Chicoco Radio
Community building designed for urban flooding, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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**Project data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Architecture, building and civil engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>CMAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Private commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned start</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary and appraisal by the jury**

Chicoco Radio is a floating media platform that will be built and for the residents of the waterfront slum community of Port Harcourt in Nigeria. The structure is conceived as a linear public space connecting land and water. The design is part of the African Water Cities project, which investigates the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of rapid urbanization and climate change in African coastal cities. A participatory venture using locally produced materials, Chicoco Radio will be the community’s voice and will include recording studios, a computer center, meeting rooms, cinema, and an amphitheater.

The jury acknowledges the project’s objective to establish links both locally and across the region. Architecture merges here with new media to become a platform for modern communication and participation—a civic tool to strengthen local and regional identity located at the threshold between land and water. The structure further exemplifies the effects of climate change on coastal communities in Africa. The use of indigenous materials such as bamboo to create a media center offers the opportunity to create an architecture that goes beyond tradition, while respecting the past.

**Sustainability concept**

Chicoco Radio is part of NLÉ’s African Water Cities project, which investigates the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of rapid urbanization and climate change in African coastal cities and waterfront communities. Following the first urban prototype, Makoko Floating School, which has received significant international appreciation, Chicoco Radio is the second prototype of NLÉ’s ongoing urban project.

The simple yet innovative structure adheres to standards of sustainable development. It is designed to use renewable solar energy to manage stormwater and to facilitate the water-based, cantilevered structure as unique in the world.

As a ‘bridge to transformation’, the amphibious nature of the building offers a reconnection between the community’s life on land today, their historic past, and their potential lives on water in the future.

The building will be used not only as a radio station, but also for a variety of cultural, social, commercial, recreational, and educational activities. Local residents saw the water-based, cantilevered structure as unique in the region if not the entire country, and likely to inspire tourism and economic development as well as more positive opinions of the waterfronts. The project has had an educational impact on the local community introducing the element of design advocacy and seeks to illustrate the social and environmental value of public space. Furthermore, the community will be fully-equipped to replicate and further adapt the design of the building to best meet their own needs.

One of the most powerful outcomes of NLÉ’s projects is that they provide infrastructural solutions for sustainable urban development that could be replicated (not just by their forms, but their methodologies as well) within impoverished rural communities, yet adaptable for urban areas around the world.

**Further authors**

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**Acknowledgement**

Image 1: The floating structure liberates land to create a shaded landscaped area and public space for the community.

Image 2: The cantilevered structure is unique in the world.

Image 3: The floating structure is a waterfront cinema space.

Image 4: The radio station is also a beacon and landmark for the community.

Image 5: The simple yet innovative structure adheres to standards of sustainable development.

Image 6: Built of locally-available materials, the structure incorporates renewable energy systems.

Image 7: The studio as conceived as a linear perspective of public space from land to water, to connect all the various activities.

Image 8: The concept and design development have been completed in close consultation with a community design team.

Image 9: The waterside of the building is a floating stage and jetty responding to the daily tidal changes.

Image 10: The radio station is also maintained for the community. The building offers a reconnection between the community’s life on land today, their historic past, and their potential lives on water in the future.