

CASE STUDY | NIGERIA

Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre

Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre (Kebetkache), a community-based organization (CBO) in Nigeria works to promote women's rights and environmental justice.

The word (Kebetkache) is an Indigenous word for wetland, thus evoking the Niger Delta region where the organization operates. Kebetkache supports women to understand their rights and empowers them to engage and find concrete solutions. Kebetkache mobilizes and facilitates the engagement of women from the Niger Delta, especially women in rural communities, with key stakeholders.



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR GREEN AND
GENDER ACTION

1.1

Context of risks, vulnerabilities and impacts related to climate variability and climate change

River deltas are among the most vulnerable regions to hazardous impacts of climate change due to high exposure to sea level rise, storm surges, coastal erosion and river flooding.

The vulnerability of the Niger Delta region is exacerbated by environmental pollution and degradation, due to decades of oil and gas extraction, including oil spillages and gas flaring, by multinational companies.

Despite promises to local communities that they would benefit economically, oil and gas extraction has resulted in poverty, land evictions and environmental devastation, including destruction of farmland, pollution of rivers, streams, creeks and drinking water, and air pollution, among other things.

Traditional occupations vital to women, fishing and farming, have been decimated by pollution.

The lack of environmental remediation or adequate compensation exacerbates poverty and health issues within the community. Moreover, the region's Indigenous people have faced harassment and violence for their efforts to combat oil pollution and the environmental destruction of the Niger Delta.



1.2

Activities to address the context- and location- specific climate change vulnerabilities

To address these issues, Kebetkache advocates for environmental restoration in the Niger Delta, including reduced pollution, remediation of contaminated sites and income-generating activities for affected women in communities. The group calls for immediate clean-up of polluted lands and mangroves in the Niger Delta, as well as a health audit for oil-impacted communities and community-led environmental monitoring.

Kebetkache engages in advocacy, including work specifically targeting Anglo-Dutch company Shell, which has been active in the Niger Delta for nearly a century. [The Global Alliance of Gender and Green Action \(GAGGA\)](#) alliance member [Both ENDS](#), based in the Netherlands, has played a crucial role in facilitating Kebetkache's access to Shell and its investors, as well as allied European and global organizations working on environmental and human rights issues in the Niger Delta. Kebetkache is now part of two networks (one in the Netherlands, the other in the UK), fighting for justice in the Niger Delta, which has strengthened their global advocacy.

During Shell's Annual General Meeting in 2020, for example, Kebetkache posed a question about a specific case of gas



flaring in close proximity to the Federal Government Girls' College, Imiringi, a school for girls. **Following the question, the Shell Kolo Creek gas flare site was largely shut down.** The result is significant given the historic lack of any response from the company in the Niger Delta.

Kebetkache's advocacy is backed by participatory action research. In 2023, Kebetkache published a research report about oil pollution and its effects on women, including how local water wells were filled with crude oil. For a follow-up report, published in 2024, Kebetkache conducted scientific research – including soil sampling and blood sampling of community members – to show the effects of the oil pollution.

The 2024 study found severe health and environmental impacts on the local population and widespread contamination of water, soil and food.



Both reports supported Kebetkache's advocacy in response to Shell's decision, announced in 2024, to sell its onshore oil assets in the Niger Delta. Shell's announcement was made without any public commitment to clean up the decades of oil pollution or compensate the hundreds of thousands affected by its operations, leaving behind a vast oil pollution caused by 70 years of oil extraction in the region.

In the Netherlands, Both ENDS supported Kebetkache in calling for remediation and clean-up of pollution before Shell's divestment. Together with Both ENDS, Kebetkache presented its research to Shell investors, and met with representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a member of the Dutch parliament.

Kebetkache held 10 media briefings in the first half of 2024 alone, and sent an open letter to investors and Shell's Executive Committee together with over 195 international and Nigerian civil society organizations to insist on environmental remediation and compensation for environmental pollution, loss of livelihoods and adverse health impacts on the community.

Through these activities, Kebetkache increased the awareness of Shell investors, key government actors and the public awareness of the local reality on the ground in Nigeria. Specifically, in their meetings with investors, Kebetkache increased investors' awareness of the negative impact of Shell's irresponsible divestment, and the urgent need for the company to remediate the environmental and public health impacts

on the Niger Delta communities caused by decades of oil pollution. Meanwhile, Both ENDS raised concerns about Shell's financial and due diligence with respect to the sale of its Nigerian holdings.

As a result of this work, Shell investors committed to following up with Shell with specific questions raised by Kebetkache. **These engagements led to Dutch investor MN asking a specific question on Shell's divestment in the Niger Delta at the Shell 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the only corporate investor to do so.** Both ENDS, Kebetkache and a local community member from the Niger Delta were also able to attend the 2025 AGM to ask questions about transparency, accountability and remediation in Shell's divestment plan.



Kebetskache has also increased regional and global awareness, visibility and support for its work to ensure ecosystem restoration in their Niger Delta. The group participated in an international summit of women focused on the water crisis in their communities, part of GAGGA's global [“We Women are Water”](#) campaign. Kebetskache collaborates closely with the [WoMin African Alliance](#), a Pan African Ecofeminist Alliance that works to make visible and publicize the impacts of extractivism on women and to support women's organizing, movement building and solidarity.

A key initiative that came from connections within GAGGA was the Women's Climate Assembly, which has now become an annual event.

In 2024, Kebetskache co-organized the third Women's Climate Assembly (WCA), with the theme 'African women defend their lands, forests and waters,' that was held in Senegal, October 2024 and drew over 150 women from 17 African countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe). Held at the same time as the African Peoples' Counter COP, the Women's Climate Assembly is led by a steering group of NGOs, community organizations and their allies. During the Women's Climate Assembly, women participated in and contributed to workshops ranging from how women are responding to the climate crisis to risk, safety and protection for women

activists. The WCA and African Peoples' Counter COP resulted in two statements on climate justice and COP29, which were shared at the international level.

Kebetskache has also shared its learnings with other organizations facing similar struggles. For example, through GAGGA, Kebetskache built ties with other oil-affected communities in Nigeria, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. In Uganda, Kebetskache co-organized a conference where they increased awareness among government decision-makers of women's demands regarding a just energy transition, and compensation around oil exploitation.



Kebetkache has also organized networking activities between fisherfolk in Nigeria and Ghana, where participants exchanged fishing techniques and practical knowledge.

Participants have since joined the FishNet Alliance with the aim of attracting government and banks' support and for more training opportunities. At the UNFCCC COP29, they further solidified their relationships and highlighted the diverse ways climate change is affecting Indigenous people and countries.

Kebetkache also works to ensure that climate finance reaches women-led CBOs, that women-led CBOs and NGOs have a meaningful say in climate finance decision-making processes, and that false climate solutions do not get funded, particularly projects that have a negative impact on the environment and violate human rights. **Kebetkache has engaged directly with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), including by attending Board Meetings of the GCF, where it underscored the importance of integrating local perspectives into global climate finance decisions.¹** Kebetkache has built a relationship with the GCF national designated authority in Nigeria and plans to submit a proposal to GCF.



1.3

While the advocacy work with Shell remains ongoing and the issues around the impact of pollution remains unresolved, Shell is no longer simply ignoring the community's and Kebetkache's demands.

Through the support of Both ENDS and GAGGA:

- Kebetkache's advocacy has resulted in **the shutting-down of a gas flare site, which threatened the health of local girls.**
- Kebetkache has helped ensure that **investors and government actors are aware of the local reality on the ground in Nigeria**, and the negative impact of irresponsible divestment in the Niger Delta.
- Kebetkache's work has helped contribute to a ruling by the Nigerian regulatory body, which found that Shell has to remediate polluted sites and pay due compensation to affected community members before it can divest itself of its onshore assets. This huge success underlines the importance of GAGGA using its contacts and resources to support Kebetkache's advocacy with key actors - publicizing the issues and therefore bringing more effective pressure to bear.
- Through its regional and global networking and learning activities, Kebetkache has also contributed to advancing knowledge and solidarity, and **strengthening women-led action for climate justice in and beyond the Niger Delta.**

¹<https://gaggaalliance.org/bringing-local-realities-to-board-level-gagga-and-both-ends-partners-at-the-gcf-b38-in-rwanda/>



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