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# MAKOKO FLOATING SCHOOL

RESEARCH REPORT – APRIL 2012

SUPPORTED BY  HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

**MAKOKO** IS A COMMUNITY ON WATER.  
FOR NEARLY 100 YEARS IT HAS THRIVED ON  
THE **FISHING AND SAWING INDUSTRIES** –  
PROVIDING OVER A THIRD OF LAGOS' FISH  
SUPPLY AND MOST OF ITS TIMBER.

IT IS A HIGHLY DENSE AND URBANIZED  
AREA, YET IT HAS **NO ROADS, NO LAND,  
AND NO MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE.**

**MAKOKO IS AN INNOVATIVE AND  
CONTEMPORARY MODEL FOR COASTAL  
AFRICAN CITIES.**

# MAKOKO

An aerial photograph of the Makoko floating village in Lagos, Nigeria. The image shows a vast, dense cluster of small, rectangular wooden houses built on stilts over a body of water. The houses are packed closely together, creating a complex network of narrow waterways. The roofs of the houses are mostly made of corrugated metal, and some have colorful accents. In the background, a larger, more developed urban area is visible, with taller buildings and more organized street patterns. The overall scene depicts a unique and densely populated community.

Photography  
Ade Adedokun

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MAKOKO FLOATING SCHOOL — AFRICAN WATER CITIES PROJECT

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# MAKOKO



Photography  
NLÉ

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# INTRODUCTION

Makoko community has adapted its lifestyle to its environment and has become a ‘city’ on water.

It builds wooden houses on stilts and transportation is by canoes only. Although an informal settlement, it is believed that about 100,000 people now call Makoko home. Due to the impact of climate change, rising sea levels, increased rainfall and flooding are becoming day-to-day reality for people of Lagos and other world cities under similar coastal conditions.

With its current building quality and stilt construction, Makoko is better prepared, yet not completely spared. Although overall living conditions are very poor and modern infrastructure is not available, the people of Makoko’s adaptation to their environment offers valuable insights for addressing the imminent challenges of rapid urbanization and climate change in coastal cities.

Within Makoko a nursery and primary school facility was built, not even on stilts, but on reclaimed land. The consequences are now uneven settlement and recurrent flooding of the school building, which hinders children’s access to their basic need — an education. The last flooding occurred in October 2011.

In response to this, we propose to develop a Floating School for the community. This school will meet the immediate needs of the community, at the same time be a new building for adapting to the imminent impact of climate change.

Our proposal of a floating building addresses different issues regarding flooding, poor building structures and land titles. The project will also provide a flexible multi-use space which can be used outside of school hours by the entire community for a range of purposes.

## RELATED NEWS ON MAKOKO

1. [BBC documentary: Welcome to Lagos: Episode 2](#)
2. [Aljazeera documentary: Street Life in Lagos](#)
3. [TIME article: Intelligent Cities](#)
4. [Nigerian Tribune article: Amphibious Residents of Makoko](#)
5. [The Guardian article: Images of the Community of Makoko](#)

## RELATED NEWS ON FLOODING:

1. [BBC article: Nigeria floods](#)
2. [BBC clip: West Africa meets for climate talks](#)

# WHAT WE ARE DOING

NLÉ is developing a floating school for Makoko. We began engaging the community through comprehensive survey questionnaire, conducting research and conceptualizing designs for the school as a self-initiative in May 2011. Now, with the support of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, we have funding for further research and documentation of the school, the environment and the community needs.

Our proposal for the Floating School is a building that is self-sustaining and adaptable for other building typologies—homes, community centres, playgrounds—to gradually cultivate an improved quality of architecture, urbanism & living on water.

We would appreciate support or collaboration for 3 outstanding phases of the project to realise the project by May 2012 (before the onset of heavy rains).

1. Concept Design & Research (Funded by NLÉ)
2. Detail Research & Documentation (Funded by Heinrich Böll Stiftung)
3. Design Development and Construction Supervision
4. Building Construction & Operations cost
5. Post-occupancy Evaluation

# KEY BENEFITS

1. Supports the immediate educational needs of children
2. Provides a flexible space and a multi-use facility for the larger community needs
3. Poverty alleviation strategy: through integrated social development and gainful employment of local skills and technologies
4. Addresses challenges of climate change: mitigates urban flood risks and disasters
5. Furthers the development of water settlements as an attractive and contemporary way of living
6. Ecologically/Environmentally friendly and responsible in energy use/building systems.
7. Addresses challenges of rapid urbanisation: densification of inner city core
8. Re-usable modular building prototype that increases the urban housing stock through affordable, good quality, flexible housing
9. Identifies and unlocks an alternative to reclamation of land as urban assets.
10. Creates opportunities for international knowledge exchange and professional practice

**Please contact [team@nleworks.com](mailto:team@nleworks.com) for more information, collaboration or support.**



# MAKOKO FLOATING SCHOOL CONCEPT DESIGN



Art wall (placeholder for student project) inspired by Yinka Shonibare



Location is subject to change



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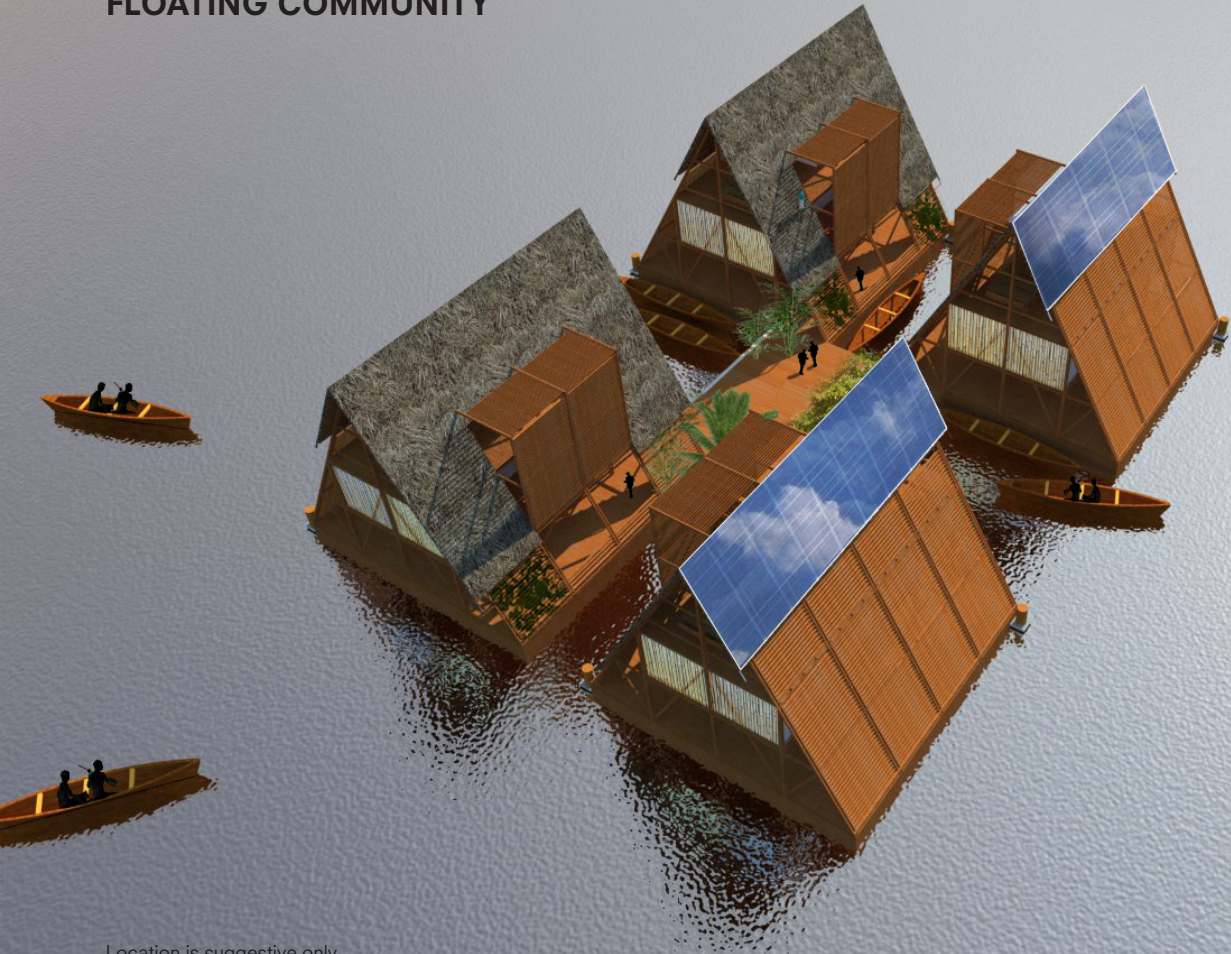


**INDIGENOUS  
ECOLOGICAL  
LOCAL MATERIALS  
SELF SUSTAINING  
ECONOMICAL  
ADAPTABLE  
MOVABLE  
SAFE**

Location is suggestive only



# FLOATING COMMUNITY



Location is suggestive only

