

Outcome 1: Community Essence Map

Location: Abuja, Nigeria (Academic and Tech Ecosystem)
Focus: The hidden struggle of scientific research funding.

The Narrative: "The Waiting Game"

In Abuja, the seat of Nigeria's government, research does not die from a lack of talent—it dies in the waiting room.

From our exploration at the **University of Abuja** and conversations at **innov8 Hub**, we discovered a repeating timeline of frustration. A brilliant post-graduate student has a breakthrough idea for agricultural pest control. They apply for a government grant. They wait. Three months pass. They visit the office. Files are "processing." Six months pass. The season changes, the data becomes obsolete. The student, defeated, pivots to fintech or applies for a visa to Canada ("Japa").

This is not a resource problem; it is a **trust and visibility** problem. The money exists, but the pathways are overgrown with bureaucracy and opacity.

Voices from the Ground

"I have the proposal approved in principle since February. It is now November. My samples have spoiled. I am not asking for millions, just enough for reagents."

— Dr. A., Senior Lecturer, Gwagwalada

"We don't trust the local grants. You need to 'know someone' to get the file moved. I only apply for foreign grants now, even if they don't fit my local context."

— Chinedu, Biotech Researcher

"As a donor, we want to fund Nigerian science. But we can't see where the money goes. We need a window, not a black box."

— NGO Program Officer, Adem BaBa Hostel(Near Foundation)

Observations from the Walk

- University Labs:** visibly aging equipment; students using personal funds to buy basic supplies.
- Tech Hubs (Wuse II):** buzzing with energy, but focused almost entirely on software/fintech. "Hard science" is seen as too risky/unfundable.
- Government Offices:** mountains of paper files. No digital tracking for grant applications.
- The "Corridor" Talk:** Researchers spending more time lobbying in offices than working in labs.

The Timeline of Stagnation

- Ideation:** Spark of genius (Abuja allows for high-level networking).
- The Bottleneck:** Application submitted to traditional bodies. Total silence.
- The Gap:** 6-18 months of "processing".
- The Exit:** Researcher abandons project or leaves the country.
- The Loss:** Intellectual Property (IP) lost or developed elsewhere.

Based on exploration 1-8 December 2024.