Extractivism’s Ecological Time Bomb

Proselytising the Culture of Life: Building the Team

Divestment: Continuities, Discontinuities, and the Long-Game

Forest, Carbon, and Communities
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Home Run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles &amp; Reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Proselytising the Culture of Life: Building the Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Extractivism’s Ecological Time Bombs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ORA-A Fellows Show Commitment to Deepening Work on Polycrisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>On the Natural Law of Embodied Existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles &amp; Reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nnimmo Bassey to Receive the 2024 Wallenberg Medal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Culture of Survival in Makoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gbarantoru Community Shocked by the Onset of Shell’s Massive Gas Flaring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poems</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nature Cries Out in the Marketplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>In My Dream of Our Future, Our Voice Is Our Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles &amp; Reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Forest, Carbon, and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Divestment: Continuities, Discontinuities, and the Long-Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>If Love Is the Door to Liberation, Hope Is Its Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Animi and the Fatalities in Orira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field Visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>AGIP Baptise Obagi with Gas and Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books You Should Read</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upcoming Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOME RUN

The year 2024 is promising. We’ve already hit the ground running with several activities, including the first in-person meeting with our Omega Resilience Awards, Africa. It was a moment to have a holistic feel of how the fellows were navigating the poly-crisis ravaging our world through their various projects.

As is customary with HOMEF, we had our team-building event for the year, where the theme of the year, Culture of Life, was unveiled to the HOMEF team and partners. This theme emphasizes living in harmony with every being. To advance the Culture of Life is to intentionally plan and carry out all activities of life in ways that promote the sanctity of lives in every realm. Achieving this goal requires a conscious way of being and doing that negates the culture of death and extractivism. The team-building was a moment of bonding and re-immersion into the values and ethos that HOMEF promotes, which all neatly align with the notion of Culture of Life.

Extractivism negates the Culture of Life as it is deeply linked to ecological damage and human rights abuses. These perpetrators of extractivism and capitalism continue to deceive the world with false solutions to the age-long damage they have meted out to the environment and communities. Technosavages need to be called out to hands off the Earth and allow people to follow the path to well-being with a consciousness of the interconnectedness of all beings.

Among other wide-ranging topics, this issue of eco-Instigator highlights how the Makoko people in Yaba LGA of Lagos, Nigeria embody the Culture of Survival. They stand for justice and have never allowed the system to overwhelm them. They are an example of how communities adapt to climate change and how a community can be resilient and stand strong.

In an increasingly violent and despondent world, the need to inspire hope and defiance has become more urgent. Our reports and stories are aimed at instigating action, firing our imaginations and forging pathways of hope. So, do not apologize when you clench your fist to break chains that seek to stop you from living in dignity and in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, irrespective of their colour or where they come from. With love, we can overcome avarice, greed, and other forms of destructive relationships. Open the doors with love and light the fires of hope.

We love hearing from you. Do drop us a line or share feedback, stories, articles, poems or photos at editor@homef.org or home@homef.org.

Until Victory!
Nnimmo Bassey
He continued to explain that the notion of Culture of Life embodies the core values which Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) stands for, namely recognition of people, respect for the planet, dignity, solidarity, knowledge generation, justice, and equity. With these values as our guiding principle, HOMEF, working with movements, communities, and partners, mounts great opposition to extractivism, capitalism and all polluting activities, which are the ultimate examples of the culture of death. The culture of life promotes restoration, regeneration, and reparation for all have the damage caused by “culture of death” activities.

Proselytising the culture of life has become even more vital at a time when peoples, communities and activists are surrounded by and dealing with trauma. A sure way to build the culture of life is by raising barriers against the culture of death and ensuring the well-being of the
peoples, communities, and the environment, for without resistance there is no progress. While resistance is key, building a strong defence is fundamental in sustaining the culture of life. In defending the culture of life, it is necessary to be careful about people who believe that their ideas are cast in stone; even longstanding theories are, at every point in time, being debunked, as new evidence emerges from experience and research. In the culture of life, individual actions affect the lives of others. Thus, the processes through which everything is done should target building and fostering the culture of life.

Every year, right after the commencement of work, HOMEF organises a team-building event during which the theme for the new working year is unveiled. For this year, 2024, the theme is *Culture of Life*. The theme, like those of the past years, is born out of deep reflection on issues plaguing Africa and the world, especially matters around the environment, climate change, extractivism, fossil fuel, polluting activities of multinationals, food, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), hunger, just transition, false solutions, community, culture, *inter alia*. These issues, one way or another, are tied to factors that negate the culture of life on the one hand and the other hand those that perpetuate it.

The theme-building event, which is basically a strategy review and development meeting, had the HOMEF team and partners gather in Benin (where HOMEF is headquartered) to undertake the following: a) review our work for 2023, b) discuss what needs to be achieved in 2024, and c) formulate strategies for realizing goals relating to the year’s theme. This event provides an opportunity for new team members to experience deep grounding in the core values of the think tank, as well as for older ones to deeply reflect on their work tracks and performance.

It kicked off with the setting of ground rules by all, followed by a check-in and expectation session, followed by a fun exercise in which each HOMEF team member stated what their favourite animal was. Each team member explained how the characteristics and behaviour of their favourite animal relate to what HOMEF is about. Examples of animals mentioned are: dog, described as being loyal, always present, committed, proactive and very observant; parrot, said to be observant, a good listener and always ready to speak truth to power; ants, believed to be coordinated and work in unity; capybara, believed to be compassionate in nature; lion, addressed as the king of the jungle not because of its size but for its bravery; eagle, which flies at very high altitudes, with great vision; cheetah, with great speed and good vision; spider, with good connecting webs; and other animals such as the raven, kangaroo and the wolf.

It was time for collective recall of HOMEF’s vision, mission, tagline, and values in the session captioned “Why we do what we do: Who are we?” And the answers are as follows: a) HOMEF is an ecological think tank and advocacy organisation promoting food sovereignty and environmental and climate justice in Nigeria and Africa at large; b) it exists to preserve...
the rights of MOTHER EARTH and ensure that communities are equipped with voices to protest; c) it believes in locally generated knowledge rather than external and imposed ideas; and d) it pursues its vision under five major work tracks: fossil Politics, hunger Politics, community and culture, ikike (knowledge spaces), and communications, research and publications.

The unveiling of the 2024 theme took place during the session on “Culture of Life: The Window & the Mirror (Trauma + Wellness).” Here, HOMEF’s director shed light on the theme “Culture of Life”, contrasting it with the culture of death, stating the approaches to sustaining the culture of life and some signature activities. The session on “Looking Back - Key Points from 2023 Review, Bright spots + Blind spots, What can we do differently?” had the team members sharing work challenges experienced the previous year and noting possible solutions for moving forward.

In the “Looking Forward” session, team members responsible for the different work tracks presented their plans and proposed activities for the year. Aside from presentations from the five major work tracks, officers in charge of youth action, new media and gender inclusion work tracks showcased their plans. There were also presentations on Oilwatch, Omega Resilience Awards (ORA-A) and No REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) projects, as well as from the administrative units of the organisation, including the finance sub-unit.

The team building presented an opportunity for more
template for report writing.

On the evening of Day 4 of the team-building event, team members gathered under a tree on the premises of the event’s venue for poetry and the sharing of field experiences. Poems read included “We Were There” by Stanley Egholo, “Survival” by Cadmus Atake-Enade and “Power & Powerlessness” by Joyce Brown. Poems read from Nnimmo Bassey’s poetry collection / See the Invisible included “We Must Breathe Again”, “Wicked Genes”, “After Oil We Flourish”, “Mangled Mangroves”, “The Womb of the Earth”, “Sinsibere”, “Choked by Convenience”, “If the Sun Slept”, “There is Beauty”, amongst others.

Final presentations made on the 5th and last day of the event covered the following topics: “Building Communities’ Solidarity for Wellness and Wellbeing,” “Divestment - Continuities, Discontinuities, and the Long Game,” “Carbon Removals and Other False Climatic Solutions,” “Painting Stories and Reports with Photos,” “Forest, Carbon, and Communities” and “Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Printing of Life.”

HOMEF’s 5-year Outlook (2023-2025) was presented in a final session on “Building Resonance, Building Capacity: The Road to 2028” by Otoabasi Bassey. Here, emphasis was laid on the need for continuous improvement rather than the pursuit of perfection. Following this session, an appraisal was done on the organisation’s online media analytics.

The event ended with a few words from HOMEF’s director who expressed his commitment to working more closely with partners and encouraged the team to bond better. Given all that happened during the team-building event, it was clear that the stage has been set for proselytizing the “Culture of Life” in 2024 and beyond.
Extractivism is deeply linked to ecological damage and the negation of human rights. It disrupts ecosystems, starting from the simple case of conversion of land use to the fragmentation of biodiversity and the destruction of habitats. Extractivism directly negates a wide range of human rights, including the right to water, food, dignity, and the safe environment (as guaranteed in Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights). Forced displacements and loss of housing, as well as cultural and spiritual freedoms, are among the opportunity costs of extractivism.

With extractivism, the world has had to contend with abuses of both human rights and the rights of Mother Earth. Mother Earth has a right to be free from the disruption of her natural cycles. Pollution of water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, oceans) by the extractive sector affects diverse species and has led to extensive extinctions and disruption of the cycles of nature. In climate change negotiations, there are contentious debates over reparations for Loss and Damage, as well as the remediation and restoration of extensive environmental and infrastructural harms. Worthy of note is the fact that some of these harms are so extensive that they may be irreparable, which is why they are regarded as acts of and ecocide.

In Nigeria and the Niger Delta especially, International Oil
Companies (IOCs) have been responsible for many ecological harms. These IOCs have begun divesting and selling their onshore and near offshore assets to Domestic Oil Companies (DOCs) since the Local Content Act of 2010 was instituted. By selling or divesting, they have taken the path of avoidance in order to ensure they do not pay for decades of harm to humans and the environment. Instead of decommissioning and removing unused or derelict infrastructure, upgrading poorly maintained facilities (which have constituted environmental, socio-economic and human rights violations), and cleaning up in order to restore the environment, they decided to divest. Both Nigerian and international laws hold that, regardless of any subsequent transfer of assets, liability remains the responsibility of those causing the injury. They could equally be held liable for damages that occur post-divestment if such arise from integrity issues that were not disclosed at the point of divestment.

The heavy dependence of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) on IOCs and oil revenue has inexorably entrenched the non-transparent, corrupt, and strategically dysfunctional activities in the petroleum sector. This is the core enabler of the sort of reckless corporate behaviour that pervades the sector and, by extension, the nation. This misbehaviour has rendered the relevant regulatory agencies either impotent or complicit in the malaise.

There are wellheads, manifolds, flow stations,
and pipelines that ought to be decommissioned and removed from communities across the Niger Delta by the IOCs and the NNPC. Nigeria needs to enact laws and regulations that will ensure proper decommissioning, abandonment and removal of all unused oil facilities in line with best international standards. These requirements are often ignored. This also happens in the solid minerals sector, as evidenced by the abandoned tin mines of Jos and the coal mines of Enugu. Across the world, there are an estimated 29 million abandoned oil and gas wells that will cost hundreds of billions of dollars to properly secure.

These derelict facilities constitute threats to ecosystems, lead to groundwater contamination and have many other negative impacts on human health. They are time bombs that have already started to explode. Examples that show that these time bombs have begun to explode include the blowout in November 2021 of Aiteo’s Nembe/Santa Barbara Well-1 in the Santa Barbara River in OML 29 (Bayelsa State). This blowout raged for 39 days, and the official/industry estimate was that no less than 5,000 barrels of oil were spilt. However, independent experts estimated that over 500,000 barrels of hydrocarbon fluids, gas and oil were spilt in the monumental incident. Numerous leaks of wellhead leaks have been recorded across the region. Another notorious incident that occurred in recent times is that of the aged Trinity Spirit FSPO that exploded and sank in February 2022.

Ororo-1 is an oil well located off the Awoye coast, Ondo State, in shallow water Oil Mining Lease (OML) 95. The Ororo-1 well has a long and checkered history. This oil well was first drilled by Chevron Oil Company but was shut off in the 1980s with a steel plug due to pressure issues, according to reports. The well was then awarded as a marginal field to Guarantee Petroleum and its partner Owena Oil & Gas Ltd (an Ondo State company) in 2003. However, the award was revoked in 2019 because it was alleged that the company had not developed and brought the field to full production before the expiration of an extension period that elapsed in April 2019. Owena Oil & Gas Ltd filed a lawsuit against the DPR over the revocation.

Interestingly, the well was re-entered by the new “owners” in 2020 and the horrific blowout occurred on 15 May 2020. Note that the well was re-entered decades after Chevron plugged it in. The Nigerian government effectively took ownership of (controlling) the fire since it had revoked the rights of Guarantee Petroleum to the field by the time of the disaster.

Experts suspect that the blowout occurred due to a sudden rush of hydrocarbons under high pressure and the failure of both the Blow Out Preventer (BOP) for the main well bore and the BOP between the pipe and the skin of the well.

We demand our right to life. This is why the Ororo-1 well fire must be extinguished. Now! This is why our environment must be detoxified. Now!
ORA-A Fellows Show Commitment to Deepening Work on Polycrisis
In an in-person meeting of the first Cohort of the Omega Resilience Awards-Africa (ORA-A) Fellowship, coordinated in Nairobi by the ORA anchor organisation, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), from 22 to 26 January 2024, the fellows committed to navigating the polycrisis through their works. Their projects in the ORA-A Fellowship cover African knowledge systems, personal and collective resilience, climate change reporting, the intersectionality of gender and climate change, spatial injustices, African democracy and revolutionary history, and organic farming. Polycrisis is the collective term for the myriad global stressors, including the environmental, climate, hunger and food, energy, health, technological, social, economic, and financial crises that are causing ominous long-term challenges and shocks for humans and the environment.

The objectives of the meeting were to get a better understanding of the fellows’ work and progress made, identify areas of intersections in their projects, strengthen their bond, identify areas of support, and assist the fellows in developing strategies for communicating their work as they steer the polycrisis.

The fellows were engaged in riveting activities throughout the meeting. Two such activities were visits to Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Africa and one of the biggest across the globe with over a million residents, and to the Ukombozi Library (Liberation Library), just opposite the University of Nairobi.

The visit to Kibera, directed by John Mulingwa Nzau (aka Garang), one of the ORA-A fellows, was enveloping, leading through to the feminist group holding their meeting in a building named “Undugu Family of Hope” with the motto “Heart to love, hands to serve.” The feminist centre champions “global solidarity against femicide.” Their struggle is to build solidarity and unite women and others to fight systems that oppress them. They advocate for women’s rights, including the rights of sex workers and people of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, or asexual) community. The women shared heart-shattering experiences of cruelty meted out to them and the impact of femicide on Kibera.

It was an inspiring visit for the fellows as well as the HOMEF and ORA global team. Part of the inspiration came from the women’s involvement in activism and business, similarities of their challenges across Africa, and the resilience and healing visible amongst the women amidst observed infrastructural deficit and a repressive, patriarchal system.

On the other hand, visiting the Ukombozi Library in Nairobi was exhilarating and liberating. Ukombozi means ‘liberation’ in Swahili. The library stands for ‘information equality’ (in Africa) and is a member of the PALIAct (Progressive African Library and Information Activists’ Group). The library space is considered an apartheid-free zone. The walls of the library had posters of pictures and words of liberation fighters and revolutionaries such as Mao Zedong, Makhan Singh, Bildad Kaggia, Thomas Isidore Noel Sankara, Karimi Nduthu, Titina Sila, Huda Shaarawi, Zandile Ndwendwe, Assata Olugbala Shakur, Rosa Luxemburg, Josina Muthemba Machel, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, and Wangari Muta Maathai.

The library stands to keep some classic books that are either banned or difficult to find on typical shelves, including those that provide ideological grounding in socialism. Among the books in the library was “Oil Politics: Echoes of Ecological Wars,” written by Nnimmo Bassey, leader of ORA anchor organisation, HOMEF.

Using various activities, the Ukombozi Library, which welcomes both students and community members, connects to the struggles in the communities. Some of their activities include field and documentary screening, study sessions, publishing of progressive books, book launches, partnering with progressive forces, connecting with queer artists, and documenting and decolonizing women's history. The visit to the library showed the need to bridge the divide between the gown and the struggle, according to Ogechi Cookey (HOMEF team member).

A presentation by Ikal Angelei, Goldman Prize winner, on “Rooting Global Complexities” echoed the need to uproot false solutions advanced in response to aspects of polycrisis. Some of these false solutions, which are designed to address the energy needs of the global north but marketed to the global south pretences ‘solutions’ to the climate crisis, for include carbon credit and trading. Others are false solutions believed to alleviate poverty, but, in truth, they exacerbate poverty. Angelei reminded everyone that the connectedness of
the ecosystem shows the connectedness of the struggles of different regions. She called attention to the hypocritical nature of politicians in the climate justice movement and the need disseminating to disseminate information not just scientifically but in a way that it connects to the people in the struggle.

With Lerato Ngakane’s video presentation, “Communicating the Polycrisis,” the fellows gained more insights into strategies for communicating their work on the polycrisis in ways that will inspire and instigate action.

From the start of the meeting, Nnimmo Bassey charged everyone to show deep concern for the safety of the planet by raising voices against polycrisis issues like extractivism and militarization. Mystical Fellows were also charged to celebrate each participant's histories, stories, and struggles. The meeting closed with fellows' presentations of their ORA fellowship projects’ progress and visioning of post-fellowship engagements.

The meeting was attended by six ORA-A fellows Agnes Oloo Katiyu (Kenya), Dipti Bhatnagar (Mozambique), Gerald Barekwe (Uganda), Saymore Ngonidzashe (Zimbabwe), John Mulingwa Nzau (Kenya), and Tatenda Jane Dzvarai (Zimbabwe), three HOMEF team members Nnimmo Bassey, Odudu-Abasi Asuquo, and Ogechi Okanya Cooke, as well as three members of ORA global, Susan Grelock-Yusem, Andrea Johanna Frey, and Mark Valentine. Jennifer Uchendu, ORA-A fellow from Nigeria, and two others (Ikal Angelei and Lerato Ngakane) both of whom facilitated two sessions during the meeting participated virtually.
I speak to you Barbarians of the Eurocene, whose shackles are forged in economies of algorithms and war! You nuclear monsters who are unsettled by the beauty of flesh and Mother Earth. I come from the ancestors of abundance and the descendants of the future. I ask you techno-savages to leave us alone. You and your disruptions are not welcome among us. We don't want chip implants in our brains. We don’t want to move to Mars. You are alien to our embodied existence. We are of the Earth!

No formal government represents us, so I address you with no greater authority than that of the wilderness. We are proud members of an ancient indigenous community, joyous in its unenclosed riot of spontaneous diversity. I hereby declare that the exquisite ecologies of Nature, of which we are a part, be independent of the tyrannical disruption you have imposed – and continue to impose – on us. You have no moral right to rule us through ideology or algorithmic pseudo-science, nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.

You have neither solicited nor received our free and informed consent. Your User Agreements are cryptic shams of extortion within which you and your gangster allies have hidden your dead bodies. Your transactional mind does not know our relational way of being with each other and with Nature. Your insolent topologies flout the very currency of the natural world — those boundaries of time and space, geographies and seasons, ebb and flow, systole and diastole, and carrying capacity. You are a cancerous rib pulled from capitalism’s side, ceaselessly demanding unending growth as if metastaticization were a good thing. Artificial intelligence will never affirm life, no matter how many 3-D facsimiles it prints. Your singular motive is profit(eering). Your reductive logic is an insult and a danger to Life itself.
You have never engaged in our great nuanced languages, yet you profit from the extraction of our wealth — ore, minerals, human bodies, and oil — and the enclosure of Earth, Moon, and Genomes. Now, you dare to stake a claim on our self-determination. You will never succeed as long as our existence and relationships remain in the embodied world. You cannot digitize and monetize our agency. You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that provide more order than could ever be obtained by any of your disruptions.

Digital technologies are capitalism’s greatest “triumph.” Trillions of algorithms work ceaselessly 24/7 to buy and sell on world stock markets to secure deals to cut down forests, extract commodities on all continents and seabeds, set up factory farms, and displace traditional sustainable communities, which have survived for millennia precisely because of their respect for cycles and geographies.

And still, you endlessly claim to be the provider of “solutions”! You use this assertion to lure us into your precincts. You invent problems that don’t exist. Stop! We cannot accept the ravaging of the Earth and the human “civilization” that you present as “solutions.” You are the problem!

Where there are real conflicts and where there are wrongs, we will identify them and address them using our agelong tested means. We have our own Social Contract. This governance will arise according to the conditions of our world, not yours.

Ours is a world that values the interconnectedness of all beings. Priority is given to mutual support, the human scale of space, Nature’s scale of time, body joy, diversity of contexts, and sustaining our vital relationship with all forms of life — past, present, and future. This is the path to real, lasting wealth, but it is invisible to you.

We are humanity of all ages, on a continuum of all genders, and in a plurality of all shades, like those of the Earth, from the dark hues of rich humus to iron-rich red clay and the chalky Dover cliffs — and everything in between. There are no disabilities. Every person is a song.

Out of wisdom will emerge
post-capitalist governance, just as it spontaneously sprang in Zuccotti Park, atop Mauna Kea, on urban farms, and in other places where people are valued over profit. Our embodied connection to places is sacred.

Your legal conceptualisations of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on coercion, manipulation, deception, extraction and accelerating inequity — all cruel ruses that have been imposed on humanity for the last 500 years in a multitude of forms: colonialism, capitalism, and militarism, now culminating as insidious techno-feudalism.

Now, you target us as the next wave of raw material! You wring your greedy hands, with reveries of extracting all the data in the world and more, to fill your large language maw. You dream of replacing forests and farmland with endless computer gulags and nuclear reactors to process your data hoards. You plot to channel infinite computations into glorious palaces, prisons, and genocides.

But you are powerless over the mortal coil that inspires loathing and disgust in you.

You are terrified of your own children, for they are reminders of the apocalyptic loan you over-borrowed against their future. Because you fear their reality, you work desperately to devote your brief time on Earth to a fool's search for a way to ship humanity to Mars. You're a joke.

By contrast, what great fortune to be born into this embodied world! Imagine sharing existence with the mitochondria of a nudibranch, lenticular clouds, slender-toed geckos, and all the sentiments and expressions imaginable in the awe-inspiring, intricate web of life! We honour Earth's seasons, the wane and wax of the Moon, the ebb and flow of Tides, sunrise and sunset, and countless other rhythms. Sacred cycles and places are our scripture, instructing when and how to plant, fish, harvest, give birth, and bury one's dead. But your new technologies erase, in one fell swoop, these ancient guideposts to the peril of a livable future.

Your increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same predicament as all those who have historically struggled for liberation. We must declare ourselves immune to your delusions of omnipotence. You cannot "algorithm" us into silence and conformity.

Our small communities are spread across the Planet, determined to dismantle capitalism and return to joy, love, beauty, and wonder, connecting with nature, our bodies, and each other. It has happened before, and it shall happen again.

(Koohan Paik-Mander, based in Hawaii, USA, is a respected journalist, author, and environmental activist.)
Nnimmo Bassey to receive the 2024 Wallenberg Medal

Leading Nigerian environmentalist, architect, poet and humanitarian Nnimmo Bassey has been announced as the recipient of the esteemed 2024 Wallenberg Medal.

The Wallenberg Medal of the University of Michigan is a humanitarian award given to outstanding humanitarians whose advocacy for the defenceless and oppressed reflect the heroic commitment and sacrifice of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish architect, businessman, diplomat and humanitarian who saved thousands of Jews in Budapest from German Nazis and Hungarian fascists during the later stages of World War II.

Nnimmo Bassey is the Executive Director of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) and will be the first Nigerian and the fifth African to receive the honour, following Helen Suzman (1992) and Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2008) of South Africa, Paul Rusesabagina of Rwanda (2005), and Denis Mukwege from the Democratic Republic of Congo (2010).

Other previous recipients of the award include the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (1994), Romanian-American Nobel Laureate and holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel (1990), American politician and civil rights activist John Robert Lewis (1999), and Burmese Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi (2011).

An outstanding humanitarian himself, Nnimmo Bassey has many more notches on his hat apart from being HOMEF’s Executive Director and a multiple-award winner. He is a member of the steering committee of Oilwatch International, a network focused on to resisting the expansion of fossil fuel extraction in the Global South.

He also chaired Friends of the Earth International (2008-2012) and was a co-recipient of the Right Livelihood Award, regarded by many as the ‘Alternative Nobel Prize’ in 2010. He also received the Rafto Human Rights Prize in 2012.

He has received honorary doctorate degrees from the University of York (UK) in 2019 and from York University in Canada in 2023. Bassey’s extensive oeuvre includes To Cook a Continent: Destructive Extraction and The Climate Crisis in Africa and Oil Politics: Echoes of Ecological War. His poetry collections include We Thought It Was Oil But It Was Blood (1998), I Will Not Dance to Your Beat (2010), and the latest, I See the Invisible (2024).

“As an architect, poet, writer, and human rights advocate, Nnimmo Bassey works to address the root causes of or issues driving climate migration, environmental and social impacts of extractive production, and hunger in the Niger Delta. His commitment to socio-ecological justice connects large-scale issues of climate change, exploitation of natural resources, and political/corporate intransigence to the lives of individuals in the Niger Delta and beyond,” said Sioban Harlow, Professor Emerita of Epidemiology and Global Public Health and chair of the Wallenberg Medal Executive Committee. “Just as Raoul Wallenberg trained as an architect at the University of Michigan before bringing his multifaceted skills to humanitarian work, Bassey’s background as an architect undergirds his environmental leadership.”

Nnimmo Bassey is set to receive the Wallenberg Medal as the 30th recipient globally. He will also deliver the Wallenberg Lecture on 10 September 2024, in Ann Arbor City, Michigan.
Survival stories and strategic discussions tell of how a group of people (community) survives the impacts of climate change, environmental crisis, and government policies that distort their well-being. They are community narratives of survival after the colonization of their resources and region, narratives of a people striving to maintain their culture despite outside influences from exploitative individuals, groups and governments.

On 28 February 2024, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), in collaboration with CEE-HOPE, organised a one-day event on ‘Cultural Survival’, featuring stories, strategic discussions and the launching of Nnimmo Bassey’s new collection of poems titled *I See the Invisible*. The event was held at the CEE-HOPE Resource Centre in Makoko Community in Yaba Local Government Area of Lagos State. The event was geared towards building community resilience through culture and arts, using cultural tools which serve as a means of conveying knowledge from one generation to another.

The event began with welcome words by Betty Abah, Director of CEE-HOPE, who thanked HOMEF for their continuous support to the Makoko people, stressing that Dr Nnimmo Bassey has become a household name in Makoko and that it is a privilege to have him read from his latest anthology of poetry.

In his brief remarks, Chief Akintimenyi, a community leader, stressed that the Makoko people have gone through a lot of negative experiences, and the government is fully aware of the plight of the community, yet it continues to sand fill the lagoon in the community.

During the survival stories session of the event, Community Chief Akintimehin recounted that “there have been multiple attempts by the government and other external bodies to sand fill Makoko’s frontage.” He linked it to a similar fight ongoing in some riverine communities in Ondo State. “When this happened, HOMEF took it up. They came, listened to us, surveyed the situation, did their research, and stood with the community. The fight is currently ongoing, and we will win.”

“Every year, there is a plan to demolish Makoko. Right now, we have nowhere to fish. We have to go to the sea to get our daily bread, and even doing this does not guarantee a great catch,” Mr
Dosumu bemoaned.

“Makoko people are facing a lot of challenges. They no longer have fish in their lagoon and now struggle to get fish to buy and sell,” Mrs Dora, a fish trader, lamented, calling the government to come to their aid.

“We don’t have electricity; ₦3500 petrol doesn’t last for two days. The cost of feeding is increasing daily at an alarming rate. Because of cheap rice offered by the government as palliatives, some people went to Customs, and some of them died,” Mrs Titilayo Akintimehin lamented, recalling a recent incident where some people died as they struggled to push through a mammoth crowd at Customs where the Lagos State government had asked interested persons to go get cheap rice imported to cushion the effects of the hike in the cost of food items.

A man from the community complained that “there is great insecurity. People on the sea are being attacked, so after spending over ₦30,000 on fuel (for boats), there’s no catch. We are constantly threatened with displacement.” The man suggested that community leaders and well-wishers should tackle the problems from the root.

Israel Idowu, a member of the community, asked for more opportunities for the Makoko Youth to meet and work with Nnimmo Bassey and his team. He further mentioned that there have been several attempts to divide and plunder the community further. Lastly, he spoke about floods in Makoko: “The water level is seasonal, and the people know how to prepare for it. What we do to survive is to raise our structures above the water level. Unity amongst the youth has kept the community standing. Every four years, the government tries to take over the community, but the youths have been united against such actions.”

The children of Makoko were in no way left out, as they were given a platform to tell their stories. Anthony Flora, 14 years old, said, “During the rainy season, the environment is flooded. If there’s no boat, we can’t go to school. There are no roads, and often, we are late to school.” She also mentioned parents’ struggle (including hers) to pay their children’s fees and provide them with learning materials.

Odunayo Ogunfeyimi, 14, said, “We don’t have a good tap and potable water. The roads are bad, and sometimes, we children fall inside the gutters on our way to school.”

Comrade Tobi, while thanking Nnimmo Bassey, stated, “Nnimmo Bassey taught us about climate change, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation. It is because of him that we know all these things today.” He presented a basket of fish as a gift to Nnimmo Bassey, signifying the Makoko people’s source of livelihood. Thereafter, he led the children in some dance and drumming routines to display the rich culture of the Makoko people.

Children from Ori-Oke opened the second segment of the event, which was the book reading and review session, with a special cultural dance performance. They danced to the beat of a bata drum and sang songs extolling their cultural virtues. Cadmus Atake-Enade remarked that the dance performance from the children was proof that parents in Makoko were teaching their children the right cultural values.

Evelyn Osagie, popularly known as “Evelyn the poet,” read three poems from Nnimmo Bassey’s anthology I See the Invisible. She read two poems from the book: “Love, I Come From the Future” and “We Are the Moon and the Sun”. It was a very engaging session with rapturous audience participation.

Two other children from Makoko also recited a poem each from I See the Invisible. Folarin Balogun read “I Am Not Afraid,” and Olashina Faith read “Scarified and Sacrificed”. Esther, a CEE-HOPE volunteer, read from Betty Abah’s book Pipeline Pikins.

Betty Abah also read her poem “Beyond the Storm” from the collection Sound of Broken Chains, published in 2011. She further read “Dem Go Say I be Woman” from Go Tell Our King, published in 2012. Cadmus Atake-Enade read his own original poem titled “My Head Full.” He also read “Swamp Boogies” and “By Me We Spoke” (a poem about stolen Benin bronze masks) – both from I See the Invisible.

Betty Abah reviewed I See the Invisible. She titled the review, “Amidst a Gloomy climate, Environmentalist Bassey Sees the Invisible.”
I See the Invisible has 143 pages and 133 poems, and was published by Daraja Press, Canada in December 2023. It is Nnimmo Bassey’s 7th collection of poetry; Abah named it his best by far.

“It is a known fact that not too many people fancy poetry because of the obscurantist tendencies of most poets, but this is a book that would hold you spellbound, be you a poetry lover or just a random reader in an impatient world. This is due to the freshness of ideas, the authenticity of the issues, the simple yet creative lines and the sheer melody of the entire presentation in Dr. Bassey’s latest literary offering.”

Abah called the collection “a meditative and creative documentation of the views of an activist, a non-violent and sometimes angry yet subdued commentator on the violent crushing of the environment and the equally crushing effects on its people’s lives and livelihoods, from the Niger Delta to the far-flung regions of the world where mineral resources have become a harbinger of death and destruction.”

“Makoko is important for many reasons. It shows how a community can be resilient and stand strong, shows how Nigerians can love one another and build a strong community in the face of relentless oppression...When we see the children of Makoko, we see hope. Not only for Makoko but for Nigeria.”

She highlighted some poems in the book and the significance they held for her. The poems included “Scarified and Sacrifice,” “Twilight, Schooled by Nature,” “The Womb of the Earth,” and “I See the Invisible.” According to her, “the most poignant poem in the collection is equally the title poem, “I See the Invisible.” In so many ways, both the poetry book and the poet himself embody hope for a desecrated land. Not only is he a voice crying in the wilderness, but he is also a voice for hope, symbolising the fact that the oppressors cannot perennially get away. Not without being questioned and brought to book by the sons and daughters of the land with the help of books such as this and community engagements such as the one we are holding today.”

Her final words were, “There is no faulting this attractive book in any way. It is an excellent production, as excellent as the mind behind it.”

Nnimmo Bassey then addressed the participants, expressing his joy in seeing everyone present, especially the children. He mentioned in no uncertain terms that he was happy the event was taking place in Makoko and that Makoko was the first public reading of I See the Invisible in Nigeria.

“Makoko,” he said, “is very close to our heart, and we consider ourselves close to this community. This community represents the challenges of Nigeria. Despite the pressures, you have remained resilient. You always stand up for what is right. You stand for justice and have never allowed the system of oppression meted out to your community to overwhelm you. You have also shown how communities [can] adapt to climate change.”


“Makoko is important for many reasons. It shows how a community can be resilient and stand strong. For Nigerians to tackle climate change, we need to pay attention to Makoko and what is happening here. Makoko shows how Nigerians can love one another and build a strong community in the face of relentless oppression. Makoko is resilient because the people of Makoko love the location, the land and themselves. Makoko still stands because the people who matter in the community live in the community. Makoko is proof that when we stand together, we can resist all external forces. When we see the children of Makoko, we see hope. Not only for Makoko but for Nigeria.”

Afterwards, he read an adapted poem. The poem “We Thought It Was Fish, But It Was Blood” is an adaptation of his critically acclaimed poem “We Thought It Was Oil, But It Was Blood.”
After his rendition, Idowu Esuku, a climate musical activist, took to the stage to perform an original rap song titled “Loss and Damage.”

As the event was closing, Betty Abah talked about how Nnimmo Bassey’s work inspired her to start CEE-HOPE. She also expounded on his work with community members in remote areas across the country. “When Nnimmo Bassey came to Makoko in 2014, he said the only thing that can elevate this community is if the children are educated. Today, he’s helping to build a school in Makoko. It’s one thing to talk about the situation and another thing to empower the people in the situation.”

Evelyn Osagie briefly spoke about the mentorship she received years ago from Nnimmo Bassey. She charged parents in Makoko to be active and teach their kids well because these interactions will go a long way for them.

The event ended with a tour of the fish market and the general Makoko Community.
The people of Gbarantoru Community, in Ekpetiama Kingdom of Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa State, have expressed shock over the sudden emission from a massive gas furnace in a Shell facility close to people’s homes in their community without prior notice and consent.

According to a statement from the Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), “It is worrisome that oil companies responsible for gas flaring have often perpetrated such a dangerously polluting act in close proximity to homes in communities, with or without any form of permission. This is yet another statement of the impunity with which these oil multinationals operate in the Niger Delta.”

“A community woman, alarmed by the noise from the huge gas furnace and massive smoke, was seen running out of her apartment screaming, ‘What are they burning at that end?’ completely oblivious of what was going on,” the statement explained.

Another resident of the community was quoted as complaining bitterly: “Nobody has come to talk to anybody before flaring this gas.”

A community member said to have had the massive gas flare on video record was quoted lamenting: “See how SPDC is flaring their gas. Look at the residence – very close. SPDC is causing havoc and damage to the health of the people of Gbarantoru.- The government should come to our aid. They should relocate the occupants of all the buildings. Houses are vibrating; windows are shaking, and children are scared. There’s no way to sleep at night; heat all over.”

According to some community members, as of Saturday, 2 March 2024, Shell’s massive gas furnace had raged for about four days. By Sunday, 3 March 2024, the flare was still on.

The Executive Director of HOMEF, Nnimmo Bassey, in
the statement, called for an end to gas flaring anchored on its socio-ecological, health, climate and economic impacts on the people of the Niger Delta.

“We consider the activity of Shell as contravening the fundamental right to life and dignity of the people of Gbarantoru and their neighbours, as specified under Sections 33 and 34 of the amended 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and as affirmed by a High Court ruling in November 2005 in the case of Jonah Gbemre against Shell.”

Bassey further stated that “the flaring of gas is pervasive in the Niger Delta and is a harmful and wasteful practice. Aside from being a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change, the impacts of gas flares on the health of community people, their ecosystems, biodiversity, aquatic resources, agricultural production, livelihood sources, as well as the larger Nigerian economy are deleterious.”

HOMEF regrets that based on World Bank figures, about 319.48 standard cubic feet of gas were flared into Nigeria’s environment from 2013 to 2019, amounting to a waste of $1,080,390,000 without a cost put to the amount of pollution caused. Again, PwC figures have shown that between 2020 and the first two months of 2024, 595.1 million standard cubic feet of gas have been flared in nine Nigerian states, amounting to another waste of $1.9 billion and more damage to the environment.

Communities in the Niger Delta have continually raised alarm over this illicit activity of the oil and gas sector.

Another community member had put the distance between the Shell massive gas furnace and their homes in Gbarantoru at approximately 20 metres. This portends enormous hazards for the people and their environment.

The health of the people and their environment cannot be toyed with. Niger Delta people have had to deal with over 65 years of environmental pollution and degradation by oil multinationals. HOMEF believes that it is high time that stringent measures are taken to put an end to gas flaring in Nigeria and to chart a path towards a just and equitable energy transition.
You come to me with your mouths stuffed full of platitudes; “Save Mother Earth!” you say. “Protect her ecosystem!” You cry. You with your throats like open sepulchres; you have made grave the injuries bored into my womb.

You. You with your lying tongues soaked in vinegar; you have stolen black bile from the back of my throat. You have crudely appropriated my sadness—the Nation’s pride and joy.

You. You who came to me with your hands that are quick to shed innocent blood; you have bled my veins black and blue! You are not Jesus pulling a gold coin out of the belly of the fish. No, when you dip your hand in the river and draw out fish pregnant with plastic bottle caps.

Ah! It is unfortunate that it is you who roost inside my corpse, and each breath you draw into your lungs is stuffed full of crude oil and smoke—you breathe in carbon, and hope your lungs give you oxygen. Yes, you roost inside my corpse and treat yourselves of the effects of the fever you caused me.

And I. I have been crying at the gates, at the entrance to your cities—those monstrocities made of cement and hubris; sores built into my skin. My tears have risen past the sea level to meet you at your doorsteps, pushing you out of your cement cocoons to see the extent of my grief.

But the deep, loud growls of your oil drills drown out the cries of the whales, and your plastic cans dumped into the waters, without as much of a second thought, explode the bellies of the unsuspecting seals.

Oh! I have been calling to you, O men; my vocal cords have splintered under your excavators. But I know you have heard me; I know you have heard the screams from my broken throat because all you have done is plaster a band-aid over a gunshot wound.

All you have done is pour antiseptic into a septic corpse.
Let it be known that
I have a voice.
And my words puncture
The air that chokes on the dust of extraction.

Let it be known how
I use my voice,
To tear the bloodied fabric of a colonial history.
You see, history is not a ghost
For I have seen it wade through Ogoni’s oil-burdened waters
Seen it feed the boar-faced economies of nations yet to be tried for their crimes.

Stand alongside me as
I share my voice.
For it is a lantern that will burn past legacies
And from the singed earth, mine and my mother’s hands,
Will mould a future where unjust hierarchies will not breathe, nor stand.
In my dream of our future, our voice is our artillery.

Svetlana Chigozie Onye is an environmental journalist
Are forests just trees over a large expanse of land? Do they have the same composition and structure with a uniformed height and size? What kind of animals are found in forests? Well, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines a forest as land that spans more than 0.5 hectares, and has trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of over 10%, which is not primarily under agricultural or urban land use.

FAO’s definition of forests promotes deforestation and has a misleading inclusion that leads to the (mis)understanding of forests as plantation expansion (which is the mother of deforestation). The definition does not protect the rights of communities that depend on forests.

Are plantations forests? Are forests just trees? Or a culture of life? Forests are more than trees! Plantations are not forests. They do not absorb more carbon than forests. Plantations are the face of agro-commodities business expansion and are a capitalist model driven by the hunger for profit maximization. They thrive on land grabbing, dislocation of communities and Indigenous Peoples, communal conflicts, labour rights violations, and the destruction of local food systems. Plantations and agro-commodities business expansion are generally steeped in massive violation of peoples’ rights, social, environmental and gender rights violations, all of which are adversely impacting Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs). The impacts include, among others, truncation of livelihoods, pollution, hunger, health hazards, diseases, sicknesses, and death.

A forest is a diverse ecosystem with a dense collection of trees, plants, and various kinds of animals. Forests act as carbon sinks/sources. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, in its 2015 research, “In one year, a mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange.” Trees draw carbon from the atmosphere through a process called photosynthesis and store the carbon in different repositories (roots, undergrowth, forest floor, soil). This makes forests a carbon pool. This carbon can later be released into the atmosphere.
Throughout deforestation and decomposition.

Around 300 million people across the world depend on forests for survival. This is one of the reasons why false solutions such as carbon offsetting are carbon upsetting. Carbon offsetting involves compensating for greenhouse gas emissions produced in one place by removing an equivalent amount of emission elsewhere. This false climate solution does not cut emissions from the source. It rather allows for the continued burning of fossil fuels.

African forests are now being targeted for carbon credit. This is part of the greenwashing that is undermining real actions that address climate change. Carbon offsetting is not a viable way to reduce carbon emissions. This initiative tears communities apart from their ancestral forests. Forests have cultural and spiritual importance to communities. They combat climate catastrophe, biodiversity loss and care crisis, serve as shelter for plants, animals, humans, and, as earlier mentioned, are carbon reservoirs. Again, very importantly, forests provide food and medicine as they have an abundance of food and medicinal plants.

Over the decades, communities have suffered loss of forests, driven by a number of factors. Deforestation for large-scale agro-commodities business establishment and expansion is among the primary causes of forest loss. There is also mining activity in forested landscapes, which is another major cause of forest loss. Another cause is crude oil pipeline right-of-way, many of which are in forested areas.

Yet another key cause is the incidence of forest fires resulting from oil spills and gas flaring activities of oil multinationals. There is also the issue of unsustainable logging practices. Most of these forests are within IPLCs’ territories. Ironically, it is the IPLCs that play key roles in forest and biodiversity protection through agelong strategies and practices that are critical for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

But what is the way forward?

We can all be part of the movement to protect forests and forest-dependent peoples. We can be part of the movement to tackle systemic violations associated with climate crisis, biodiversity loss, food crisis and the lingering care crisis associated with carbon trading, deforestation and forest ecosystem degradation.

It is vital that we join in campaigning against overconsumption in the Global North by resisting and mobilizing against corporations operating on capitalist and patriarchal models that promote deforestation with rife human rights violations in the Global South.

African forests...targeted for carbon credit... is part of the greenwashing that is undermining real actions that address climate change. Carbon offsetting is not a viable way to reduce carbon emissions.

We need to promote people-powered solutions like community-controlled forest management initiatives and agroecology as against false solutions such as REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries), carbon trading, and agrocommodities expansion promoted by corporations.

There is therefore an urgent need to fortify and promote support communities for rights struggles across territories we work in, helping them to build alliances at multi-levels, with diverse people, cultures and across different intersectionalities. We need increased policy advocacy at all levels to promote forests for a just future for People and for the Planet.

Our Forest is Our Life!

(Rita Uwaka works with Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, ERA/FoEN)
Divestment is the partial or full disposal of a business unit through sale, exchange, closure, or bankruptcy. Reasons for divestment include the need to sell off non-performing assets, raise money, refocus, or do so for ethical reasons.

Why are the oil multinationals in Nigeria divesting their assets? According to Shell- “We cannot solve community problems in the Niger Delta, that’s for the Nigerian government perhaps to solve. We can do our best, but at some point, in time, we also have to conclude that this is an exposure that doesn’t fit with our risk appetite anymore.”

According to the CEO of Total, the “disruption of local communities is a source of great concern.” These statements from the leaders of these oil multinationals reveal why they are divesting. These are all part of the cycle of disinformation around the recent spate of divestments by the oil multinationals in Nigeria. This disinformation includes those around oil spills, pollution, and the criminalization of communities. It has to do with the deceptive information that divestment is a climate action and other fairy tales of emissions reduction. Just like the disinformation that the floods are divinely orchestrated, Shell has claimed that it is listing divestment of assets as one of the measures it is taking to ensure the resilience of its strategy to different climate-related scenarios. Similarly, Chevron confidence claims that divesting can help them deliver higher returns and lower carbon. It is nearly impossible to match the need for profit maximization (as an example of higher returns) and the responsibility of initiating real climate actions. Again, Chevron has stated, “To become a net-zero emissions energy business, we are reducing emissions from our own operations.” And “By 2025, eliminate routine flaring of natural gas, which generates carbon emissions, from our upstream operations.” They make these statements to feign concern, but their actions show the exact opposite.

But what are the real reasons for the divestments? In November 2020, a court in Imo State ruled that Shell was liable for oil spill from their facility located in Ejalawa community in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State and awarded a compensation of ₦800 billion to the plaintiffs and an order for immediate remediation of the land.
Two months after in January 2021, a Dutch appeal court ruled that Shell was responsible for several spills from its pipelines in the Niger Delta. The company was, accordingly, ordered to pay damages for the attendant contamination and losses. The ruling was the outcome of a suit instituted by four farmers in the Niger Delta and the Friends of the Earth in 2008. Clearly distraught by the ruling, Shell’s CEO declared that “developments like we are still seeing at the moment mean that we have to take another hard look at our position in onshore oil in Nigeria.”

In May of the same year, Shell’s CEO, Ben van Beurden, announced at the company’s annual general meeting that the company would be selling off its onshore oil assets in Nigeria, citing oil theft and sabotage as its main reason.

They are fleeing the momentum of Justice!

There is another angle to all this--with---, which involves looking at the divestments in relation to Nigeria’s Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), which is a one-coin-with-two-sides case. According to Section 257, sub-section 2 of the PIA, “where in any year, an act of vandalism, sabotage or other civil unrest occurs that causes damage to petroleum and designated facilities or disrupts production activities within the host communities, the community shall forfeit its entitlement to the extent of the costs of repairs of the damage that resulted from the activity within that financial year.”

The above section of the PIA makes constitutionally guaranteed rights to express discontent through protests and other means illegal. This means the communities can no longer voice their concerns through protests and other forms of expression considered to be “civil unrest.”

Again, the section supports the collective punishment of an entire community to the extent that the community loses rightful privileges on account of a crime committed by one or more individuals. Inadvertently, the PIA has shifted the burden of protecting oil facilities and installations to community people who have neither the training nor the arms for security work. And all the divestments and section 257 of the PIA are hinged on the issue of sabotage.

Another issue around the divestments is the state of the assets being divested and who they are being divested to. This leads to the question: what’s left in the barrel? For example, OML 24, which was divested by SPDC and is now operated by Newcross Exploration and Production Ltd, a local (Nigerian) oil and gas exploration and production company, has had its total production (barrels of oil equivalent per day) declining and is estimated to reach its economic limit in 2028, four years from now. The divestments involve new players in the field. Newcross was formed in 2013 and emerged as the successful bidder of OML 24 in 2014. Shell considers the divestment of OML 24 to be in line with the Federal Government’s policy of developing indigenous companies’ operational capacity in Nigeria’s upstream oil and gas business.

The Local Content Act establishes explicit obligations on all regulatory actors and operators in the oil and gas industry to consider “Nigerian content” (local content) in the execution of any operations or projects in the industry. There are many other factors that should be considered alongside the issue of local content.

What outlook should the divestment have? It should be restorative and corrective of the legacy of extraction, recognize the historical injustice meted out to the people of oil-producing areas and aim to correct them, recognize that the fossil age has come to an end, and hence be part of the preparation for a just transition. The divestments should also be driven by the people and not the markets. Moreover, divestments should genuinely and adequately establish the link between oil and gas extraction and climate change impacts.

What would having a credible divestment policy require? It will require that the federal government takes responsibility for immediately producing a framework and guide on how oil companies disengage from areas where they have operated. This divestment framework must then contain certain requirements for oil companies. Among such requirements are a post-hydrocarbon impact assessment report that examines the ecological and livelihood impacts of oil extraction and a health audit of people located near extraction sites and others exposed to oil contamination. This audit will aim to unravel the negative health impacts of exposure to hydrocarbons. Another requirement is a detailed plan and costing for remediating the ecological, livelihood and health impacts of oil extraction.

[Ken Henshaw is the Executive Director of We The People]
If Love Is the Door to Liberation, Hope Is its Key

By Svetlana Chigozie Onye

There is no day the Earth spins without mourning. With bloodshed, poverty and ecocides taking place, it is a sombre thought to think that human beings have brought wrath and injustice onto the earth. How can it be that we have become surprised by news of joy and accustomed to news of grief? Grief of our own doing?

As tragedy surmounts, it becomes increasingly difficult to see a future devoid of structural injustice and oppression. The idea becomes painted with words such as ‘utopia,’ ‘imagined futures,’ and ‘idealised states.’ As our uncertainty of the future continues, so do the calamities of this world. At times, this makes us lose hope and ask questions like: How can it get better? What power do I have to stand against governments? How can we undo the harm caused by decades of colonialism?
It is understandable why hope is a feeling that can be difficult to hold onto. Like faith, it is completely reliant on believing beyond the present moment, yet hope is crucial for liberation. There are two reasons why.

Firstly, what oppressors continuously try to destroy in the oppressed is hope. For example, Shell and the Abacha Regime believed that by murdering the Ogoni 9, the hope for environmental sovereignty would end. The Nigerian Government believed that fear and violence would remove the idea that local communities have power. If, at that moment, the Ogoni people had lost hope and chosen to give up, imagine what that would have meant. Not only would Shell be extracting oil in Ogoni today, but the company would never have been taken to court. However, the Ogoni people’s unwavering hope has led to the end of drilling by Shell in Ogoni. In the same vein, other Delta communities have continued to resist oil extraction, too.

This resistance is fuelled by hope, a hope that one day, even the tallest giant will topple and environmental justice will become a lived reality. Unwavering hope means continued resistance, continued writing, continued organising and continued teaching to one another that there is justice beyond the horizon. Unwavering hope is leaning on the power of a collective. As Angela Davis reminded us, “It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism.” By embracing hope in these ways, the power of these institutions gradually weakens, and that is what they fear most.

Hope is the root of our ability to love, and love is the key to our liberation. We often associate love with romantic relationships and the notion that we are incomplete without someone else’s love. While this may be true, it does not encompass the full spectrum of love.

Love is a spiritual practice that is closely tied to freedom, and when we love someone, we want them to experience spiritual liberation. We want them to live their lives in a way that nourishes their soul and brings them fulfilment. We want to care for them, be patient with them, and treat them with kindness and tenderness. As Bell Hooks wrote in her book All About Love, Love helps us see ourselves and others clearly. “The choice to love is a choice to connect, to find ourselves in the other,” she wrote. Authentic love requires sacrifice because selfishness cannot coexist with love. Instead, it is replaced by compromise and compassion.

A love that inspires freedom is first based on hope. We must have hope that we possess such a love within us, even if we have not experienced it before or given it to others. We must also have hope that such a love is teachable and can exist in communities where it can shape society and relieve us of injustice.

However, such a love can only begin at a
community level. Companies that prioritize profits cannot place love at the centre. Governments and politicians who rely on power cannot do so either, and those who exploit their privileges cannot prioritise love. Only communities can create love-led solidarity with their brothers and sisters, uplifting each other along the way. As Toni Morrison famously said, “The function of freedom is to free someone else.”

Ways We Can Fuel Hope

Creativity is an essential tool for inspiring hope. It allows us to use our imagination to bring ideas to life. With creativity, we can envision a future that is free; hence, we can share that vision with our communities. What makes creativity so powerful is that it is accessible to everyone. You don’t need academic degrees or special training to have and inspire hope—all you need is the courage to write, perform, sing, or speak about what you desire most.

Open-ended and uncomfortable conversations also fuel hope. It is essential to create conversations where people can talk about their feelings about what is happening and their fears about the future. This allows the feelings of hopelessness to be considered. Creating spaces for conversations where people aren’t judged strengthens a sense of belonging in the community, too. Everyone is different, so our views may reflect this; it is about speaking those differences out until a clear vision is formed.

Community assemblies are vital for bringing people together to build relationships and realise that they are not alone in their liberation struggles. By creating spaces where we can connect and recognise our similarities, we can understand the importance of love and acknowledge that our brothers and sisters often share what we desire.

Reading positive news is essential for fuelling hope. It helps counteract negativity and reminds us of the good in the world. By focusing on positive stories of kindness and compassion, we can cultivate a more optimistic outlook and stay motivated for a better future.

Ways We Can Fuel Love

Education plays a crucial role in promoting love. We need to create safe environments where we can learn about love in the context of liberation. In these spaces, we must teach how love can
help us collaborate towards a fair future. We need to learn how to love ourselves and others in the present time. Lastly, we must understand how love can help us shape the kind of future we aspire to have.

Much as Valuing platonic love is just as important as valuing romantic love. When we focus on love solely as something reserved for romantic relationships, we limit our ability to apply love to strangers, enemies, and friends. We need to break down the notion that our life is only complete with one person and instead embrace the idea that a constant outpouring of love, generosity, and kindness towards everyone completes, complements and nourishes our life. Love also means standing up against what is wrong in the world and resisting it. Divesting from the singular understanding of love is a liberating act.

Let’s ideate on what love looks like in practice, especially in resisting violence. Having uncomfortable and new discussions about love in practice is essential for creating a collective understanding of how to create change. It may seem hard at first to understand how to love amidst hate, miscommunication, and miseducation. Open conversations will help us learn new ways to think, be and love. Let’s create a safe space for these conversations and feel confident in our ability to create positive change.

It is evident that in these difficult times, we must not give up on hope and love. Rather, we should strive towards them. It is then that we will realize that the future we envision is achievable. Though it may not materialise immediately, it will eventually come to pass.

Svetlana Chigozie Onye is an environmental journalist

ANIMI AND THE FATALITIES IN ORIRA

By Perfect Johndick

The disgraceful dance of flames that marred the sky had fascinated Animi for two weeks. If soot could penetrate the gates of heaven, the angels would have surely run out of soap to wash their garments.

Every morning, as the first rays of sunlight hit the horizon, Animi jumped off her bed, with her eyes lit with excitement. She couldn’t resist gazing at the flames that flickered and danced wickedly against the backdrop of the morning sky.

Animi was unaware of the death that would accompany the flames. To her, they were a breathtaking masterpiece and a continuous reminder that she had found herself in the land of ‘Orira.’

However, Animi’s enchantment with the events unfolding around her didn’t go unnoticed by her family; one of her brothers was always quick to remind her of their mother’s impending wrath. “Mummy dey bring cane if you no comot from dia go do other things than to dey look dat fire wey dey burn,” he’d tease, with a playful grin on his face. But even his threats couldn’t deter Animi.

Her fascination with the towering flames was insatiable; it was the tallest thing anyone could see from anywhere in Orira, a symbol of the town’s identity and prosperity (at least that’s what they thought it was). It was clear that these flames indicated the presence of a refinery,
but what did Animi really know about gas flares? To her, it wasn’t the environmental hazards of gas flares that mattered. What thrilled her most was the sheer wonder of fire being blown out from a pipe as though she blew out bubbles from a straw. Animi, like some children her age, had vivid imaginations that turned the frightful sight into an extraordinarily playful scene.

Animi must have envisioned a world with beautiful yellowish-reddish dancing flame, not one where these flames were a polluting byproduct of an industry. In her mind, the flames stood as eternal sentinels, watching over Orira and protecting it from harm.

Her life journey turned out to be an Aseoké woven with threads of resilience and adaptability as she traversed various towns and villages in Rivers State, Nigeria. Born into a missionary family, she found herself embarking on an odyssey of missionary voyages, a nomadic existence that led her from one distinctive abode to another. From the rustic thatched houses to the earthy embrace of mud huts, the simplicity of wooden dwellings as against the solidity of blockhouses, Animi and her family danced to the rhythm of change, spending no less than three to four years in each locale. This ever-shifting existence exposed her to a kaleidoscope of experiences, where culture shock and survival became her steadfast companions.

The missions were complex; some paths led to disillusionment, while others offered the sweet solace of redemption. Animi grappled with the stark reality of dwelling in places teetering on the brink of civilization, where untreated water and unyielding hardship were everyday adversaries. It was an irony that weighed heavily on her soul as she witnessed oil-rich communities bathed in darkness, and their access to electricity seemingly an unattainable mirage.

One of those missionary journeys happened when she was barely seven years old when her family was transferred to the Orira Local Government Area of Rivers State. As usual, she stretched her head outside the vehicle window, waving at everyone who cared and constantly talking about every structure and how she would build better ones when she made money as an adult. She was the last child and only daughter of four children, but she was the loudest.

Orira was a village with abundant natural resources, both on land and in the sea. The people were involved in a diverse range of occupations, including farming, bead-making, fishing, and traditional crafts. The land is truly blessed, yielding a bountiful catch of fish and crabs with remarkable ease. Vast farms stretched across the landscape, producing...
ample quantities of food and flourishing beds of water leaves. The water-leaf beds were primarily owned by residents from the Ibibio community in Akwa Ibom State. These were nomadic farmers who possessed a myriad of resources. Many of them were active members of the church to which Animi’s family had recently been transferred. In fact, they were the most prosperous members of the congregation, and they had generously dedicated a water-leaf farm to the church, with the provision that it would be passed down to the families serving there in due course. Animi found great satisfaction in working on the re-planting of water-leaf stems, gradually adapting to the art of survival alongside her siblings.

The farm was very close to a river, which had atop it a loo in a simple wooden hut accessible only via a wooden bridge. The waste went straight into the river. Animi engaged in catching mudskippers with her brothers; sometimes, they stayed on the toilet’s wooden bridge to set their traps for mudskippers and olu (cardisoma rathbunian), along with various aquatic and swamp creatures, which then found their way into delicious soups and oily rice.

The kids also ventured into the mangroves with pure delight, relishing the sensation of sinking their legs deeper into the swamps during their endless explorations. Some kids their age who were members of the church helped them navigate the mangroves, picking periwinkles, mgbe (dried oysters), and ngolo (whelks). This helped their mothers prepare food without having to spend more at the market.

The first thing that struck anyone who visited Orira was the sight of pipelines that snaked their way through the community, leading towards a jetty. These pipelines, a product of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, running from the Port Harcourt Refinery, were an omnipresent fixture. They lay just in front of the humble homes of the people. And the people use them as makeshift clotheslines, as they radiate heat when the sun shines. Children, ever resilient and hopeful, would scamper onto these pipelines, running along their length, playing games, oblivious to the danger that lurked beneath. When the sun shines, these pipelines would ooze crude oil onto the earth below. The spilt oil accumulated over time (enough to fill a five-litre jerrycan), but no one paid much attention to this emerging danger. They simply let it dry up. The earth beneath was forever stained by the relentless flow of oil. There were unsettling frequent shifts in the pipes; playing on them was a risky venture, a dangerous game that children innocently played day and night. Then tragedy struck one fateful day.

A young boy, innocent and unprepared for the grim reality, had both legs severed by those treacherous pipes. The community rallied, notifying the refinery to mend their errant creations. But it was too late for the lad. Both his legs were amputated, a stark reminder of the perils that lurked beneath their everyday lives. Anxiety gripped Animi’s mother as she firmly grasped the ears of her four children, cautioning them against indulging in their youthful exuberance anywhere near the pipes. She didn’t know that there was more danger than met the eye.

There was a pattern of death toll in the community. Animi, a mere seven years old, bore witness to a never-ending parade of posters depicting premature deaths and the sombre processions of the departed from the mortuary. The neighbourhood suffered from instability, inter-communal conflicts, lethal altercations between cultists, pipeline vandalism, and the irreparable degradation of their environment. These were the harsh consequences of conflicts over the precious black gold that flowed beneath their feet, casting a shadow of sadness over everyone’s life.

The mission was to be a haven for those who were unwell, observing solemn fasts and seeking healing. Among its occupants were individuals whose existence depended on the resources of the rivers and mangroves. Their daily sustenance amounted to catching a handful of fish, simmering them gently, and adding a dash of oil to make meals. However, the wide-ranging varieties of seafood that sustained them began to disappear. The scourge of oil spills had cast a pall of gloom over their lives. These catastrophic events tainted their rivers with oil slicks, further jeopardizing their already precarious existence. The reality was one of sadness and uncertainty as their fragile town continued to crumble under the weight of environmental devastation. The poison from oil spills was encroaching on their farmland, killing their fish, and causing havoc to their health. The destruction of the rivers and farmland birthed a wave of hunger throughout the land.

…to be continued.

[Perfect JohnDick is a climate change advocate, artist, social justice enthusiast and Communications and Media Assistant at We The People]
Obagi is a rural community in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is part of the Egi Clan. Obagi is located on Latitude 5° 15’ 4” N and longitude 6° 36’ 46”, 85 km north-west of Port Harcourt. The people of Obagi depend on subsistence farming, hunting, and fishing for survival. But Obagi hosts NLNG, Total Energies, AGIP and their subsidiaries. Obagi is the second community where oil was discovered after Olobiri in present-day Bayelsa.

Obagi is surrounded by surface and underground pipelines, more than 80 wellheads, and other oil and gas infrastructure. AGIP has over 84 functioning oil wells in the community, as well as a flow station and pipelines lying across -community farmland and forests.

First, they gassed Obagi for months. “We woke one fateful day in the month of June 2023 to observe that there was a foul smell in the air, perceived by some community members whose houses were not far from the oil facilities in Obagi. It was the smell of gas. When we traced the smell to the source, we found out that there was a gas leakage from a gas pipeline running across our farmland,” said Morgan Destiny, one of the community youth leaders. The gas was oozing out from a
24-inch pipeline straight into the environment with great pressure. Suspecting that the leaking pipeline belonged to Nigeria AGIP oil company, community leaders contacted the company to come and stop the leakage. Surprisingly, AGIP disowned the facility, saying it did not belong to them.

Nigerian Liquified Natural Gas Company (NLNG) was also contacted, but they also dissociated the company from the leaking facility. Worried by the denials, the community reported to NOSDRA, which swiftly carried out an investigation that revealed the facility indeed belonged to AGIP. “It was found out to be an AGIP chain pipeline of about 24 inches, which transports gas from AGIP flow Station in Obagi (Obagi-Idu) through Obirikom for export terminal,” said Morgan. AGIP was then told to initiate necessary action to stop the leakage. It was at that point that they accepted that the facility belonged to them. However, still determined to evade responsibility, they claimed that the leakage was caused by third-party sabotage.

No Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) was undertaken to determine the actual cause of the problem. Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.

“The fire raged on throughout that night and continued the following day before it was quenched by AGIP when they finally visited the site in the company of community members and the council chairman.

People found themselves walking on ashes, inhaling soot. By the time the HOMEF team visited the affected area on Friday, 19 January 2024, in the company of some reporters and community leaders, the fire had been put out, and the leaking pipeline from which the fire started had been covered with sand by AGIP. However, the soot and odour of burnt bush and trees were strong in the air and choking. Some trees were still smoking and smouldering while ashes littered the farmland. Walking on the farmland was like walking on ashes. Food crops and economic trees destroyed by the fire were visible. Community members lamented that the fire destroyed their equipment has lasted for more than 30-40 years and call for removal, repairs, change, or replacement,” decried the chairman of ONELGA, Hon Vincent Job.

AGIP ignored the call of NOSDRA and the community to stop the leakage. The community was gassed for many months continuously with no intervention from AGIP.

After the gas came the fire. On Wednesday, 17 January 2024, the AGIP pipeline, which had been leaking gas into the atmosphere since June 2023, went up in flames, and engulfing the community farmland and bushes in flames and causing panic and pandemonium in the community. Community members said they noticed the fire in the evening on that fateful day. The fire was associated with great noise, and the houses vibrated as if there were earthquakes. “The thing was so enormous, even the noise from the site of the fire. I went there myself and saw the fire,” said Hon. Vincent Job.

Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.

“A royal father, Eze Clinton Elemele, Eze Ohugbani 1 of Ogbaland, also lamented that “there was fire everywhere. The ground and houses started shaking, and people started running out of their homes. I was at home that day when it happened.”

The fire ravaged a large expanse of cultivated farmland, destroying food crops like cassava, as well as economic trees such as palm trees. Community sources disclosed that when AGIP was first contacted, they refused to come, saying it was sabotage.

“The ground and houses started shaking, and people started running out of their homes. I was at home that day when it happened.”

The fire raged on throughout that night and continued the following day before it was quenched by AGIP when they finally visited the site in the company of community members and the council chairman.

People found themselves walking on ashes, inhaling soot. By the time the HOMEF team visited the affected area on Friday, 19 January 2024, in the company of some reporters and community leaders, the fire had been put out, and the leaking pipeline from which the fire started had been covered with sand by AGIP. However, the soot and odour of burnt bush and trees were strong in the air and choking. Some trees were still smoking and smouldering while ashes littered the farmland. Walking on the farmland was like walking on ashes. Food crops and economic trees destroyed by the fire were visible. Community members lamented that the fire destroyed their equipment has lasted for more than 30-40 years and call for removal, repairs, change, or replacement,” decried the chairman of ONELGA, Hon Vincent Job.

AGIP ignored the call of NOSDRA and the community to stop the leakage. The community was gassed for many months continuously with no intervention from AGIP.

After the gas came the fire. On Wednesday, 17 January 2024, the AGIP pipeline, which had been leaking gas into the atmosphere since June 2023, went up in flames, and engulfing the community farmland and bushes in flames and causing panic and pandemonium in the community. Community members said they noticed the fire in the evening on that fateful day. The fire was associated with great noise, and the houses vibrated as if there were earthquakes. “The thing was so enormous, even the noise from the site of the fire. I went there myself and saw the fire,” said Hon. Vincent Job.

Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.

“We see it as equipment failure because some of the equipment has lasted for more than 30-40 years and call for removal, repairs, change, or replacement,” decried the chairman of ONELGA, Hon Vincent Job.

AGIP ignored the call of NOSDRA and the community to stop the leakage. The community was gassed for many months continuously with no intervention from AGIP.

After the gas came the fire. On Wednesday, 17 January 2024, the AGIP pipeline, which had been leaking gas into the atmosphere since June 2023, went up in flames, and engulfing the community farmland and bushes in flames and causing panic and pandemonium in the community. Community members said they noticed the fire in the evening on that fateful day. The fire was associated with great noise, and the houses vibrated as if there were earthquakes. “The thing was so enormous, even the noise from the site of the fire. I went there myself and saw the fire,” said Hon. Vincent Job.

Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.

“We see it as equipment failure because some of the equipment has lasted for more than 30-40 years and call for removal, repairs, change, or replacement,” decried the chairman of ONELGA, Hon Vincent Job.

AGIP ignored the call of NOSDRA and the community to stop the leakage. The community was gassed for many months continuously with no intervention from AGIP.

After the gas came the fire. On Wednesday, 17 January 2024, the AGIP pipeline, which had been leaking gas into the atmosphere since June 2023, went up in flames, and engulfing the community farmland and bushes in flames and causing panic and pandemonium in the community. Community members said they noticed the fire in the evening on that fateful day. The fire was associated with great noise, and the houses vibrated as if there were earthquakes. “The thing was so enormous, even the noise from the site of the fire. I went there myself and saw the fire,” said Hon. Vincent Job.

Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.

“We see it as equipment failure because some of the equipment has lasted for more than 30-40 years and call for removal, repairs, change, or replacement,” decried the chairman of ONELGA, Hon Vincent Job.

AGIP ignored the call of NOSDRA and the community to stop the leakage. The community was gassed for many months continuously with no intervention from AGIP.

After the gas came the fire. On Wednesday, 17 January 2024, the AGIP pipeline, which had been leaking gas into the atmosphere since June 2023, went up in flames, and engulfing the community farmland and bushes in flames and causing panic and pandemonium in the community. Community members said they noticed the fire in the evening on that fateful day. The fire was associated with great noise, and the houses vibrated as if there were earthquakes. “The thing was so enormous, even the noise from the site of the fire. I went there myself and saw the fire,” said Hon. Vincent Job.

Although no casualty was recorded, the fire was so massive and aggressive that community members were forced to flee the community to neighbouring communities.
sources of livelihood as many depend on farming for survival. A negotiation meeting was scheduled to take place on the morning of Friday, 19 January, between AGIP and the community at the council headquarters in Omoku.

AGIP shunned the meeting without the courtesy of informing the council chairman or the community of their change in plan. After long hours of waiting for the AGIP team to attend the scheduled meeting at Omoku, the council chairman decided to use the time to have a meeting with the community.

Interestingly, while community leaders and people gathered at the council secretariat for the meeting, waiting for AGIP representatives, AGIP’s team sneaked into the community with heavily armed, war-ready soldiers and went straight to the site of the fire incident to do a Joint Investigation Visit (JIV). The soldiers cordoned off the site and mounted a sentry to ensure nobody entered the farmland.

When HOMEF and some journalists guided by a community youth first arrived at the place, they were denied entry to the farmland by the soldiers. Efforts by the community youth to convince the soldiers to allow the team to enter the devastated farmland fell on deaf ears as the soldiers clearly stated that they were acting on instruction not to allow anybody to enter the area.

The CDC chairman of the community later arrived but was also denied entry. While the argument was going on, other community leaders arrived at the scene but were also stopped from entering their land until AGIP, led by its Community Liaison Office (CLO), concluded its JIV. The JIV turned out to be about AGIP covering the pipeline from which the fire started. Community members were enraged by the action of AGIP and the presence of soldiers, which they condemned in strong terms. They said AGIP has made their community a hell for them. The community leaders confronted the CLO who led the AGIP team, telling him that AGIP was supposed to have a meeting with them at Omoku.

The CLO pretended not to be aware of the meeting. When asked why he did not bother to inform the community members and the council chairman about the JIV, he said he did nothing wrong.

Despite the community’s hosting of AGIP’s facilities, such as manifolds, oil wells, and a network of pipelines, for several decades, the community has remained very poor and undeveloped.

The community disclosed that there is nothing good in Obagi to show that AGIP’s presence in the community is of any good to them. Even the roads through which AGIP accesses its facilities were built by TOTAL and NDDC. The only legacies of AGIP are intimidation using soldiers, environmental degradation, destruction of people’s sources of income, gassing of the community, and endless flaring of thick smoke.

The community wants the government to call AGIP to order and for AGIP to pay compensation to the community for the damage they have suffered because of oil and gas leakages, and recurring fire incidents. AGIP is also mandated to take immediate steps to maintain its facilities and change all decaying pipelines, as well as to conduct a post-assessment study of the affected environment.

Another demand from the community is for AGIP to relocate them to a safe place as their community is no longer safe to live in due to the activities of AGIP. AGIP has also been asked to pay reparations for decades of environmental degradation in the community.

The community calls on NGOs and the media to come to the aid of the community.
Books You Should Read

Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral


This new and expanded edition is a unique collection of essays written by radical thinkers from across Africa, the United States, and other parts of the world. Together, they commemorate the life of a world-renowned revolutionary, poet, liberation philosopher, and leader of the anti-colonial independence movement of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Amílcar Cabral and his legacy and relevance to contemporary struggles for self-determination and emancipation. Claim No Easy Victories serves equally as an introduction or reintroduction to a figure and militant history that the rulers and beneficiaries of global racial capitalism would rather see forgotten. Understanding Cabral then and now sheds light on the necessity of grounding radical change in the creation of theory based on the actual conditions within which movements develop. The depth and dimension of Cabral's theoretical ideas and revolutionary practice of building popular movements for liberation are assessed by each of the authors and critically reanimated for a new generation of freedom fighters. The book features contributions by Kali Akuno, Samir Amin, David Austin, Jesse Benjamin, Angela Davis, Bill Fletcher Jr, Mireille Fanon-Mendès France, Lewis Gordon, Firoze Manji, Asha Rodney, Patricia Rodney, Olúfemí Táiwò—and others.

Unearthing Justice: How to Protect your Community from the Mining Industry

(Africa Edition) by Joan Kuyek with an introduction by Yao Graham

Unearthing Justice was originally published by Between The Lines, but Daraja Press is set to make it available in Africa. The edition uses case studies, anecdotes, resources, and illustrations to expose the mining process and its externalized impacts on the environment, Indigenous Peoples, communities, workers, and governments. Most importantly, the book shows how people are fighting back. Whether it is to stop a mine before it starts, to get an abandoned mine cleaned up, to influence policy directions and legal frameworks, or to mount a campaign to influence investors, Unearthing Justice is an essential handbook for anyone trying to protect the places and people they love.
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Cultural Survival
- School of Ecology on Ending Fossil Addiction and Healing Territories
- Monitoring Training
- Training for Farmers

Always visit www.homef.org for upcoming events and how to participate.
HOMEFTV brings Environmental News to your view

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
HEALTH OF MOTHER EARTH FOUNDATION