



# ABOUT AWO-KAJOLA-IDANRE

(DEMOGRAPHY, CULTURE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMY)



A PUBLICATION OF PIONEER MEDICAL INITIATIVE



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## OVERVIEW

Awo-Kajola Idanre also known as Awo-Congo is a small diverse rural settlement in Idanre Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The L-shaped Linear community was established about 50 years ago by indigenous and immigrant cocoa farmers who settled to farm the environs as annual labourers recruited by the farm owners. The community is dominated by immigrants from Kogi, Benue, and South-South states with a population of about two hundred and fifty (250) people. The community serves as the headquarters and confluence for six other rural camps around it.

Awo-Kajola has rainforest vegetation due to its location in the tropical rainforest region of Southwest, Nigeria. The immediate vegetation around the community is, however, not natural and is largely cultivated by the residents. The soil is loamy in nature and encouraged the primary occupation of farming.



*Awo-Kajola Community (7°09'15.0"N 5°08'10.3"E)*

Awo-Kajola-Idanre has three basic social amenities and services which are a community borehole, a school building, and a basic health center building. The borehole was constructed by a non-profit organization as a substitute for well and stream sources of water. The basic education facility was constructed by the European Union Micro-Projects Programme (MMP6) in

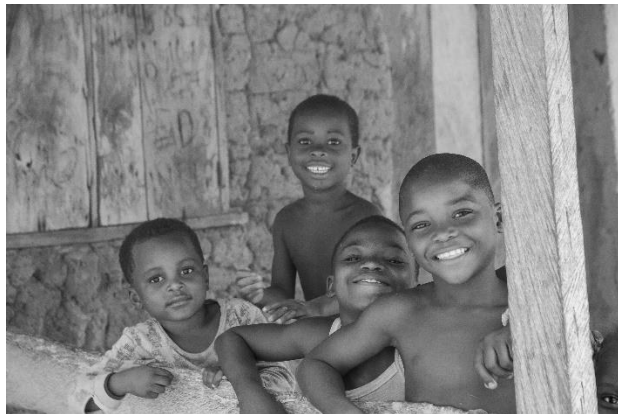


2006 and is now being run by a Missionary, Gempal Mission since 2018 after a few years of being closed. The primary healthcare center is dysfunctional. The Basic Health Center building was constructed by Ondo State Community and Social Development Agency assisted by the World Bank. The primary source of basic health services in Awo-Kajola at the time of this publication is Health4Rural by Pioneer Medical Initiative.

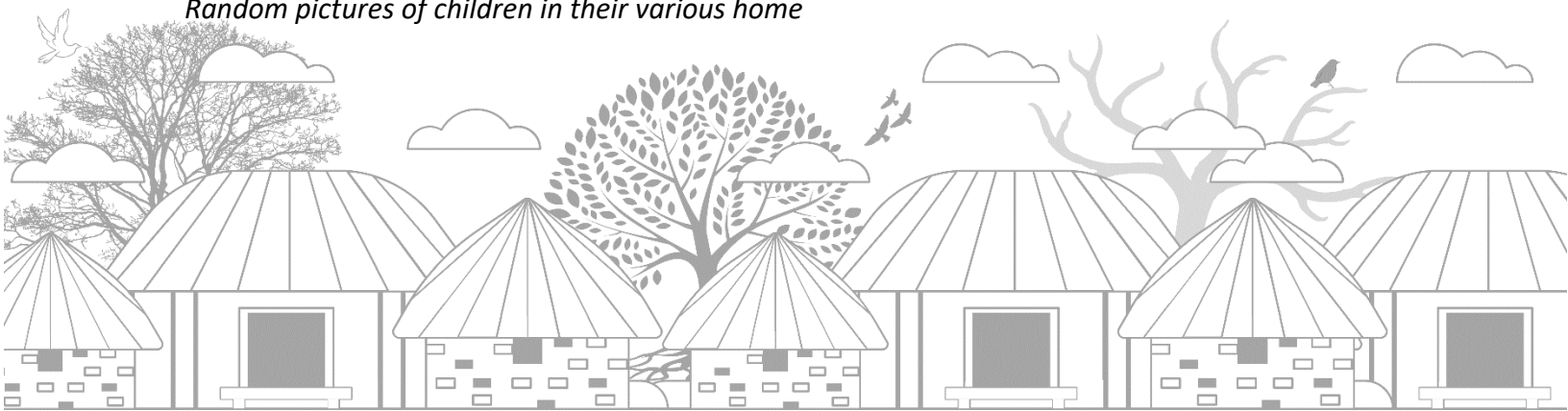
According to the community residents, Awo-Kajola is a peaceful and serene community for a typical rural farmer. New residents are welcomed warmly, and strong ties are maintained with neighbouring communities.



*Women of Awo-Kajola at a health education session on breastfeeding and early child-care*



*Random pictures of children in their various home*



## DEMOGRAPHY AND CULTURE

### Age Distribution, Gender and Marriage

Awo-Kajola has a teeming young population of under 18 years accounting for up to 49% of the population. There are slightly more females in the community than males. Typically, female children marry from the age of 15 years while males marry from the age of 20. An average family has five children and is polygamous. Average life expectancy is unknown.

	Male	Female	
Adult	26.32%	24.56%	50.88%
Child	22.81%	26.32%	49.13%
	49.13%	50.88%	~100.00%

### Culture, Ethnicity & Languages

Awo-Kajola is a melting pot for culture. The people are made up of different cultures and tribes including Benue, Ibo, Cross-river, Delta, Hausa, and Yoruba. This huge cultural diversity makes cultural and ethnic activities decentralized yet unique. The central language is pidgin English, unifying the various languages and dialects that are also freely spoken in the community.

The community is headed by a local chief who does not reside in the community fully. The grandfather of the Chief is said to be the first settler in Awo-Kajola about fifty (50) years ago and immigrated from Idanre town, Ondo State, Nigeria. The community is also led by a resident chairman who is answerable to the Chief. Other leadership figures in the community are the religious and Missionary heads who are highly respected and honoured for their all-round contribution to the development, and maintenance of peace and religious roles in the community.

### Religious Activities

The dominant religion in Awo-Kajola is Christianity with about 60% being nominal Christians. Other religions such as Islam and traditional worship are unpopular in the community. There are two churches in the community. Missionary activities are popular in the community.





*Women of Idoma in Awo-Kajola and its neighbourhood tribe dancing at a local Cooperative Society meeting.*



*Children attending to domestic duties on the street and at the community borehole.*



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Cellular and Internet connectivity

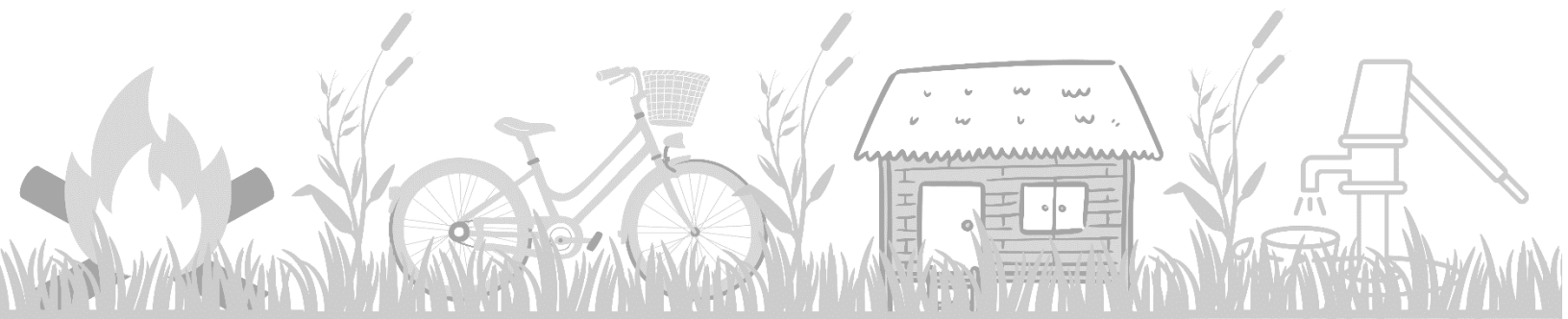
Generally, there is limited cellular connectivity and no internet access in Awo-Kajola. For a technology age, this limitation makes Awo-Kajola less attractive to youth populations and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) -such as financial institutions and their retail outlets- that require cellular and internet connectivity. Areas with cellular connections are largely unstable and may be dependent on atmospheric weather conditions. To make calls, the residents typically go to the areas identified to have cellular connectivity or go to a neighbouring community such as Ita-Olorun. Most residents of the community do not have mobile devices, especially women. It is believed by the residents that the internet provider, Glo Nigeria, is the most accessible internet service in the community.

### Energy and Power

The primary source of energy in Awo-Kajola is wood and natural sunlight. Awo-Kajola does not have access to electricity and is off the national grid. Energy needs in the community include cooking, milling, small-scale processing of palm kernels (palm oil production), drying of farm produce, and powering of motorcycles. Household cooking accounts for over 70% of the energy needs and is derived from the abundance of wood in the community.



*A woman smoking fish using firewood in Awo-Kajola.*





Other energy needs such as warmth are derived from the sunlight or from burning local lamps. Fortunately, the interior of the huts and houses are warm at night, thanks to the insulating nature of the clay used to build the homes. Individuals with mobile devices power their phones in neighbouring towns. Occasionally, generators are powered for religious activities. Solar energy use is limited to solar-powered rechargeable lamps used by missionaries.

### Transportation

The sole means of transportation in Awo-Kajola is by foot. There is only one motorable road leading into and out of Awo-Kajola. The road starts from old Idanre road and is said to go as far as Commando village in Kogi State. There are several non-motorable routes that connect Awo-Kajola to neighbouring camps. Within the community, houses are connected by the single L-shaped road that cuts across the community and by footpaths. Motorcycles are used by a few residents in transporting farm produce. Goods and people are transported over longer distances (such as neighbouring communities) by motorcycles and occasionally, cars.

### Housing

Houses are dominantly made of mud. Few buildings including the school, the dysfunctional primary healthcare center, and a yet-to-be-completed church are made of concrete bricks. All houses are roofed with aluminum roofing sheets. The floor of most houses is made of mud while a few are made of concrete. Fencing of compounds is completely absent in the community. In consideration of the farming activities dominant in the community, most houses have concrete threshing floors in the front of the building for drying cocoa and other farm produces. Nomad farmers on annual contracts in the community rent houses from the full residents and landowners. Housing is very cheap compared to the neighbouring towns.



*The floors of the houses are mostly made of mud interiorly and an open concrete threshing floor.*



### Healthcare, Financial and other Essential Services

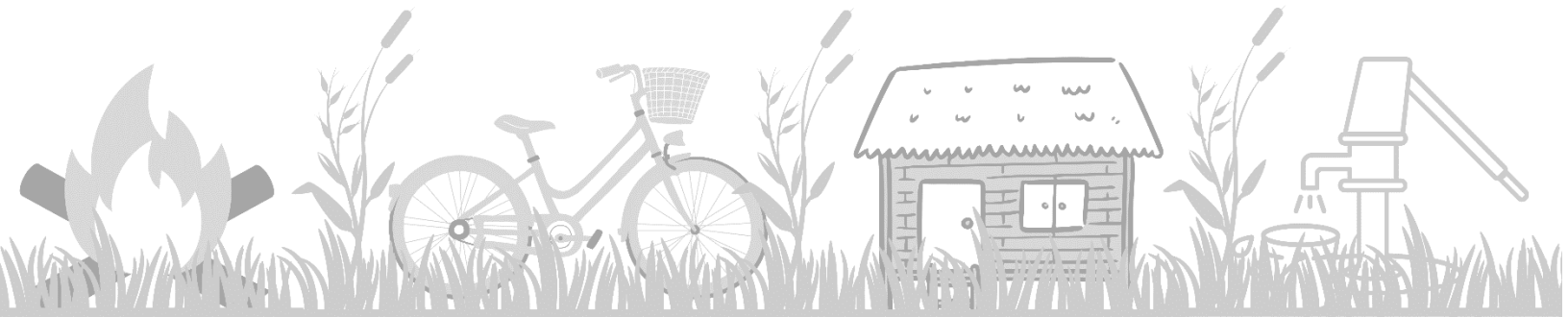
Essential services such as security, healthcare and finance are lacking in Awo-Kajola. Healthcare services is provided by Pioneer Medical Initiative's Health4Rural Program. To access emergency healthcare and for child delivery, patients are transported to Awo-Congo, a neighbouring rural community with a public basic healthcare facility where two staff are stationed. Local cooperatives exist within the community and are run collectively with residents of neighbouring rural camps. Modern banking and financial services are completely absent, and all digital financial transactions are carried out in close towns.



*Pictures of Awo-Kajola residents receiving medical care through Pioneer's Health4Rural.*



*A resident of Awo-Kajola receiving medications from a Health4Rural caregiver.*



## ECONOMY

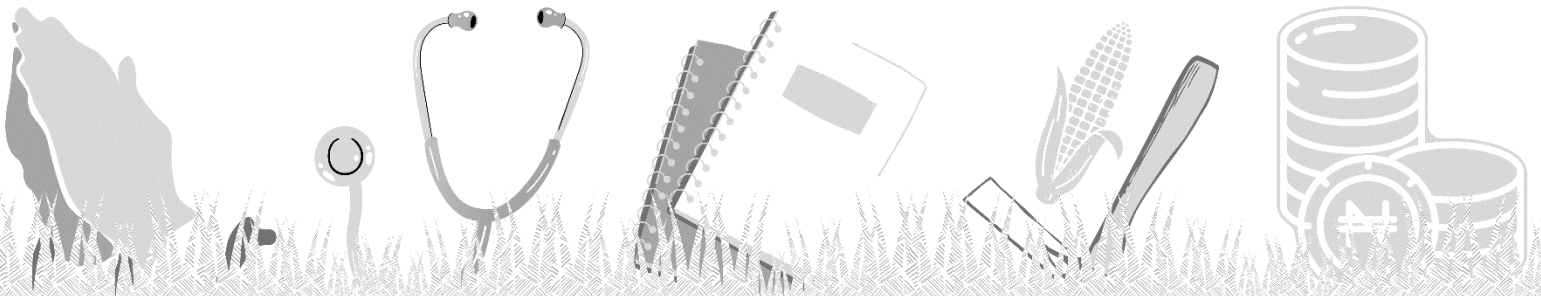
Farming is the major economic activity carried out in Awo-Kajola. Other economic activities include education, trading, handiworks e.g hairdressing, e.t.c. The average standard of living can be regarded as below the poverty line of \$1.9 daily although the actual average value is undetermined.

### Farming

The primary economic drivers of the community are non-resident employers of farmers. These are landowners who employ immigrant rural farmers in the community for their annual farming works in exchange for an agreed remuneration. Popular crops planted include cocoa, palm fruits, food crops, and fruits. Farming activities are seasonal following the rainy-dry season cycle. The farm produce is retrieved by the employers at the end of harvest periods. Self-employed farmers either take their produce to the closest towns to sell or sell to middlemen who come to the community to purchase the product in large scale. Most of the farming activities in the community are mainstream in the agricultural value chain. Farming activities are carried out by both men and women and by both adults and children.



*A farmer spreading harvested cocoa pods for sun-drying.*

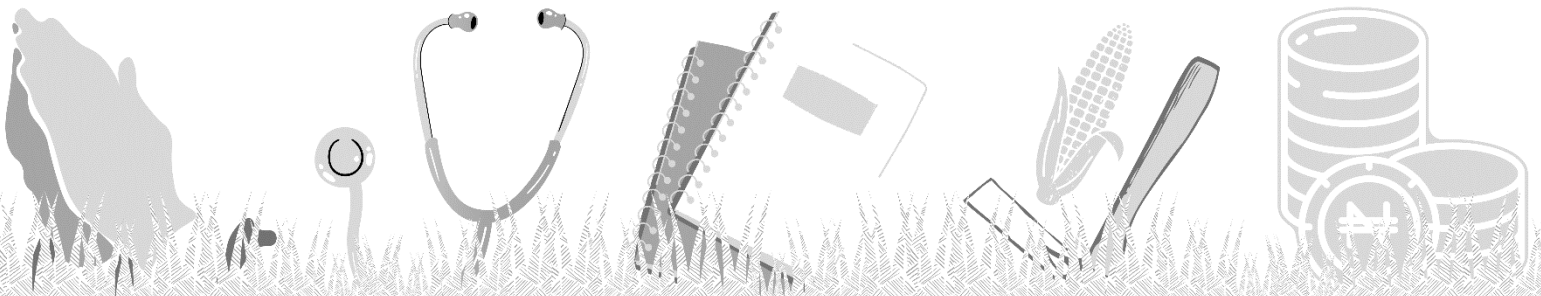


## Education

Educational activities in Awo-Kajola are more social service and non-profit driven than for-profit. There is only one educational Institution that admits students from kindergarten through Junior Secondary School. The school serves both Awo-Kajola and three of the neighbouring rural camps. The school has a new and small boarding facility to accommodate students from neighbouring communities. Prior to this, all students attended daily as non-boarding students. The school is owned and managed by the Mission Group and has about six teachers who are mostly missionaries.



*Members of Awo-Kajola and neighbouring communities at the end of session and graduation ceremony of the missionary school in Awo-Kajola.*

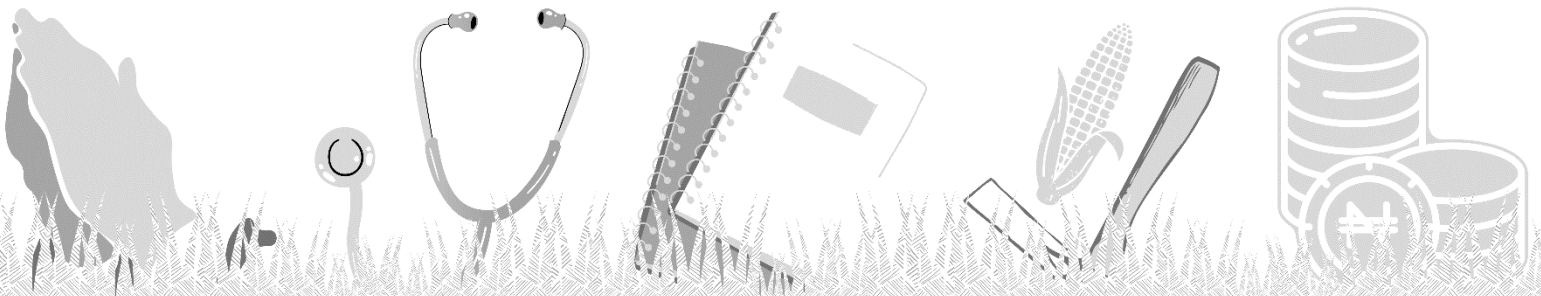


## CONCLUSION

Awo-Kajola is a peaceful and diverse community of rural farmers with the potential for economic growth, especially in its agricultural sector. The community reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity in Nigeria and importantly exemplifies the possibility of living together peacefully. Christianity, Healthcare, and Education are the primary drivers of its development.



*Some children displaying their patriotism to Nigeria in Awo-Kajola.*

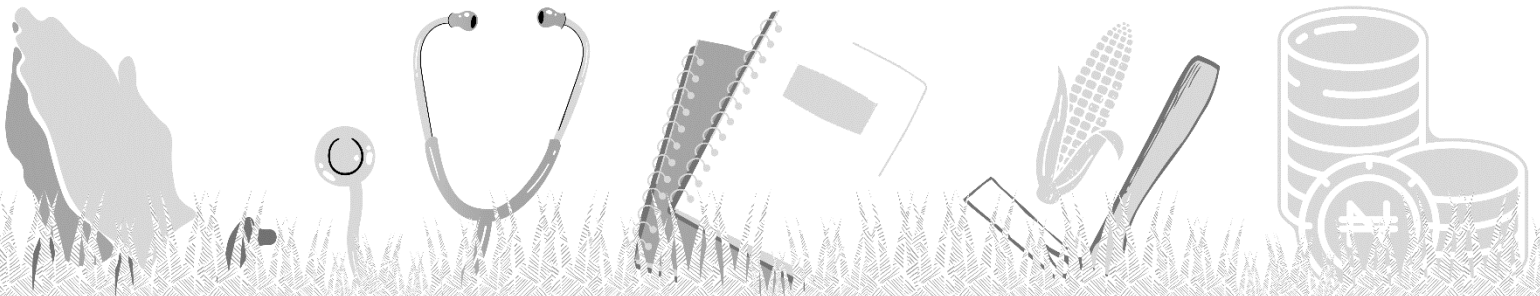


## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Non-profit and philanthropic organizations in education, healthcare, women and gender advocacy, and financial inclusion should consider adopting Awo-Kajola for philanthropic activities toward the overall development of the community.
2. Agricultural startups and investors should consider investing in enabling farming activities in Awo-Kajola through improved technologies as the Awo-Kajola residents are receptive to learning and innovation.
3. Industrial hubs for the processing of agricultural produce distributed to Akure and its environ should be sited in Awo-Kajola due to its proximity, social stability, and potential for human resource growth.



*A young woman carrying a baby in Awo-Kajola.*





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