementation gaps and missed opportunities that stunted previous impact.

The newly revised strategy is aligned with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 'Renewed Hope' Agenda and is steered by Vice President Kashim Shettima, who has been playing a major role since the original phase. His leadership is now central to the reinvigoration of a nationwide effort aimed at building a healthier, more educated, and more economically productive population.

The urgency to invest in human capital has never been clearer. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index (2018 – 2020), Nigeria continues to grapple with high child mortality rates, learning poverty, malnutrition, and health system inefficiencies—factors that all contribute to long-term economic drag. These indicators make the case that human capital development is not merely a social policy; it is a national economic imperative.

According to Rukaiya El-Rufai, Special Adviser to the President on NEC & Climate Change and National Coordinator, Human Capital Development in Nigeria, the "HCD 2.0 goes beyond traditional education and healthcare reform. It integrates emerging trends in technology, entrepreneurship, and skills development to match the fast-paced demands of today's global economy."

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HCD 2.0 goes beyond traditional education and healthcare reform. It integrates emerging trends in technology, entrepreneurship, and skills development to match the fast-paced demands of today's global economy



Rukaiya El-Rufai, Special Adviser to the President on NEC & Climate Change and National Coordinator, Human Capital Development in Nigeria

"It places a premium on outcomes: school-to-work transition, job readiness, gender equity, and scalable innovation. With a strategic emphasis on digital literacy, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)

education, maternal and child health, nutrition, and youth empowerment, the programme promises to unlock a demographic dividend in the coming decade," she said.

The economic rationale behind this pivot is compelling. Studies show that countries investing in human capital experience higher gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates, lower unemployment, and improved national competitiveness. Nigeria, with its vast youth population—more than 60 percent under the age of 25—has the potential to become an economic powerhouse if it can convert this demographic into a skilled and healthy workforce.

In Rukaiya El-Rufai's words: "Yet, real transformation requires more than policy declarations. The HCD 2.0 is designed with a multi-sectoral framework that encourages partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, the private sector, donor agencies, and civil society. The programme is structured to be measurable, accountable, and results-driven. It embeds a robust

monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress, ensuring that investments in people translate into real socio-economic outcomes."

"The Vice President's leadership reflects a strong political will to make human development a top-tier priority. His previous track record as the Governor of Borno State, where he invested in education and health despite conflict-related challenges, underscores his credibility in pushing this national agenda forward," she also said.

As Nigeria confronts the dual challenges of economic uncertainty and a growing population, the HCD 2.0 offers a roadmap for inclusive growth. It positions human capital not just as a sectoral priority but as the cornerstone of Nigeria's future prosperity.

Now is the time for stakeholders—from ministries to multinational firms—to align with this vision. Human capital development is no longer a policy option; it is Nigeria's most strategic investment, according to El-Rufai.

Editorial

Why FG Must Double Down On Scaling HCD Across All States

Nigeria's long-term prosperity will not be written in oil wells or natural resources—it will be written in classrooms, health clinics, and the productivity of its young, rapidly growing population. With more than 60 percent of citizens under the age of 25, the country's true wealth lies in its people. Recognising this, the federal government's Human Capital Development (HCD) programme has emerged as one of the most transformative national efforts in recent times. But, we believe for Nigeria to truly capitalise on this momentum, there is a clear and urgent need for the government to double down and scale HCD initiatives across all states, and the for all the state governments to key into this initiatives, regardless of the political affiliations.

The National HCD Programme was never designed as a one-size-fits-all policy—it was structured to catalyse state-level innovation through a decentralised but data-driven framework. Anchored on three core pillars—health and nutrition, education, and labour force participation—the programme's goal is to raise a generation of Nigerians who are not only healthy and educated but also economically active. And in states where political will has matched the policy vision, the outcomes speak for themselves.

To us Akwa Ibom State provides a powerful case study. The state has embraced the HCD strategy with measurable results: a 22 percent jump in early childhood enrolment, a 31 percent increase in skilled birth attendants, and a notable reduction in infant mortality from 61 to 47 deaths per 1,000 live births. The state's youth employment drive, supported by

targeted skills acquisition programmes, has engaged over 18,000 young people in the last two years alone. These achievements are not isolated—they are the outcome of rigorous planning, local ownership, and the strategic application of a results-based monitoring dashboard tracking over 50 human capital indicators at the grassroots.

This level of progress, however, remains

accountability mechanisms. The states that demonstrate measurable improvements in health, education, and employment outcomes could be rewarded with additional resources or policy levers. On the other hand, lagging states should face targeted federal intervention to unblock bottlenecks and align execution with national goals.

Moreover, the integration of private sector partnerships and international development agencies can further amplify impact, especially in areas like technical and vocational education, maternal and child health, and digital skills development. But without a strong federal backbone, these partnerships may remain fragmented or underleveraged.

In a post-pandemic global economy where competitiveness increasingly depends on human capability, Nigeria cannot afford to treat human capital as an optional agenda item. It must be the national strategy. The cost of inaction is already visible—in the country's

productivity gap, skills mismatch, and growing social inequality. In scaling the HCD programme with intentionality and speed, the governments have the opportunity to shape a new economic narrative—one driven not just by gross domestic product (GDP) numbers but by the quality of life of every Nigerian citizen.

The data is compelling. The roadmap exists. What is needed now is stronger governments resolve to ensure that every state—not just the most proactive—becomes a hub of human capital advancement. Because in the end, no matter how diverse Nigeria's challenges may be, the solution begins with the same truth: investing in people is investing in progress.

The National HCD Programme was never designed as a one-size-fits-all policy—it was structured to catalyse state-level innovation through a decentralised but data-driven framework

uneven across the federation. While 33 states and the FCT have formally adopted the HCD framework, the depth of implementation varies widely. Some states have yet to convert the framework into sustained action, either due to bureaucratic inertia, lack of political prioritisation, or inadequate coordination between ministries and local government actors.

This is where, we opt that the governments across the country must recalibrate their role—not just as facilitators, but as drivers. Scaling HCD across all 36 states requires sustained federal commitment's efforts in three key areas: technical support, fiscal incentives, and

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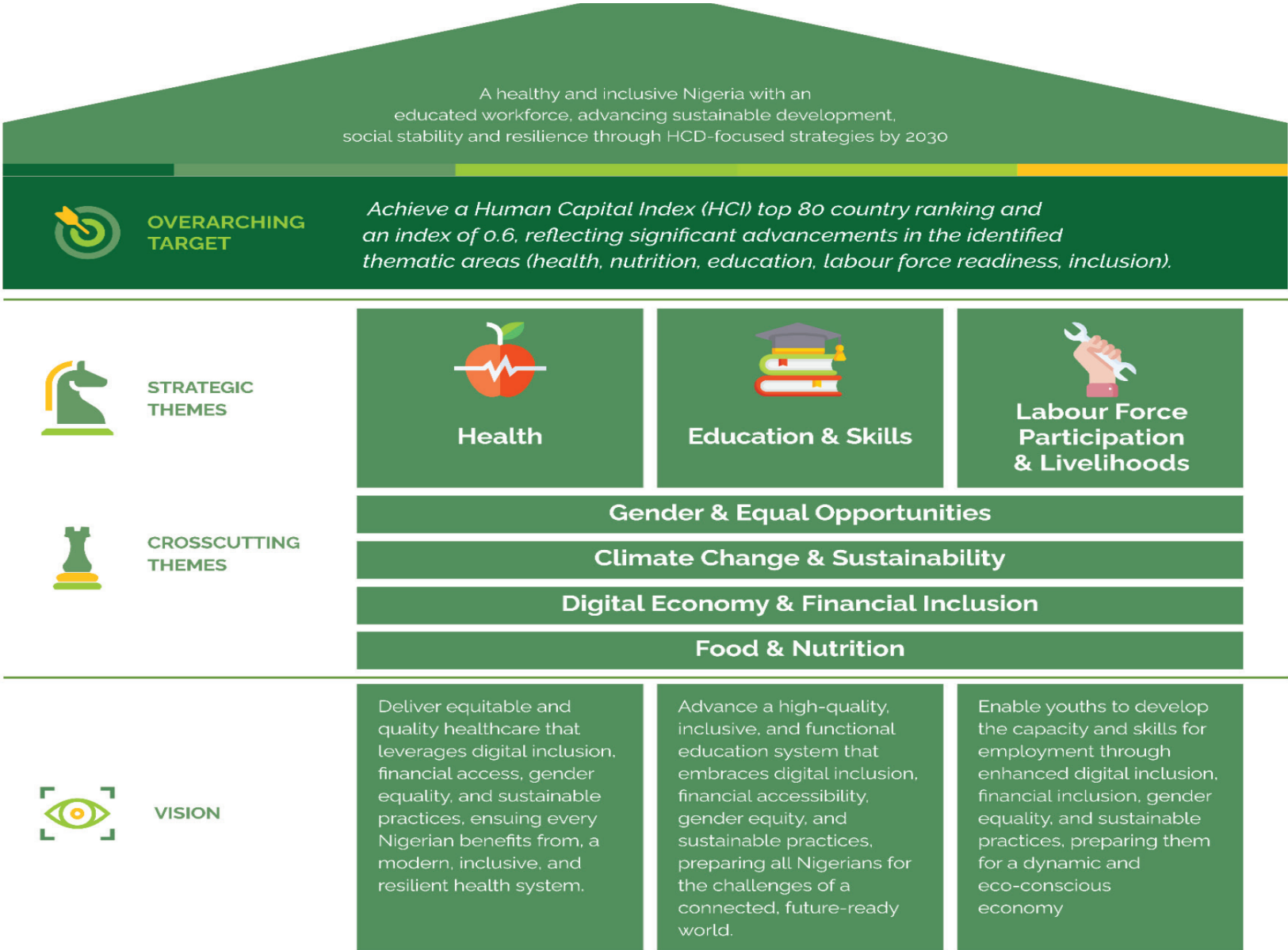
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Key Improvements

- 1 HCD 2.0 vision is results-oriented rather than output-oriented, with an emphasis on impact
- 2 The HCD 2.0 target incorporates the HCI, a globally recognized measure that provides a comparative assessment of human capital development
- 3 The strategic themes have been expanded to ensure inclusivity and sustainable development
- 4 Crosscutting themes have been identified for effective mainstreaming

Nigeria's Human Capital Initiative Powers The Path To A Prosperous Future

By Musa Ibrahim

In a bold shift from fragmented interventions to an integrated and results-oriented framework, Nigeria's Human Capital Development (HCD) strategy is now taking shape as a cornerstone of the nation's long-term growth ambition.

Under the newly launched HCD 2.0 blueprint, the country is doubling down on efforts to improve lives, build skills, and unlock productivity across every stage of the human lifecycle.

The government's vision for HCD is no longer simply about ticking boxes or expanding access to basic services. Rather, the focus has moved toward outcomes that have a measurable impact on people's lives. The new strategy is deeply aligned with global standards, especially through the adoption of the Human Capital Index (HCI)—a World Bank-devised metric that offers a comparative lens for assessing how effectively countries are investing in their citizens. By rooting its goals in the HCI framework, Nigeria has declared its intent to hold itself accountable on the international stage.

At the core of this transformation is an expanded strategic house that prioritises inclusivity, sustainability, and measurable impact. No sector is left behind. Health, education, nutrition, youth empowerment, and skills development have all been brought under one unifying framework—each treated not as separate silos but as interconnected pillars for economic resilience and growth.

In contrast to past approaches, which were often output-driven and short-term in focus, the HCD

2.0 framework takes a long view. It emphasises sustainable progress over political cycles and encourages inter-agency collaboration. Through carefully selected indicators from respected bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the World Bank, Nigeria has ensured that the metrics guiding implementation are not just ambitious but internationally benchmarked.

One of the standout features of the new framework is the emphasis on cross-cutting themes such as gender equity, climate sensitivity, and digital inclusion. These are not treated as afterthoughts but as integrated levers for amplifying the impact of HCD investments. From improving maternal health outcomes to enhancing digital literacy among rural youth, the strategy embeds equity and resilience at every level.

Governance structures under the HCD 2.0 have also undergone a significant overhaul. The expanded architecture is designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective resource mobilisation. With broader stakeholder engagement, including civil society, state actors, and development partners, the new approach seeks to make HCD everyone's business. This is especially critical in a country where implementation gaps have often undermined good policy intentions.

Operational sustainability is another pillar of the new plan. Nigeria's updated HCD structures are not only geared toward delivering results in the short term

but are also built to withstand shocks. Whether it's the fallout from a pandemic, a fiscal crunch, or climate-related disruption, the architecture is designed to be resilient and adaptable.

As Nigeria works toward building a \$1 trillion economy, no pillar is more crucial than its people. Human capital is the bedrock upon which innovation, productivity, and inclusive development stand. The HCD 2.0 vision recognises this and seeks to translate potential into performance, not just for today's population but for future generations.



Vice President Kashim Shettima

By Anita Dennis

Nigeria's human capital development is at a critical juncture. With 180 million Nigerians lacking access to clean cooking fuels, children and over 98,000 women dying annually from the harmful effects of cooking with firewood, the need for change is undeniable.

This is where the HCD's Programme Accelerator Projects - Fuuku - among others, comes into play—a transformative clean cooking initiative designed not only to address the pressing health risks posed by traditional cooking practices but also to contribute to the country's broader human capital development goals.

The scale of the problem in Nigeria is staggering, with four out of five Africans exposed to harmful gases every day as they prepare meals over open fires or traditional stoves. These cooking methods are not only inefficient but also contribute to respiratory diseases, especially among women and children. Project Fuuku aims to mitigate these risks by replacing these outdated and dangerous methods with clean cookstoves, which will be distributed to vulnerable communities across the country.

Beyond health, Project Fuuku also seeks to address environmental and economic challenges. The initiative's clean cookstoves have significant carbon offset potential, presenting an innovative funding pathway through the generation of carbon credits. These credits, which are tradable on global markets, offer a sustainable way to fund the expansion of the program, thereby ensuring long-term impact. In doing so, the project aligns with Nigeria's goals under the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emissions and transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy solutions.

The benefits of Project Fuuku extend far beyond the environment. It is a vital initiative for Nigeria's human capital development. In reducing health risks associated with cooking,

the program will create healthier, more productive citizens, who can contribute to the country's economic growth. Additionally, women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by the use of firewood and kerosene, will benefit from more time to pursue education, entrepreneurship, and other productive activities. The initiative thus provides an essential boost to gender equality, empowering women while simultaneously tackling health and environmental issues.

But Project Fuuku, as stated above, is just one of many initiatives under Nigeria's Programme Accelerator workstream, which aims to rapidly scale high-impact projects that enhance public well-being and accelerate human capital development. Other accelerator projects, such as the Adopt a School program, Adopt a PHC program, Food 4 Education, Smart Kids, and the Digital AI Initiative for Education, focus on improving education, healthcare, and skills development, all of which contribute to Nigeria's broader human capital development agenda.

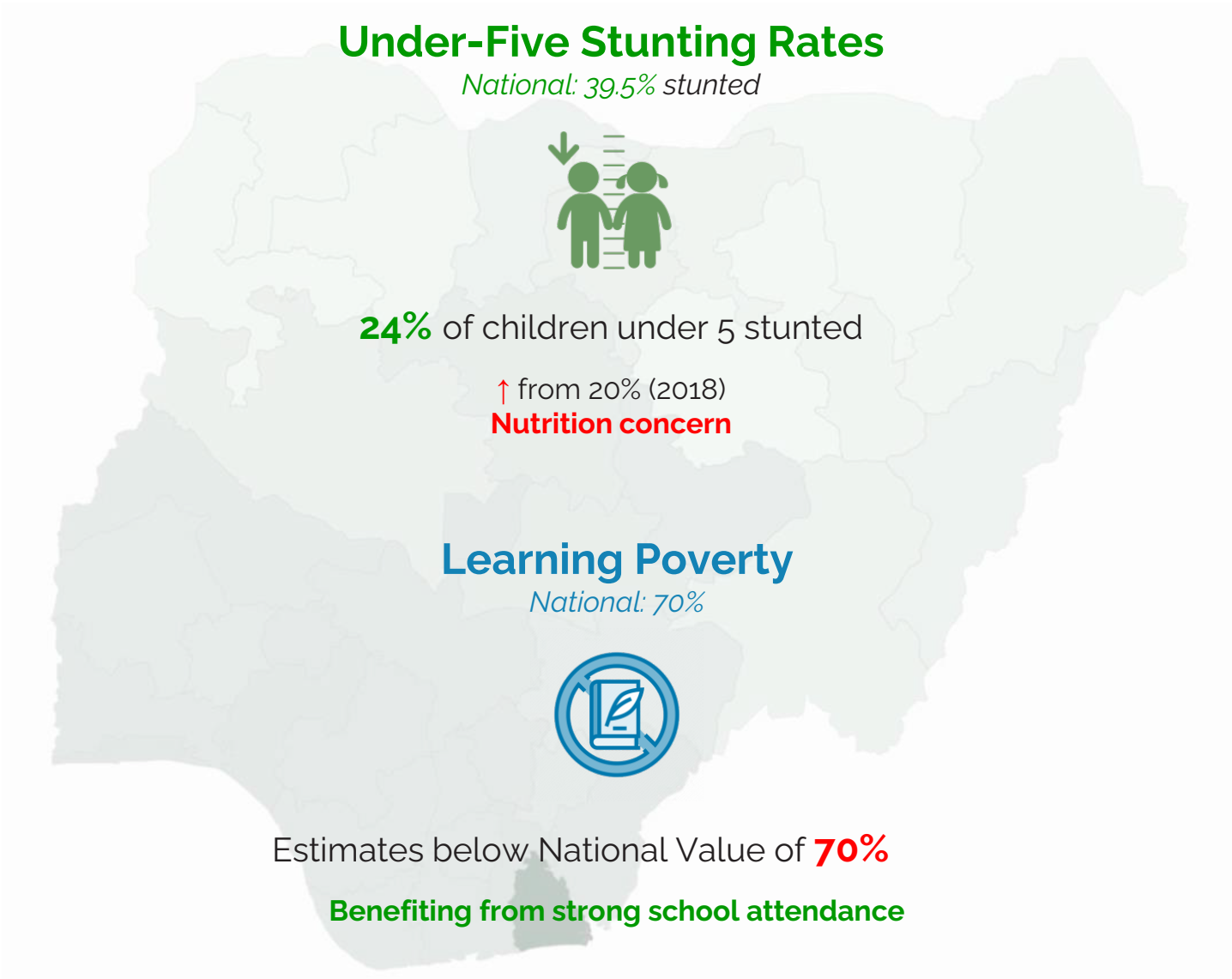
The Adopt a School and Adopt a PHC programs aim to address the critical gaps in education and healthcare, particularly in underserved rural areas, ensuring that all Nigerians have access to the resources and services they need to thrive. The Food 4 Education program ensures that children are well-fed and able to focus on learning, while Smart Kids develops the next generation of innovators by providing children with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills. Meanwhile, the Digital AI Initiative leverages technology to enhance education across Nigeria.

These programs, together with Project Fuuku, form the backbone of Nigeria's strategy to improve human capital and drive economic growth. In tackling health, education, gender equality, and sustainability in tandem, the initiative offers a comprehensive approach to development that holds great promise for the future.

Project Fuuku Revolutionises Cooking Practices, Drives HCD In Nigeria



Akwa Ibom State Performance Snapshot



Under-Five Mortality Rates

National: 110 per 1000 livebirths

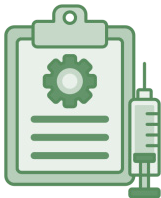


80 per 1000 livebirths

↓ from 98 (2018)
18.4% decline

Immunization Coverage

National: 36% coverage



53% of children (12-23 mo.) fully immunized

↑ from 44% (2017)
Strong performance

Out of School (Primary)

National: 25.6%



3.5% of children out of school

↓ from 16% (2017)
Exceptional access

Youth NEET

National: 14.4%



Estimates below National Value of **14.4%**
Likely less severe than most states

Techno Oil Champions HCD Through Clean Energy Advocacy In Akwa Ibom

By Kingsley Benson

A renewed call for inclusive growth and sustainable development echoed strongly in Akwa Ibom as Techno Oil Limited, one of Nigeria's leading indigenous energy companies, pledged deeper commitment to human capital development (HCD) through the promotion of clean energy solutions.

Mrs. Nkechi Obi, Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Techno Oil limited, made this declaration during a recent launch of Akwa Ibom State's ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy and the continuation of the National HCD Accelerator Project on Clean Cooking in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

In her address, she expressed deep appreciation to the Vice President and his team for spearheading the HCD initiative, describing it as a timely and necessary intervention aimed at transforming the socio-economic realities of Nigerians, particularly residents of Akwa Ibom. She emphasised that no society can achieve meaningful progress or sustainable development without a deliberate and actionable roadmap that addresses the critical gaps stalling human capital growth.

Reinforcing the company's position, Techno Oil made a compelling case for the role of energy—specifically access to clean, affordable fuel—as a foundation for human capital improvement. Linking their advocacy to Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7), which focuses on affordable and clean energy, Mrs. Obi stressed that energy poverty remains a serious threat to economic and social progress in Nigeria.

She cited data from the World Health Organisation (WHO), which reports that approximately 130,000 deaths occur annually in Nigeria due to household air pollution caused by cooking with firewood and kerosene. This, she explained, is more than just a health crisis—it is a development crisis. The company is therefore promoting the transition to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as a safer, cleaner and more environmentally sound alternative.

“As a woman, I believe our women and girls must not cook to die—they must cook to live,” she asserted passionately, underlining the disproportionate burden borne by women in energy-deprived communities. The shift to LPG, Mrs. Obi noted, would not only save lives but also enhance economic productivity, empower women, and protect the environment.

Driving Nigeria's LPG Revolution
As part of its corporate responsibility and national development goals, Techno Oil has been investing significantly in LPG infrastructure to address Nigeria's long-standing challenges in energy access. With over two decades of active presence in the oil and gas sector, the company has positioned itself as a central player in the country's energy



Mrs. Nkechi Obi, MD/CEO of Techno Oil Limited

transition journey.

A major milestone in Techno Oil's contribution is the establishment of a state-of-the-art LPG Cylinder Manufacturing Plant with a production capacity of 5 million units per annum. The plant, commissioned in June 2019 by former Vice President Yemi

Osinbajo, represents one of the largest such facilities in the West African region.

The company also operates an 8,400 metric tonnes fully automated LPG Coastal Storage Terminal, a critical investment designed to strengthen the LPG supply chain in Nigeria. To

support retail access, Techno Oil has deployed more than 50 mobile LPG skid stations and 20 LPG haulage trucks with a carrying capacity of 27 metric tonnes each. These efforts are aimed at improving the accessibility, availability, and affordability of LPG nationwide.

Techno Oil's operations have received multiple endorsements from regulatory bodies, including certification by the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON). The recognition highlights the company's strict adherence to quality management systems across its entire value chain—from manufacturing and storage to distribution.

In aligning its business strategy with the federal government's LPG utilisation and energy transition programmes, Techno Oil has emerged not just as a commercial enterprise, but as a strategic partner in Nigeria's national development agenda.

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A major milestone in Techno Oil's contribution is the establishment of a state-of-the-art LPG Cylinder Manufacturing Plant with a production capacity of 5 million units per annum

Koroma Calls For Stronger Data-Driven Human Capital Investments

By Ahmed Ahmed

In a bold show of solidarity, Her Excellency, Madam Finda Koroma, Former Vice President ECOWAS Commission and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Africa Human Capital Development Plus (HCD+), has thrown her weight behind the ARISE initiative of Akwa Ibom State, describing it as a strategic blueprint for transforming human potential into economic power.

Addressing stakeholders at the recent launch of Akwa Ibom State's ARISE Human Capital Development Strategy, she commended the state government's deliberate positioning of human capital development (HCD) as the nucleus of governance and a lever for long-term prosperity.

HCD+, a pan-African advisory and implementation partner for people-centred development, is widely recognised for supporting evidence-based and locally driven HCD strategies across the continent. Madam Koroma's message highlighted that Akwa Ibom's ARISE Vision—to make the state a preferred investment destination through citizen-focused policies—resonates with HCD+'s mission of driving inclusive and data-led human capital reform across five critical pillars.

"This mission reflects a deliberate commitment to improving citizen well-being—something that aligns strongly with our work across Africa," she said.

Strategic Alignment: From Global Goals to Local Action

At the heart of HCD+'s approach is a five-pillar model that cuts across health and health security; nutrition and food security; education, skills development, and labour participation; entrepreneurship and digital transformation; and gender-transformative policies. These pillars, she noted, are not just abstract ideals—they are actionable levers for real change.

She also commended Akwa Ibom's leadership for launching the ARISE Local Government HCD Implementation Roadmap, which maps out a bottom-up approach to development by embedding critical interventions at the grassroots. With an emphasis on early childhood development, adolescent health, youth skilling, and women's empowerment, the roadmap mirrors international best practices in lifecycle-based human capital planning.

"This effort offers a compelling example of how local ambition can align with national and continental HCD goals," she stated, stating that the blueprint has potential to serve as a model for other subnational governments in Nigeria and across Africa.



Madam Finda Koroma, Former Vice President ECOWAS Commission and Chief Executive Officer of Africa Human Capital Development Plus (HCD+)

A Proven Model: Lessons from Lagos, Kaduna, and Nasarawa

Drawing on its engagements in Lagos, Kaduna, and Nasarawa States, HCD+ has provided technical support, capacity-building, and small grants aimed at enhancing subnational HCD interventions. These programs have strengthened local data systems, empowered communities, and promoted gender-responsive policy frameworks that are already translating into real-world

impact.

"Evidence must be our compass," Madam Koroma said, emphasising the need for real-time data and adaptive policymaking that meets people where they are—geographically, economically, and socially.

Toward a Strategic Partnership with Akwa Ibom

In a forward-looking tone, she proposed a strategic partnership with Akwa Ibom State, aimed at scaling up ongoing HCD initiatives. This collaboration, she explained, would enhance the state's ability to track progress, adjust policies dynamically, and more effectively communicate its development story to both domestic and international audiences.

"Together, we can strengthen data systems, enable adaptive policy reforms, and tell the story of progress and promise," she concluded.

According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index, Nigeria scores 0.36 out of 1.0—indicating that a child born in the country today will be only 36 percent as productive as they could be under optimal conditions. This sobering statistic highlights the urgency for coordinated subnational actions like those seen in Akwa Ibom State.

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This mission reflects a deliberate commitment to improving citizen well-being—something that aligns strongly with our work across Africa



Vice President Kashim Shettima (l) in a chat with Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Bassey at the recent launch of the ARISE Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy in Akwa Ibom State.

Investing In People Is Powering Nigeria's Future Growth Through HCD

By Jennete Ugo Anya

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At the national level, the HCD Programme has introduced a multi-sectoral governance structure linking the Office of the Vice President, the NEC, and the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)

In a nation where over 60 percent of the population is under 25 years old, Nigeria's economic strength lies not just beneath its soil but in the potential of its people. Recognising this, the federal government—through the National Human Capital Development (HCD) Programme—has begun reshaping the development conversation across the country. With a sharp focus on health, education, and the labour force, Nigeria's human capital agenda is now actively turning strategy into measurable socio-economic gains.

Anchored by a well-structured results framework and a bold Strategy House model, the HCD Programme has set ambitious, time-bound targets in three pivotal pillars: Health & nutrition, education, and labour force participation. The goal is clear—improve productivity and well-being of citizens from birth through adulthood, across all six geopolitical zones.

So far, the programme's decentralised implementation model, supported by a robust National Economic Council (NEC) directive, has secured the buy-in from 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The programme's strategic emphasis on bottom-up planning, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous state-by-state tracking has made it one of the most data-driven development models in the country.

A closer look at Akwa Ibom State, one of the programme's most proactive adopters, reveals just how much progress can be achieved when strategy meets local commitment. The state's approach—anchored by the Ministry of Economic Development—has prioritised expanding access to quality education, tackling maternal and child health challenges, and creating youth-focused employment pathways.

According to latest official data, Akwa Ibom State has achieved a 22 percent increase in early childhood school enrolment since the HCD rollout began. The state's infant mortality rate has dropped from 61 to 47 deaths per 1,000 live births, while the number of skilled birth attendants has surged by 31 percent. Through partnerships with private sector actors and the introduction of targeted livelihood programmes, youth employment has also seen a significant uptick, with over 18,000 young people onboarded into skill development schemes over the last 24 months.

What is driving these outcomes is a rigorous performance dashboard system that tracks over 50 human capital

indicators across all local government areas. This system ensures that each metric—whether it is the proportion of under-5 children vaccinated, or the number of functional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres—is not just a data point but a developmental milestone.

At the national level, the HCD Programme has introduced a multi-sectoral governance structure linking the Office of the Vice President, the NEC, and the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF). This has given the programme both the political will and institutional leverage needed to push reforms through complex federal and subnational bureaucracies.

Backed by key development partners including United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank, the Programme is now expanding into performance-based financing, linking funding to measurable improvements in education outcomes, health indices, and youth employment. The introduction of Human Capital Acceleration Plans (HCAPs) across states has also brought coherence to national and state-level policy alignment.

However, challenges persist. Disparities remain in literacy rates across the northern and southern parts of the country. Access to quality primary healthcare is still limited in remote areas, and gender disparities in school completion rates call for more inclusive programming. But the good news is that these gaps are now clearly identified and targeted.

The next frontier for Nigeria's human capital transformation lies in sustaining momentum and deepening accountability. This means more investments in school infrastructure, expanded access to vocational training, digital learning integration, and improving working conditions for frontline health and education workers. More critically, states must be incentivised to meet and exceed their performance benchmarks, using data not just for monitoring, but for decision-making.

Nigeria's ambition to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 hinges not just on natural resources but on unleashing the power of its people. With 33 states now integrating HCD targets into their development plans, and models like Akwa Ibom State leading the charge, the pathway to inclusive growth is no longer just aspirational—it is actionable.

A portrait of a man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is looking slightly to the right. A green speech bubble with the word 'Congratulations!' is in the top right corner.

Congratulations!

On your promotion to the position of Permanent Secretary by His Excellency Pastor Umo Eno, Executive Governor, Akwa Ibom State.

It is well deserved for your outstanding contributions to the Human Capital Development initiative in the South South, and especially in Akwa Ibom State.

MR.
UDUAK
ISAAC

Akwa Ibom State Focal Person and Chairman South-South Focal Person's Forum, Human Capital Development in Nigeria

Signed:
The HCD Team OVP

Thursday, 17th April, 2025

Why Vice President Shettima's HCD Agenda Is Nigeria's Best Bet For A Secure, Prosperous Future

In a nation constantly in search of enduring solutions to insecurity, poverty, and underdevelopment, the federal government's Human Capital Development (HCD) programme—driven by Vice President Kashim Shettima under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda—stands out as perhaps the most pragmatic and transformative policy framework of this administration.

While the clamor for improved infrastructure, better security, and more foreign investment remains ever present, the truth is that no amount of roads or railways can substitute for a healthy, educated, and economically active population. The real engine of Nigeria's development is not cement or steel—it is the people. And for once, we have in Vice President Shettima a national leader who recognises that truth, and is boldly acting on it.

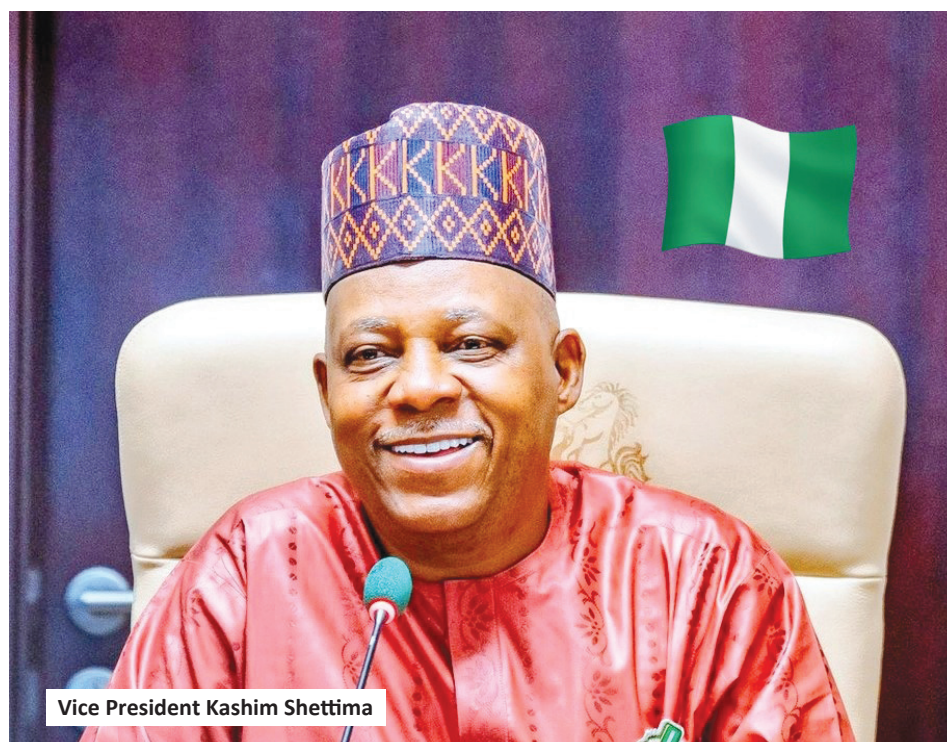
The Vice President's leadership of the National HCD Programme reflects a rare blend of political will, developmental clarity, and a deep understanding of Nigeria's structural challenges. His approach is not just to provide short-term relief, but to cure the root causes of Nigeria's long-standing vulnerabilities. A society with high rates of out-of-school children, malnourished infants, unemployed youth, and neglected women cannot build peace, prosperity, or global competitiveness. Vice President Shettima's HCD agenda directly tackles these issues at their core.

The framework is refreshingly focused: improve health and nutrition outcomes, raise the quality and accessibility of education, and expand participation in the labour force—especially for youth and women. These are not abstract goals; they are measurable, actionable, and deeply consequential. They touch the very heart of what it means to be Nigerian today, and more importantly, what kind of Nigeria we want to build tomorrow.

The case of Akwa Ibom State's recent unveiling of its ARISE Local Government HCD Roadmap offers a compelling example of what this national vision can look like when domesticated. Under Governor Umo

POLICY BRIEF

with
ENAM OBIOSIO



Vice President Kashim Shettima

Bassey Eno, the state has aligned with the federal HCD framework to develop a grassroots-driven strategy that targets child survival, school completion, quality learning, and female economic participation. This is precisely the kind of vertical

integration between federal vision and state-level execution that Nigeria needs.

What makes Vice President's approach particularly effective is his ability to bridge this federal-state divide. By working through

The framework is refreshingly focused: improve health and nutrition outcomes, raise the quality and accessibility of education, and expand participation in the labour force—especially for youth and women

the National Economic Council and empowering state focal persons and local implementation committees, he is ensuring that the HCD programme is not just a document in Abuja, but a living, breathing intervention across Nigeria's rural and urban communities.

Moreover, the programme's emphasis on data-driven planning and monitoring means it is built for accountability and course correction. This is governance with its sleeves rolled up—not obsessed with optics but focused on outcomes. In a political climate often defined by rhetoric and recycling of promises, the HCD programme offers a refreshing return to substance.

It is also worth noting that by focusing on human capital, Vice President is indirectly strengthening national security. Insecurity thrives in environments of despair, unemployment, and disillusionment. But a well-nourished child in school, a young woman with skills and access to credit, a graduate entering the workforce with confidence—these are the foundations of a more secure Nigeria. The HCD programme is, in essence, a national counter-terrorism strategy rooted in social equity.

That said, the programme still faces steep challenges: inadequate funding, weak coordination in some states, and bureaucratic inertia. But if given the right level of political, financial, and civic support, it holds the potential to outlive administrations and become a legacy framework for national renewal.

Vice President Shettima has cast a compelling vision. Now, the rest of us—federal ministries, state governors, traditional leaders, civil society, media, and the private sector—must rally behind it. For in building up our people, we do not just reduce poverty or boost gross domestic product (GDP)—we create a future that is safer, fairer, and truly Nigerian.

If Nigeria is serious about development, this is the moment to prove it. HCD is not just another programme. It is the future. And it is happening now.