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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



City of Seattle
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Greg Nickels, Mayor

NEW NONPROFIT GLOBAL CITIZEN JOURNEY builds global neighborhoods

Nigerian Joel Bisina was just seven when he was sent to live with relatives in a city hours away. This painful separation from his family was the only way Bisina's parents could ensure their son got an education because their Niger Delta village had no school. Although this was decades ago, literacy today hovers around 40 percent and educational resources are still scarce. That's why Bisina's organization Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIDPRODEV) is partnering with a new nonprofit started by Seattle resident Susan Partnow to build the first school library in the entire region.

Global Citizen Journey's mission is to build understanding through cross-cultural exchange and shared community service in regions of the world little known beyond their borders. "We think of it as building global neighborhoods," says Partnow. The organization brings together diverse groups of Americans and host-country

participants to experience village life, complete a service project chosen by the local community, and share workshops on compassionate listening, conflict resolution, peacemaking and more. Each journey is designed in partnership with a host-country organization.

This November, Global Citizen Journey and NIDPRODEV will bring Pacific Northwest and Nigerian delegates to Oporoza, a Niger Delta village accessible only by boat. The library they build will provide vital learning resources for the village

children, as well as the surrounding community. Besides its educational challenges, this oil-rich region struggles with poverty, environmental damage and inter-tribal conflict. Bisina and NIDPRODEV have been active in mediation and peace-building there.

"Many Americans don't know that Nigeria is a significant source of oil and even fewer understand the devastating impact oil production has had on the Niger Delta," says Partnow. "An important part of Global Citizen Journey's work is to shed light

on these kinds of situations around the world."

"We invite Seattle residents to get involved as delegates, volunteers, organizational sponsors or individual donors. And watch for our Oporoza library book list and donation

drop at the Phinney Neighborhood Center," says Partnow. "There are many ways to help, even if you don't go on a journey. Everyone who participates has the chance to learn about different cultures, establish bonds of friendship and peace, and be part of the Global Citizen community."

Global Citizen Journey organizers, including Joel Bisina, are hosting a series of events in Seattle. Dates, times and more information about the organization and the Nigeria trip can be found at www.globalcitizenjourney.org, or call Susan Partnow at 206.789.8697. 🌐

