ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE KIISI TRUST FROM 2017–2020
Vision: A prosperous, equitable, sustainable, and democratic Ogoniland

Mission: To support organizations promoting peace, justice, and sustainable development in Ogoniland

Values: Non-partisan, Independence, Respect for Local Knowledge, Impact Focused, Network Development
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Ogoniland has long been an area symbolic in the minds of people both inside and outside of the Niger Delta for its struggle against environmental degradation caused by resource exploitation. In 15 years from 1976 to 1991, there were reportedly 2,976 oil spills of about 2.1 million barrels of oil in Ogoniland, accounting for about 40% of the total oil spills of the Royal Dutch Shell Company worldwide. In the early 1990s, the region came to international prominence after the death of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. The struggle of Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists eventually led to the cessation of oil production activities in the area in 1993, but widespread environmental damage was already done.

One of the first philanthropic actions of the plaintiffs of the 2009 Wiwa vs. Shell lawsuit was the creation of the Kiisi Trust Fund with USD 5 million out of the USD 15.5 million out-of-court settlement in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. The plaintiffs were survivors and family members of people who were victims of human rights abuses arising out of Shell’s Nigerian operations in Ogoniland. At the time of the settlement, the Ogoni plaintiffs stated that the Kiisi Trust “should stand as one legacy of the labors of our heroes past.” This incredibly generous and selfless act by the plaintiffs was intended to be used by the Kiisi Trust Fund to support programs in education, health, community development, and other benefits for the Ogoni people and their communities, including educational endowments, skills development, agricultural development, women’s programs, small enterprise support, and adult literacy.

In 2016, the Trustees of the Kiisi Trust, in a competitive bidding process, hired TrustAfrica to oversee the management of the fund as a donor-advised-fund manager on behalf of the Trustees of the Kiisi Trust in Nigeria. The Trust officially began operations when the escrowed funds of USD 5,024,569.02 million were transferred on May 17, 2017, to TrustAfrica. TrustAfrica, with guidance from the Trustees of the Kiisi Trust, hired a Project Director and other support staff to handle the day-to-day operations of the Kiisi Trust in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, where the office and records are located. The funds of the Kiisi Trust are kept in separate bank accounts from TrustAfrica's bank accounts, with most of the funds held in an investment portfolio with a reputable international investment firm, where it is generating additional income for the Kiisi Trust.

With a vision of a prosperous, equitable, sustainable, and democratic Ogoniland and a mission to support organizations promoting peace, justice, and sustainable development based on transparent and accountable institutions, an active citizenry, and economic advancement in Ogoniland, the Trust operates as a community foundation that advances the original aims and intentions of the plaintiffs of the Wiwa vs. Shell lawsuit.
The original strategic approach of the Trust in 2017 was a focus on supporting local community-based organizations to implement projects in any of the seven thematic funding areas of the Trust. It was understood and appreciated that funding projects in a conflict-prone area to promote community development and other activities that support sustained economic development is a complex exercise with high risks, and hence, the need to work with local community-based organizations with the support of small grants to increase capacity and minimize risks.

In conceptualizing the Trust’s work with local community-based organizations, the Trust worked with a local Advisory Council made up of predominately Ogoni representatives and seasoned development practitioners to identify organizations and make funding recommendations to the Trustees of the Kiisi Trust. The Council met quarterly to review funding dockets, and as part of their work in discharging their responsibilities, met with Ogoni community representatives and stakeholders to discuss the work of the Trust. Between 2017 and 2020, the Advisory Council reviewed and debated over 64 grant applications and ultimately recommended 35 of those funding applications. Those funded projects resulted in impacting 30,861 beneficiaries in 68 communities across the 4 local government areas of Ogoniland. The Trust supports projects in seven thematic areas: agriculture, women’s programs, peacebuilding, education, governance, health, youth skills development/SME.

Breakdown of thematic funding areas funding by the Kiisi Trust (2017-2020)
Though these early interventions were critical in piloting new ideas and innovations, it ultimately undermined the sustainability of these local community-based organizations because it trapped them in project-cycle funding. This approach, though well-intentioned, also, unfortunately, too narrowly defined the scope of work of the Trust in Ogoniland and led to some entitlement and divisions between organizations and community representatives. Additionally, in the June 2020 Grantees’ Perception Survey conducted with grantee-partners of the Trust, when asked about the awareness of the Trust in Ogoniland, grantee-partners responded that the Trust was viewed as a project of TrustAfrica because the acknowledgments of projects implemented carried the TrustAfrica name. This perception is not surprising as it reflects the Trust’s initial decision to maintain a low profile with its development initiatives to manage expectations, coupled with the high insecurity and suspicion around development projects in the region.

The need to execute the true mandate of the original grantors to the Trust has led to a more expanded strategic approach that focuses more on long-term planning and sustainability, targeting larger organizations and institutions with a mandate to serve Ogoniland, resulting in a bigger impact and reach of funded interventions. Institutional core grants/support to institutions central to Ogoniland is key in building strong, autonomous institutions that have a lifespan beyond the funding from the Trust. Support to these institutions, who provide service to the majority of people in Ogoniland (e.g. community primary/secondary schools, ICT centers, health facilities, etc.), leverage on their long-standing presence in the community, ensuring that service is not duplicated and where support from the Trust is verifiable and easy to monitor. The first institution to benefit from this new approach is the Bori General Hospital, where the Trust is supporting the hospital in providing solar power as a means of alternative energy source to streetlights around and inside the hospital, including key wards of the hospital.

While project/institutional support to organizations constitutes the majority of the work of the Trust, the Trust also has two other programmatic areas – professional development and skills sharing for young Ogonis through the Ogoni NextGen Internship program, and advancing the educational careers of Ogoni students through the Ogoni Scholarship Fund.

36 GRANTS HAVE BEEN AWARDED SINCE 2017, AND IMPLEMENTED ACROSS 68 COMMUNITIES IN OGNONIAND
Nigeria’s population is now above 200 million people, with an estimated 80 million made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age, representing approximately 45 percent of the total population of the country. According to the data obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the National Population Commission (NPopC), in 2006 Rivers State had a population of 5,198,716. Taking a growth rate of 3.5%, Rivers State, the 6th most populated state in Nigeria, has a projected 2020 population of 8,280,753, with approximately half of that under the age of 35 years old. Available data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) show that Rivers State (of which Ogoniland forms 16% of the total population) recorded the second-highest unemployment rate of 36.4 percent and the State with the highest unemployed population with a total number of 1,673,991, as well as attaining the State with the largest labor force population in the southern zone of Nigeria.

The Trust’s attempt to address the growing unemployment challenge is by building the next generation of active and responsible civil society practitioners in Ogoniland by equipping them with necessary 21st-century skills for the future. In this pursuit, the Ogoni NextGen Internship program offers 3 – 12 months’ paid internship to young Ogonis at the start of their professional careers who are interested in one of the Trust’s focus areas and who desire to have a career in the development sector. With a focus on building the next generation of responsible and active civil society actors, the internship program has at its core the following components: research and report writing, grant management, and communication.

The Trust has successfully had two classes of the internship program, graduating 6 interns, of whom 4 are now gainfully employed full-time at reputable businesses and organizations in Rivers State.

The 2nd Class of the Ogoni Internship Program with their Certificates of Completion at the end of their tenure in 2020. Left to Right: Nwinaka Esaen, Vivian Dimkpa, Queen-Bess Mubenwafor, and Lemene Cyril Sambari-Epie
Started in 2018, the Ogoni Scholarship Fund aims to become a beacon for Ogoni scholars anywhere with the thirst for education and in improving not only their lives but the societies in which they find themselves. The Trust hopes that the Ogoni Scholarship Fund would remain a permanent legacy of the Trust in Ogoniland, expanding to awarding scholarships all along a student’s educational career. When students can successfully earn their degrees, and the process is not burdensome or postponed, our greater society and economy are benefited. When young adults can focus their energy and means on their careers and serving the greater good, rather than paying off loans or having to re-enroll in school after dropping out for financial reasons, we have a happier, healthier, and more efficient working public.

During the pilot phase of the scholarship scheme, the Trust awarded 18 scholarships to final-year Ogoni students in tertiary institutions across Nigeria, to support their work in producing their dissertation projects. In the second phase of the scholarship scheme (2020), the Trust awarded scholarships to 124 2nd year students, 23 3rd year students (a bonus package not initially planned for at the beginning of the second phase of the scholarship scheme), and 199 Final-year students. This was made possible by incorporating some of the lessons learned on outreach and communication from the pilot phase of the scholarship scheme that resulted in over 600 applications received in 2020.
A more aggressive fundraising strategy will also be implemented with the aim to at least double the initial endowment to the Trust, allowing it to deepen its support to institutions in the Ogoni area. This is coupled with an investment strategy that is low risk, investing in US bonds and conservative markets globally.

Success to the Trust is an empowered Ogoniland with strong institutions mandated to provide services for the benefit of the Ogoni people. Championing voice (agency) of disenfranchised groups and communities, connecting and building networks of partners and groups for effective knowledge exchange and capacity strengthening, and rebuilding trust in broken communities for effective dialogue and peacebuilding to take root are all elements of what needs to happen overtime for sustainable development in Ogoniland. An underlying thread amongst all these components and aspirations is the need to change mindsets from an entitled one to an empowered and accountable one.
BREAKDOWN OF FUNDED PROJECTS

**Agriculture**

**ELEME**

**BAN-O-BOOY, BABA-RO, BOTEM, GBAM, KIRA, KOROKORO, KPUTE, NONWA, SAAPENWA, SIME, UEDUME, Ueken**

**GOKANA**
COMMUNITIES: Bara, Barako, B-Dere, Beera, Biara, Bodo, Bomu, Buayeghe, Deeyor, Deken, Gbe, K-Dere, Kegbara, Kpor, Mogho, Nwebiara, Nwe-OL, Yeghe.

**KHANA**
COMMUNITIES: Bane, Beeri, Betem, Bori, Bo-ue, Buan, Bunu-Bangha, Duburo, Eeken, Gure, Gwara, Ka, Kaani, Kaani-Babbe, Kapnor, Kono, Kono-Boue, Kor, Kpean, Kwawa, Luawii, Luumene-Bangha, Okwale, Sii, Sogho, Taabaa, Wiiyaakara, Zaakpon.

**TAI**
COMMUNITIES: Ban-Ogoi, Bara-O-Bara, Botem, Gbam, Kira, Korokoro, Kpite, Nonwa, Saakpenwa, Sime, Uedume, Ueken.

**Education**

**GOVERNANCE, VOICE, ACCOUNTABILITY**

**HEALTH**

**PEACE BUILDING**

**WOMEN'S PROGRAM**
GreenPad Concepts partnered with the Kiisi Trust in 2018 for their funded project “Enabling Menstrual Hygiene in Ogoni Communities.” The project promoted women’s feminine hygiene and reproductive health in the four Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogoniland. GreenPad Concepts partnered with the Ministry of Education, School Authorities, and Maternity Health Centers to reach out to 8,000 women in 10 communities (Alesa, Alode, B-Dere, Bodo, Bera, Kpor, Kpite, Nonwa, Kabangha, Gwara) through sensitization on menstruation, proper feminine hygiene, and reproductive health. Additionally, in a bid to salvage the cultural taboo surrounding the female menstrual cycle, GreenPad Concepts used discarded banana and plantain fibers to produce an affordable, highly absorbent, six-months biodegradable sanitary pads. They distributed these free sanitary pads to 3,000 Ogoni women and 1,000 free packets of sanitary pads to 1,400 schoolgirls in community secondary schools.
A study conducted by Joint Medical Life Savers (JMLS) showed that 4 out of every 10 Ogoni children die within their first three months of life. In 2018, Joint Medical Life Savers partnered with the Kiisi Trust with their funded project “Saving Lives at Birth.” The project aimed to reduce maternal and newborn mortality in Ogoniland by training, certifying, and equipping 200 Midwives and Nurses with skills and resources to provide emergency obstetric care and newborn resuscitation. The organization created and published a training curriculum and manual used to train 20 Senior Midwives (5 from each of the LGAs of Ogoniland) as peer educator trainers. The peer educator trainers were recruited to the JMLF team to help train an additional 200 trainees (Midwives, Nurses, Community Health Extension Workers, and Traditional Birth Attendants) across over 42 communities. JMLS also produced 280 Lifesaver birth kits; each delivery kit contained a delivery mat that had the pictorial algorithms for diagnosing and treating postpartum bleeding and birth asphyxia.
Luther Welfare for Children at Risk Development Centre (Luther Welfare) implemented a project in 2018 titled “Promoting Alternative Livelihoods for Sustainable Agriculture.” This project aimed to improve community members’ socio-economic standards through alternative livelihoods activities such as sustainable farming, economic empowerment, and social stability. The project had beneficiaries mentoring groups to ensure that community women and men become gainfully self-employed. Luther Welfare equipped over 500 beneficiaries from the Eteo community in Eleme Local Government Area with knowledge/skills in the agro-based fields of poultry, piggery, snail farming, fish farming, and mushroom growing. Furthermore, beneficiaries were grouped into twenty (20) groups made up of twenty-five (25) members to promote sustainable investment through cooperative farming and peer mentorship. The cooperative groups improved networking among beneficiaries in maximizing opportunities to produce markets which in turn increased their earning power.
Divine Benevolent Care Organization (DBCO) implemented their funded project “Re-igniting Hope: Enhancing the Reading Culture in Ogoni.” in 2019. The project targeted students in SS3 from widowed households who were preparing for their final examination and needed alternative source of light to study (solar lamps). The project provided solar lamps to 100 students from 5 communities (Kaa, Gwara, Luawii, and Kono-Boue) in Khana LGA of Rivers State to aid with studying for their West African Examination Council exams. The project aimed to imbibe a reading culture and increase the exam pass rate among the target project beneficiaries. During the lockdown and movement restrictions caused by Covid19, DBCO distributed 200 pieces of facemasks and writing materials to the 100 students writing the 2020 West African Examination Council.