

# Global Citizen Journey

Grassroot connections. Bridges of peace.

## Oporoza, Niger Delta, 2005: NIDPRODEV

In mid-November to early December, 2005, GCJ worked with the Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIDPRODEV) to bring 19 US delegates and 21 Nigerian delegates in the village of Oporoza in the “creeks” riverine area of the Niger Delta. Together these delegates built the first library in the region and participated in workshops promoting cross-cultural understanding, compassionate listening, conflict resolution and leadership skills. They hosted several Town Hall meetings to bring various ethnic groups that have been in conflict together for dialogue in Warri, as well as several community dialogues with the community of Oporoza.

The village of Oporoza is located in the heart of Nigeria’s oil-rich Niger Delta, yet poverty and illiteracy are widespread. The community struggles to provide education for village children, but has had difficulty attracting teachers willing to face the challenge of teaching without books in a region with only about 40% literacy.



*Oporoza village children pose for a delegate's camera.*

GCJ was delighted to support the energy and initiative of the community to meet these challenges with construction of a library. Oporoza village leaders believe the library will attract better funding for the school, hopefully leading the government to staff it with salaried teachers, as well as providing vital learning resources for the entire region. The U.S. delegation brought over 1500 donated books to get the library collection started, as well as purchasing text books for Oporoza students.



*Niger Delta Friendship Library*

NIDPRODEV is a non-profit organization/NGO operating in Nigeria since 1999, focusing on conflict mediation, peace building, youth empowerment and gender rights issues in the Niger Delta. Led by Founder and Regional Director Joel Bisina, NIDPRODEV has a dynamic track record of successful initiatives to meet the significant challenges of the Niger Delta.

When the situation in the Delta stabilizes, GCJ and NIDPRODEV will plan another Journey to the Delta– this time to the neighboring Itsekiri village, to balance the benefits brought to the Ijaw village of Oporoza.