



OGIEK CULTURAL CENTRE



Viewing of the proposed Cultural Centre design plans

Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP) is a registered Kenyan Non-Governmental Organisation established in 1999. OPDP's work is centred on Land rights, sustainable development, climate change mitigation, gender equality, language and culture revival and preservation amongst the Ogiek community and other minority and indigenous peoples in Kenya and across Africa.

In a bid to have a focal point to consolidate language and cultural preservation efforts, the Ogiek community led by OPDP have been attempting to acquire land and develop an Ogiek Community Cultural Centre. These efforts bore fruit in 2020 when OPDP acquire a 5 acres plot of land in Narok County, Narok North Sub- County in the Central Division of Olokuseroi location in Nkareta ward. The Cultural Centre is found within the Maasai Mau Block which is one of the 22 blocks of the larger Mau Forest Complex. It is located approximately 150km from Nairobi and 25km from Narok town. The Centre is situated on a 5-acre piece of land that is partially covered by a vibrant forest ecosystem, with a small seasonal stream watering the bionetwork dispersed across the valley.

At completion, the centre will have:

- A community museum.
- An information hub to be accessed by community members and visitors.
- A community library filled with books, videos, publications, journals etc. on indigenous peoples' agenda.
- Performance theatre for the display of traditional poems, songs, skits and sharing of traditional knowledge through storytelling.
- An Ogiek village; traditional huts to house guests giving them a feel of Ogiek traditional life.
- An exhibition area for Ogiek artefacts, regalia, traditional foods, medicinal herbs and other cultural knickknacks.
- A botanical garden filled with a variety of traditional medicine and herbs.
- Traditional beehives to supply the Centre with a constant supply of honey.



Iconic tree within the Cultural Centre

The Land Body Ecologies Project

The Land Body Ecologies (LBE) is a research project led by a team of researchers with academia, human rights and professionals from various fields. The research has established various field stations 'Hubs'; which are the Arctic North (Northern Finland), India, Kenya, and Uganda with the main Hub in London. The aim of the research is to understand the suffering that occurs when land is harmed and explore ways in which mental health and ecosystem health may be co-dependent. This study seeks to understand mental distresses that might occur when connection to land is altered through one's ability to live on it or actively in it, through impacts such as climate change, displacement, or forced eviction. OPDP will be hosting the Kenya Hub within the Cultural Centre and it is through the financial support from LBE project that the construction of the Ogiek Community is taking place.

The Community

The Ogiek are an indigenous hunter-gatherer community that has lived within the Mau Forest since time immemorial. The term "Ogiek" means caretaker of forest flora and fauna; in effect they have been the custodians of Mau for generations. At the core of Ogiek culture and traditional lifestyle is honey and the hunting of wild game. Honey was the main exchange commodity the Ogiek traded with their neighbours; Maasai, Kikuyu, Kalenjin during batter trade. It was given in exchange for goats and sheep for slaughter during cultural celebrations.

Honey is used as the main ingredient in the brewing of the Ogiek honey wine. This drink is a major component of every traditional ceremony i.e. birth, naming, initiation, wedding etc.

Objectives of the Centre

- i. To serve as a focal point for the preservation of Ogiek traditional knowledge, language and culture.
- ii. To act as an intergenerational knowledge, transfer centre.
- iii. To serve as a hub for collecting, documenting and sharing Ogiek traditional knowledge.
- iv. To serve as a resort centre for holding meetings.

The centre is a place for learning about Ogiek history, traditional knowledge (songs, poem, dance, stories etc) and culture. Others lessons to draw within the centre includes biodiversity and environmental conservation.

The Ogiek community is excited to host visitors at the Centre. Visitors will have a chance to experience Ogiek traditional lifestyle and have a taste of their traditional brew which is believed to contain medicinal properties. It is also a chance to listen to the sounds made by Ndeerit (Hyrax) in the morning and evening hours and if you are lucky, you will get to see other wild animals.



Community members dedicating the Cultural Centre through prayers



FSC Indigenous Foundation representatives' visit at the Cultural Centre



Elders setting up mabwaita (shrine) at the Cultural Centre



Lucy Claridge from Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) with OPDP Executive Director and community members at the Cultural Centre



The Official launch of the LBE project in Kenya at the Cultural Centre



Ogiek traditional huts within the Cultural Centre



Ogiek community members entertaining visitors at the Cultural Centre



Mapping out of the Cultural Centre grounds



Culture Centre construction in progress.





Support build the Cultural Centre

The Cultural Centre is currently under construction;
we are looking for well-wishers to support bring it to completion.
If you want to support build the Cultural Centre, please contact us via:

OGIEK PEOPLES' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (OPDP)

Nyamakoroto House, 2nd Floor, Room 210/211, Biashara Street, Nakuru

P.O. Box 424-20115 Egerton, Kenya

Tel: +254 51 2213803 | **Mobile:** +254 742 602 044

Email: opdp@ogiekpeoples.org

Contact our Executive Director

Daniel Kobei,

Mobile: +254 722433757 | **Email:** dkobei@ogiekpeoples.org

Website: www.ogiekpeoples.org

 [@Ogiekpeoples](https://twitter.com/Ogiekpeoples)

    [Ogiek Peoples' Development Program-OPDP](#)