

ODI GREEN CITY PROJECT

Building a Model for Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta

PHASE ONE:

The Odi Ecovillage Living and Learning Center



ODI Ecovillage Team Members



di Ecovillage Living and Learning Center is the beginning phase of the Odi Green City Project. Odi is located in Bayelsa State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Center will aim to promote and assist holistic sustainable community development programs while serving as a point of attraction for the wider society. The Center is an affiliate of Earth Rights Institute, a US-based member of the EcoEarth Alliance, a worldwide UN NGO Partnership Initiative, and the Henry George Institute of New York, USA. The Center is also partnering with the Global Ecovillage Network and intends to link with universities around the world.

The Odi Ecovillage team (year 2004) is composed of thirteen local based environmentalists supported by a core group of project consultants and high level personalities which form the International Advisory Council. The Odi Living and Learning Centre welcomes technical and financial support from well meaning corporate organizations, agencies and individuals inspired to support this hopeful, capacity building, sustainable development model for Nigeria.

Vision Statement ~

Our goal is to create an intentional sustainable community by reversing the gradual disintegration of our supportive socio-cultural structures and the upsurge of destructive environmental practices that threaten to drown us and to uplift our living standard by creating a harmonious synthesis between tradition and modernism without endangering nature.

STRATEGY AND WORK PLAN

This proposal requests three years of support for the pilot activities to translate the noble vision above into reality. There will be training sessions for the local heads of the various commissions highlighted below which will take place at the Odi Ecovillage Living and Learning Centre.

First Year Work Plan - The first phase of the Odi Ecovillage will be site preparation for permaculture landscape and design and construction of the Living and Learning Centre building.

Second Year Work Plan - The second year will focus on training, capacity building and fully developing the various commissions.

Third Year Work Plan - Third year will be for fine-tuning our model ecovillage, total project evaluation, and strategy and planning for next phase of Odi Green City Project and for possible replication in other communities around the state and the country.

ECOHOUSE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

A site of approximately one hectare has already been secured in Odi for the Living and Learning Centre. Odi Ecovillage members have begun clearing the site on a volunteer basis. All features of our plan will reflect true eco-design. The construction will be community driven rather than being contractor-driven. This will promote building skill development and greatly reduce the overall cost of construction. Building materials will be sourced locally as much as possible. Earth bricks will be used in the construction while the roof will be tiles made from coconut fibers and a mixture of earth and mortar for cohesiveness.

Structure 1 - This structure will house the main office, the internet centre, lecture room, library, and quiet/meditation room.

Structure 2 - This structure will house up to 10 private living units, shared living spaces, laundry room, toilets and shower rooms.

Structure 3 - Here will be the kitchen, restaurant/dining room, the pantry and the work centre (carpentry, engineering works, etc.).

Additional site design elements - We will have a fish pond measuring approximately 100 x 80 metre, an open air cafe under the trees, demonstration permaculture garden, animal (chickens, goats, ducks, etc.) field, walkways, park benches and woodland glade. These will give visitors the necessary space to enjoy the ecovillage ambiance.



Fish Pond Site

COMMISSIONS

The following commissions will form the platform upon which the Center intends to operate to achieve its objectives:

1. **RENEWABLE ENERGY**
2. **PERMACULTURE (Organic Agriculture)**
3. **WATER MANAGEMENT**
4. **MICRO-ENTERPRISE EMPLOYMENT CREATION**
5. **AQUACULTURE**
6. **ECOTOURISM**
7. **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
8. **EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS**
9. **HOLISTIC HEALTH**
10. **ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION & CONSERVATION**

RENEWABLE ENERGY

With the availability of ample sun, the main energy component will be solar power. Being a tropical region, solar cells can provide for all electricity needs. However, the possibility of generating wind energy would be explored which may result in co-generation. Surplus electricity can be sold to interested neighbors outside the Center. This would be a good income generating facility as the area lacks dependable electricity supply as it is not connected to the national grid which gets its energy source by thermal hydro-production.

PERMACULTURE (organic agriculture)

The Center will produce organic and naturally produced food crops, fish and animals as opposed to the current government support of biotechnology (genetically modified crops) and other environmentally risky, job-destroying technology. The Center will not just be content with self-sufficiency in organic food production but will seek to supply local market as well. There will be research on how to grow major food crops and fish to increase output for the local region. We also intend to conserve scarce crop varieties and create a resource bank.

Orchards...

Planting disease resistant varieties (oranges, pear, mango, guava, etc.), proper site selection, and establishing plant guilds of certain bulb spike root plants, insectary and nitrogen fixing plants and interplanting of leguminous trees all contribute to a successful organic orchard. Poultry have several functions in organic orchards. They scavenge soft fruits that drop (any larvae or pupae of pests), help control ground covers, provide natural manorial turnover for trees, and self forage seed and greens. They also reduce the incidence of orchard pests such as codling moth and fruit fly.

Vegetable, Herb & Flower Gardens...

These will be found in carefully selected areas throughout the Living and Learning Center landscape. All will be grown by organic methods.

Sylvaculture...

The wood land of the Center is ideal for small ecovillage sylvaculture. Tree species that are present on the site include African nutmeg, African breadfruit, star apple, palm trees and raffia palms which will supply material for crafts and other uses.

WATER MANAGEMENT

This is a wetland region noted for its abundant fresh water resource all the year round free from any biological contamination. A simple shallow well will be enough to guarantee adequate water supply for all uses at the Center. We will demonstrate environmental approaches to human waste disposal.

MICRO-ENTERPRISE / EMPLOYMENT CREATION

As the Center will be greatly involved in promoting ecotourism, its contribution to sustainable development will be broad based and regional. For example, the center will run a commercial restaurant, operate chalets for visitors, take gate fees for its fishing festival that will be integrated with several cultural activities, run a food establishment and craft shops, operate an Internet café, sell organic foods, produce natural fruit juices for sale and possibly operate a small bakery. All these are income and employment generating enterprises. There will also be a micro-credit facilities in form of small loan services to place loans at the disposal of community members in order to support growing companies. These would be services and activities which have ethical and social goals linked to the ideals of eco-development.

AQUACULTURE

One very large and several smaller fish ponds will serve multiple purposes. The large pond will have fishes of different species stocked and nurtured and would be harvested once a year as part of the ecotourism program tagged ³Ecovillage Fishing Festival.² Both tourists and those who would do the actual fishing would be required to pay gate fees. The festival would be widely publicized to invite people from far and near similar to the Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi, northern Nigeria that nets in over N70 million annually. The other ponds would serve as a water source for bees and birds and the production of edible fish for the center. Park benches would be positioned strategically around the ponds for visitors¹ enjoyment.

ECOTOURISM

The town of Odi is noted for its vibrant cultural ceremonies. The annual Ogori Ba Uge festival during the month of July lasting a period of seven days, records over 100,000 thousand visitors annually from across the state, Nigeria and abroad. This attractive prospect would be harnessed to better advantage of the center by attracting and inviting visitors there to enjoy ecovillage hospitalities and traditional cooked food in the restaurants and gift shops. In addition, the proposed Odi ecovillage fishing festival to be organized between the months of February and March will no doubt help to spread the concept of ecovillage development widely and to become a veritable source of revenues and incomes for the sustainability of the Living and Learning Center, the community and state.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - INTERNET & TELECENTER

Ecovillages need be well-linked into today's information society. The Center will be connected to the Internet to be used freely by interns while a commercial cybercafe will serve visitors. A telecenter will provide local and international telephone services for nominal fees. The Center will use printed material (flyers, brochures, newsletters, magazines, books) video tapes, slides/pictures and folders as part of its communications tools to create enlightenment and awareness.

EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Construction Phase Workshop Opportunities The Center will provide educational opportunities on several levels. Initially, the building of the Ecohouse can offer training and workshops for owner/builders,



Building Using Local Materials

officials, and local apprenticeship programs in the area of natural building practices and use of environmentally sensitive materials to create healthy, nontoxic living spaces. Permaculture design workshops can also be held on site as part of the planning process for the center.

Local Language - The center will strongly advocate that the local native Ijaw language be taught in both primary and secondary schools in the state. For now it is sad to note that the language is slipping away at an alarming rate and is almost extinct. Many locals find it hard to fluently speak the language. Maintaining our traditional language is a vitally important way to value our unique regional culture.

Geoclassical Economics

- There will be classes on Geoclassical Economics in line with the Georgist paradigm in collaboration with the Henry George Institute of New York. Courses will include Fundamental Economics, Applied Economics, Land Value Recapture, and use of GIS (Geographic Indicator Systems) technology.

Adult Education

Training - The Center will seek to encourage adults who desire to be literate to enroll for classes. A strong focus will be the promotion of women and girl child literacy and education.

Skills Acquisition - The Living and Learning Center will provide numerous other opportunities for skill development, such as programs on computer literacy and repairs especially for techno-savvy youths and training for environmentally safe and healthy smoked fish drying methods for sale in the communities and for potential fair trade exports to Africans in Diaspora around the world.

Ecovillage Training - As the center develops and the ecobuildings, permacultural design, and the human ecology enable creative and cohesive community interactions, the Ecovillage Training Program will come into play. In association with Nigerian and international colleges and universities, the Ecovillage Training Program will help students and

their sponsoring colleges become significant players in developing societal models that help restore healthy relationships to our planet and to each other. Our training program at Odi will be integrated



Gordon addresses Odi Ecovillage Members

HOLISTIC HEALTH

The multidimensional nature of the human being requires an equally multidimensional approach to health and healing. Holistic health practices are an integral aspect of the emerging ecovillage culture. Living in the Ecohouse and in daily contact with the natural world would support the soundness and stability of body, mind and spirit. Some of the inhabitants of the center will likely take an interest in developing their capacities and abilities in various holistic health modalities. The center will also promote research and enlightenment on such issues as traditional birth practices and nutrition especially among children.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION & CONSERVATION

The Center will be actively involved in restoration projects with other organizations such as Trees For Tomorrow, and Wetlands International. We will promote the conservation of our endangered animal wildlife species like the African elephant, fishes and bird species such as the Africa Gray parrots found in the aqua fauna and jungles contiguous to the site of the center.



African Gray Parrot

PROJECT EVALUATION

The overall success of the project will be indicated by how sustainable the ecocentre becomes in three years, as well as its impact on the host community and contiguous towns. Experienced researchers will be invited to partake in the evaluation process.

BUDGET NARRATIVE AND BUDGET SUMMARY

The budget and cost analysis details the separate operating and projected annual activities costs of Odi Ecovillage and specifically of the Living and Learning Centre in summary form. The various commission projects are described and costed as separate modules. Full costing details will be made available upon request. We are seeking donors to sponsor these activities and projects according to their own development priorities. Budget details can be found in a separate insert or at this website: www.earthrights.net



Proposed Site

with ongoing, related course work that students are taking at these centers of learning so that students can receive educational credits and certificates. The program will be augmented with distance learning courses and through Internet linkages among students and ecovillage around the world.



Site Clearing / Preparation

Earth Rights Institute is dedicated to securing a culture of peace and justice by establishing dynamic worldwide networks of persons of goodwill and special skill, promoting policies and programs which further democratic rights to common heritage resources and building ecological communities.

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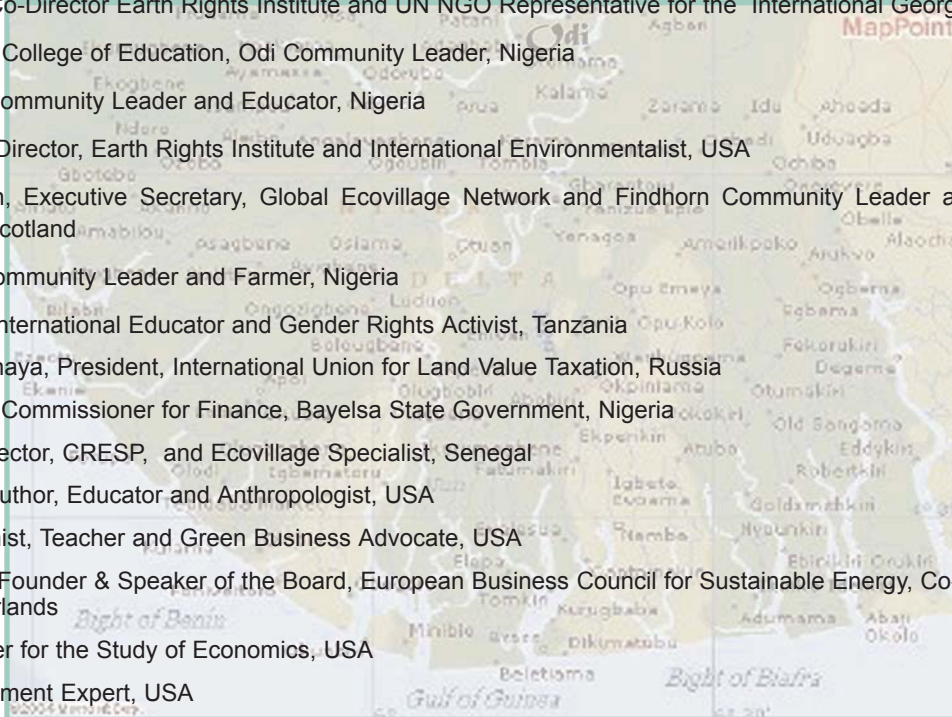
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The Odi Ecovillage and Green City Project is affiliated with the Niger Delta Fund Initiative, an NGO Partnership Initiative registered with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. NDFI is working to establish transparent governance institutions which capture resource rent of oil and other natural resources for funding capacity building for environmentally sustainable communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

For further web-based information go to www.earthrights.net

