

**COMMUNITY WORKSHOP  
ON  
PREVENTION & CONTROL OF  
FLOOD AND SOIL EROSION**

**LETTER-REPORT**

**FOR**

**NKWERRE TOWN  
NKWERRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA  
IMO STATE, NIGERIA**



*June 2010*



June 30, 2010

His Royal Highness, Eshi of Nkwerre  
(Dr. Barr.) Okwara IV, (JP)  
Eshi's Palace, Nkwerre  
Imo State

**LETTER-REPORT ON NKWERRE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP  
PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF FLOOD AND EROSION**

This letter-report is to formally convey to Eshi Nkwerre the conclusions of the workshop by WIEF-Nigeria on prevention and control of flood and erosion in Nkwerre. The resolutions adopted by the workshop participants are also included. The report also contains possible options open to Nkwerre community at this time and these options are included as "next steps."

**Background**

In September 2009, WIEF-Nigeria conducted an initial study of soil erosion issues in Nkwerre at the request of Nze Gibson Chigbu. The community was reportedly inundated with continued soil erosion that has reached an alarming proportion and has become a major concern to the entire Nkwerre community. The findings from the WIEF Initial Study indicate that the following conditions exist in Nkwerre:

- 1) Nkwerre land has a relatively flat-to-gentle sloping topography;
- 2) There are two distinct watersheds with highlands at Eziana and Amaigbo;
- 3) The geologic formation in Nkwerre is predominantly coarse and gravelly stable soils;
- 4) Structural development throughout Nkwerre appears unplanned and uncoordinated;
- 5) Road networks throughout all villages also appear unplanned and uncoordinated;
- 6) The natural drainage corridors are generally severely compromised;
- 7) Drainage channels associated with the major roads are disjointed, poorly designed and constructed;
- 8) All drainage systems throughout the villages are significantly uncoordinated, disjointed and ineffective;

- 9) Because of Conditions 3 through 8, the entire Nkwerre community suffers from twin-problem of flooding and soil erosion;
- 10) Flooding however, appears a more significant problem than the soil erosion.

Based on the above findings of the initial study and the need to create increased community awareness of the causes of flooding and soil erosion in Nkwerre as well as induce an active community sense of remedial involvement and intervention, WIEF recommended a community-oriented workshop on prevention and control of flood and soil erosion for the community.

The goals of the Workshop included the following:

1. To create an understanding and appreciation of Nkwerre's topographic and hydrogeologic setting as well as the various aspects of current environmental conditions in Nkwerre and how they impact the community;
2. To create an understanding and appreciation of the nature of flooding and erosion problems in Nkwerre and the factors that propagate the flooding and erosion within the community;
3. To provide an integrated approach to preventing and controlling floods and the associated soil erosion; and,
4. To induce participants' active sense of commitment and involvement in the prevention and control of floods and soil erosion.

#### Pre-Workshop Meeting

A pre-workshop meeting was held on June 12, 2010 between WIEF and the Nkwerre Traditional Council. The WIEF team was received by ESHI Nkwerre, his council of chiefs and other community members who were gathered in their numbers for council meeting. The WIEF team included Dr. Odili N. Ojukwu (Project Manager), Chief (Engr.) J.N.B Ofojebe, Rev. Sister M. Okeke and Engr. Ken I. Udemgba.

In addressing the gathering, Dr Ojukwu reminded the Nkwerre community that one of their own, Nze Gibson Chigbu initiated the WIEF's mission in Nkwerre when he approached WIEF in the United States. He highlighted the reality of flood issues in Nkwerre – its existence, the causes and the dangers and stated that the objective of WIEF is to assist the community to find a lasting solution. He stressed that the best solution is community-based approach

where everybody is a stakeholder - farmers, construction workers, market men and women, residents, government etc. He indicated that this could be achieved through a WIEF-organized workshop on community-based flood control, where all the villages in Nkwerre will participate through representation.

### Two-Day Workshop

The two-day workshop was held at Nkwerre Country Club on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of June, 2010 for representatives of the 31 villages in Nkwerre. A total of 58 persons participated in the workshop including high ranking members of the traditional council and Nkwerre Aborigines. The Workshop was aimed at providing participants with basic understanding of how and why flooding and soil erosion occur in Nkwerre, and developing an integrated community-based approach toward the prevention and control at the local and community levels.

The workshop reviewed the findings and conclusions of the Soil Erosion Study conducted for Nkwerre in September 2009. The workshop further evaluated the underlining causes of the flooding and soil erosion in Nkwerre as identified in the study and considered specific remedial and control actions that can be undertaken for prevailing situations in the community. A strategic approach that is community-centred was adopted with all stakeholders identified for purposes of evolving the ultimate solution to the flooding and erosion challenges.

The adopted strategic plan is required to be sustainable and regional and, requires the active involvement of all stakeholders with responsibilities shared fairly and equitably among all them. The plan will include activities that will prevent and control floods & erosion in Nkwerre and other contiguous watersheds. These activities include but not limited to:

1. Redirecting excess rainwater flow from Amaigbo, Eziama, and within Nkwerre;
2. Conserving natural areas and/or utilizing such natural corridors as runoff flow path where appropriate;
3. Reducing impervious cover for maximum rainwater infiltration into the ground;
4. Redirecting or breaking of water flow on local pathways; and,
5. Engaging in public & community outreach and enlightenment.

The workshop concluded by expressing the need for Nkwerre community to take ownership of its environment and resolving to act as a community in taking all necessary actions to effectively address the flooding and erosion challenges posed to the community. The reasons advanced for direct community participation in resolving the Nkwerre flood and erosion challenge include:

1. The health of Nkwerre people is at risk;
2. Continued destruction of the Nkwerre's environment;
3. Nkwerre's ancestral living space is at risk and being adversely impacted;
4. Protection of Nkwerre's environment for her unborn generations; and,
5. Potential loss of community properties and economic trees/crops if nothing is done.

The Executive Director of WIEF, Dr Ojukwu pledged the foundation's commitment to the people of Nkwerre to provide necessary professional support whenever called upon. All participants to the workshop were issued with Certificates of Participation in the Workshop as representatives of their various villages.

### Next Steps

Based on the prevailing environmental conditions in Nkwerre and the resolutions of the workshop participants, there are three options open to Nkwerre community. The options are as follows:

1. Do nothing. This option requires that the prevailing situation remains as is with the people dealing with their respective flood and erosion issues on individual basis. This option is strongly discouraged;
2. Develop a comprehensive "Flood and Erosion Control Plan" to serve Nkwerre community. This plan will be enforced by the community;
3. Develop a "Regional Flood and Erosion Control Plan" to serve the region including Nkwerre, Eziana, Amaigbo, Owerre Nkworji and other neighborhoods in the regional watersheds. This plan will be enforced by the local government.

In consideration of the expected outcome of each option and the level of effort required to coordinate all stakeholders involved in the options,

WIEF recommends that Nkwerre community pursue Option 2. The pursuit of Option 2 by the people of Nkwerre will allow the community to retain control of all that will happen within its territory while effectively resolving the flood and erosion issues. To jump-start the process, the community under the leadership of Eshi Nkwerre, may setup a high-powered Flood and Erosion Control Committee made up of representatives of the villages to work out details of Option 2.

WIEF will be glad to provide necessary professional support and coordination effort to ensure the successful development and implementation of the proposed comprehensive flood and erosion control plan for Nkwerre. The Executive Director will also be available to discuss any or all aspects of the proposed plan if requested. If there are any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

*Odili Ojukwu*

**Dr. Odili N. Ojukwu**  
Executive Director

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Conducted by:

**WIEF**

(A Non-profit NGO for Restoration of the Environment)

*June 2010*

**“COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT”**



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