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YES Alum Led Project to Obtain Clean Water in Nigeria









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Daniel Ishaya (YES alumnus 2009-2010) was the project leader for the Rehabilitation of Boreholes Project in the Gombe State of Nigeria. The project began and was made possible by a grant from the United States Mission Nigeria Grants Program through the United States Embassy in Abuja.



Members of the Gombe Chapter of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Alumni Association of Nigeria collaborated with a team of technicians to rehabilitate boreholes in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Boreholes are deep water wells meant to act as alternative sources of clean water. They are essential to communities in which boreholes are the only affordable source of clean water.

Lack of adequate water resources is a common issue in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Ishaya, the majority of illnesses in these rural communities are due to drinking unclean water.



Other YES alumni participants involved in the project included: Ibrahim Ezekiel (YES alumnus 2006-2007), Ishaku Abner (YES alumnus 2009-2010), Habib Tel (YES alumnus 2013-2014), Esther Bila (YES alumna 2014-2015) and Patience Habila (YES alumna 2014-2015).

Most of the boreholes were damaged due to worn out pipes, rods and barrels. Some of the boreholes were also blocked by dirt that accumulated during the dry season. During the repair process, pipes, rods, barrels and leather caps were replaced on the damaged boreholes. The dirt was also flushed out, which increased the flow of water from the boreholes.

Before the program concluded, the technicians revisited any boreholes that were still not functioning properly after maintenance was completed. The community members surrounding the boreholes were instrumental in the completion of the repairs. Rather than having to hire help for the excess labor needs, locals volunteer technicians restore and repair the boreholes.



As part of the program, locals at the site of each borehole were given instructional orientations on how to maintain the boreholes moving forward. They were encouraged to raise money to repair the boreholes in case of future damage or disrepair.

“We are grateful to the government of the United States of America for reaching out to us with such a wonderful help at the right time of our need and we young people of our community having good and positive thought towards our community,” said one local.

Ishaya describes that this project began all the way back in 2009-2010 while he was studying in the United States. When asked how he hoped to benefit his home country, he returned to Nigeria, Ishaya remembers writing about providing clean water. While studying in Iowa, he fundraised for the Borehole Rehabilitation Project and asked his host mother for advice.

"I want to tell the host families out there – possibly you cannot come to Africa and repair boreholes, you may not be able to send support to Africa – but with these students, you are hosting future leaders who will come back home with the spirit of volunteerism," said Ishaya. "You are helping by building leaders and they are helping make an impact in a part of the world you have never been."



PR Intern



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