ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2018





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First Edition

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About RAEF



Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) was founded in the year 2007 and registered as a corporate body on the 23rd of June, 2009 under the Companies and Allied Matter Act, (Part 'C') 1990 of the federal Republic of Nigeria. We owe and carry out free medical treatment; free education support programs, youth and widows empowerment.

Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation believes in restoring hope and giving hope to the widows and orphans and in so doing, the foundation uses her yearly International Widow's Day celebration to empower widows who were trained on different skills and also provide scholarship to the orphans.

The foundation carries out research, training, outreaches and public educational campaigns about the needs for

widow's empowerment, orphans, youth and other vulnerable groups in the society. It is committed to its mission of transforming the lives of the underprivileged individuals through quality education, free medical treatments, and financial support, regardless of age, gender, race, religion or financial status.

We deliver in the following areas:

A. Education:

Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation aim at reducing illiteracy in Nigerian rural communities; engage in education supports programs such as distribution of books, school uniform, bags, and laboratory equipment etc to primary and secondary schools. We advocate for the need for Girl-child education at least to secondary school level. We provide scholarships to children of the widows and the less privileged in the society.

B. Health:

We are focusing services on vulnerable groups such as women and children in the following areas; Routine free medical outreaches to complement the efforts of the primary healthcare services; HIV/ AIDS and other diseases awareness, prevention and care services; Health education to pregnant women (PMTCT) in the rural communities; Health advocacy and promotion program; Medical check-up for aged men and women and various training on Personal Hygiene and disease prevention

C. Empowerment:

We provide skill acquisitions training, capacity building and development for widows and youths, financial supports, financial management training as well as provision of foods, clothing and shelter.

D.Agriculture:

In the area of agriculture, we providing training to widows farmers in crop production, management and marketing; formation of farmers (widows) into Clusters; we provide capacity building in the areas of leadership, cooperation and record keeping, linking the farmers to stakeholders forum and build capacity in the areas of gender and family budgeting

E. Career Counseling:

In career counseling, we are developing the self-awareness of the students/ clients; provide professional course information for higher school leavers; provide labour market information for graduates and help clients in making decision and setting goals as well as assist them in job search.

Achievements

RAEF has singlehandedly transformed the lives of over 7000 widows and their children, through skill acquisition trainings, financial empowerment, free monthly medical check-up and payment of school fees for their children without any external sources of income. We are being moved by the plight of these vulnerable and we are committed to pulling resources together towards giving a helping hand.



am proud to report to you that Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation made tremendous progress in 2018. As we reflect on another exceptional year, I want to appreciate our dedicated friends and supporters who have stood by us till date.

For close to 9years, the Foundation have touched over 7,000 lives by way of empowerment and have paid the school fees of over 3,000 orphans. Presently, our support also extended to youths and women prison inmates.

The Foundation has been consistent in the last 8years in honoring widows by way of training them in business skills and giving them start-up grants for business yearly during International Widows Day celebration. With this message, kindly permit me to share some of our challenges, achievements and way forward with you.

The major challenge before this Foundation is lack of funding. The Foundation has single handed funded its activities from inception till date.

Despite the challenge before us, the foundation recorded a number of results in the year under review. This includes routine free medical outreach, prison visits and release of a woman inmate. Others include; 2018 International Widows' Day celebration where the widows receives different types of empowerment and marking of the 2018 International Youth Day, the first of its kind with the students of the University of Abuja, Gwagwalada Campus. Our achievements are growing everyday as we continually identify areas of need in the society.

I have a dream, which is to continually give hope and restore hope to widows, orphans and less privilege because supporting widows strengthens society's human tissue and this keeps family strong even when they are broken by the death of a loved one while supporting orphans enable them the opportunity to have good education because they are the leaders of tomorrow.

When I was very young, I lost my mother to the cold hands of death. I suffered so much to get to the level I am in life. To this day, I have promised to support widows, orphans and less privilege in the society.

I am determined to fill the gap created as a result of the lost of a parent or both parents in the lives of orphans/less privilege. I call upon people of the like minds as I look forward to working with men and women of goodwill, Nigerians and international partners who will join us in challenging the ugly trend of poverty, diseases, marginalization, domestic abuses, illiteracy and neglect and give succor to the less privilege with your support and financial assistance.

Thank you for being part of RAEF's family and for your continued support. I wish you all the best of this year in good health.

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Ignatius Newman Ezeibgo Founder, RAEF



e are pleased to share this report showing our activities for the year ending and the progress Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation has made so far.

2018 was the 8th edition of the International Widows Day celebration tagged "**YOU CAN**" by the Foundation and in so doing, the Foundation has succeeded in touching the lives of over 7,000 widows from inception. RAEF also succeeded in establishing about 19 widows zones in different communities within the federation were these widows come together on a monthly bases to share a common value. In each of these zones, we have over 80 widows, giving us an estimate of over 1,500 widows under the umbrella of the Foundation.

As you go through the detailed description in this report, you will see a number of projects carried out to support the widows, orphans and less privilege in the society as well as the youths.

The Foundation visited prisons and freed a woman who was imprisoned for no just course and could not be bailed due to lack of funds.

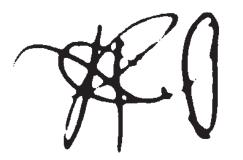
We have committed staff members, consultants and volunteers who work effortlessly to achieve the vision of the foundation. Staff members and volunteers in our outreach centers (Enugu, Lagos, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, Ilorin and Jos) are not left out.

The sole aim of this foundation from inception was to restore hope and give hope to widows, orphans and the less privilege in the society as well as making impact in the lives of youths and girl child in particular. Taking to note that this foundation has never had any external funding from inception but it is bent on actualizing its vision of empowering widows who were dejected as a result of the death of their spouse and give educational support to orphans by way of paying their school fees.

The Foundation is open to funding, support and partnership in executing projects in any area.

We want to use this medium to truly appreciate all those who have been with us on this journey from inception, those who have supported us in one way or another; financially, materially and morally. We look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,



Rita Ndubuisi Program Director, RAEF

RAEF Free Medical Outreaches





Prison Visit and Release of Prison Inmate: Blessing John

s most new brides will tell you, the honeymoon is far from over one month after the wedding. But for Blessing John, the story was completely different. A mere one month after her wedding, trouble came to her doorstep in the form of two fighting neighbours. Their shouts and grunts as they slapped, kicked and punched each other brought Blessing and other neighbours running from their own homes.

Everyone tried desperately to separate the fighting women to no avail. Blessing lent her voice to her neighbors' pleading with the pair to stop fighting. They didn't listen; rather they became increasingly violent, their senses dulled by adrenaline and riotous anger. They overturned objects in the vicinity as they tangled and pelted each other with violent blows. In the course of the fracas, a little child was flung against a wall and it promptly burst into tears as a huge, bloody gash appeared on its head. That didn't stop the duo; they continued to fight with even more violence, seemingly determined to inflict grievous bodily harm on each other. Blessing tried to separate the pugilists bodily but they roughly shoved her out of the way.

Finally, in a fit of desperation, Blessing looked around wildly for something to distract them with. She spied a pot of boiling water and without pausing to think; she grabbed it straight from the fire and flung its contents at the pair. It worked like magic; they stopped fighting instantly. Their yelps of pain and shocked disbelief quickly gave way to outrage. Before her very eyes, two enemies united against a new common enemy: Blessing John. A police complaint was made and in record time, a dazed Blessing found herself in a dock answering to criminal charges. Abject poverty and lack of information meant they had no lawyer to defend her during the trial and in short order, she was found guilty and sentenced to one year imprisonment with an option of fine of N300,000.

Unfortunately, for a family barely keeping its head above water, N300,000 was an astronomical figure. Even when the court tried to mitigate the cost, the family still could not afford the fine. They barely managed to comply with the court's order to treat the complainants who were nursing burns from the hot water. Blessing went to jail in lieu of fine.

Three months later, on 14th May, 2018 a few days after her story came to the ears of the founder of Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) IG Newman, Blessing's release was secured when RAEF paid the fine. Her release was sudden and unexpected to Blessing and to her family. As she exited the prison, she stared wide-eyed at the strangers who had come to take her home. Curiously she followed us meekly out of the prison, not asking any questions of us whatsoever. It was almost as though all questions had been taken from her during her stint in jail.

Her family members were conspicuously absent because they too had been unaware that she would find favor that fateful day. When the RAEF staff attempted to take her home, we were shocked to discover that Blessing had become so disoriented and traumatized by her prison-stay that she could not recall the directions to her own home!!! Her husband was away at work and we ended up having to roam the entire neighborhood until we were fortunate enough to stumble across someone who recognized her and knew her home; a neighbour she called Mama Bright. So deep was Blessing's disbelief at her new-found freedom that she kept glancing fearfully over her shoulders as though expecting the prison officials to show up and drag her kicking and screaming back to what had to be the worst place she had ever been in.

If the family had had the funds to hire a lawyer or pay the fine, Blessing might not have spent three months of her life in traumatic and harrowing conditions. Poverty has destroyed and is still destroying several homes which is why we at RAEF are so passionate about empowerment of widows, orphans and the indigent.

As Nelson Mandela said, when we fight against poverty, it's not charity it's justice because poverty is man-made.



















2018 International Widows' Day Report and Pictures

he 2018 International Widows' Day celebration being the 8th edition in the history of Rock of Ages Empowerment foundation (RAEF) was a huge success with the team "**YOU CAN**". The event took place on the 23rd June, 2018 at the International Women Centre, Abuja, Nigeria.

Present at the event were the representative of the Honorable Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development Hajiya Aisha Jummai Alhasan among other dignitaries including RAEF Partners, Supporters, Friends and well-wishers as well as over 1,500 Widows under the umbrella of the Foundation from the 19 widows zone within and outside Abuja.

The highlight of the event was the empowerment of about 70 Widows with Startup Grant within the range of N50,000 and N30,000 naira only. Twenty six (26) older widows who were empowered with grinding machine and 20 widows who were previously empowered gave testimonies and success stories on how the start-up grant has been of great help to them and their families. These 20 Widows were equally supported with ovens, grinding machine, cooking pot and cash donation as an encouragement to continue to support their families.

To mark the years International Widows' Day, the Foundation visited various prisons within and around Abuja. During one of the visits, Mrs. Blessing John was found and successfully freed by the Foundation. After her release from the prison, the Foundation empowered her with the sum of N100,000 naira to pick up her life again. (More detailed story on what led to her imprisonment and release was elaborated in the previous page).

During the event, the RAEF Medical teams, volunteers and Vision Edge Eye Clinic & Optical service LTD were on ground to provided free medical treatment and free eye care to the widows. In addition, all widows present at the event were given bags of rice and fabrics among other things.

The event was well attended and covered by various media houses which includes the Catholic Television of Nigeria (CTV).



(Stake)











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Success Story of Widows Empowered in Past Years

Nwokedi Fidelia

"My name is Nwokedi Fidelia, a.k.a. Mama Kuje. When my husband died, I lost all hope in life. But I was fortunate to join Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in April 2016 and I was empowered on June 23, 2016 with an oven, a frying pan and one big spoon. After the empowerment I went for further training. I started baking professionally and taking care of my children and people have been patronizing me. Now I can bake and sell one cake for N7,000 (seven thousand Naira only) and more. I have five children and I have been training them with the proceeds I get from this business ever since I was empowered. One of my child is studying telecommunications engineering in school and will be graduating in September 2018."

Mrs. Perpetua Okeke

"My name is Perpetua Okeke. I am here to testify about the goodness of the founder I.G. Newman to me and in the lives of other widows. I don't even know what to say. This cake in my hands was as a result of the founder's influence over my life. I'm just grateful."

Mrs Julian Ukwueze

"When my husband died in 2008, I had N25,000 (Twenty-five thousand Naira only). I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2013. I was taught catering. In 2016 the founder empowered me with a big frying pan and spoon. I borrowed N60,000 from a Micro-Finance Bank and started a restaurant and also baking and catering. I can now make several soups and even different types of food. I have 3 children and I use this business to train my children. I don't even pay house rent anymore because I have my own house now."

Veronica Michael

"The founder empowered me with N10,000 and also brought people who taught us how to make liquid soap and vaseline. I added some money to the N10,000.00 (Ten Thousand Naira) given to me and I bought a sewing machine. I have been making and selling handbags since then and I've been using the money to take care of my children. I have three children."

Maria Ugwuja

"After my husband died, I had so many problems until I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) and met the founder. He said all widows should come and collect food, rice and semovita. Through the help of the founder, we were taught so many things. He empowered me with N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira only); I now have a farmland near a river and I even bought engine from the proceeds I get from the farmland to help supply water to the farm. I am here with *Ugu* leaves from my farm. I have been taking care of my children since then. No lack."

Mrs Adamu

"I was empowered by the founder since I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) and because of that empowerment, I now make and sell *kunun aya* (tiger nut milk). In short, I am available for business and supply anywhere I am called."

Mrs. Mary Sama

"I joined this Foundation in 2015 and the founder empowered me. I call the founder our Daddy a good shepherd because since I was empowered, I now prepare snacks and pastries and sell them; snacks like chin-chin and buns and I also train by children in school."

Victoria Eze

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2012. I was empowered in 2014 with N20,000. I put it in my *Okpa* business and I've been doing well since then. Now I have one of my children in University, another has finished secondary school and three are in secondary school. May God bless the founder IG Newman and preserve him."

Ngozi Odiaka

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2013 and I was among those who learned catering. I never knew I could prepare food in large quantity. I was empowered with N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira only) and since then people now invite me to cook for them professionally. My business has thrived so much that I can now train my children. One of my daughters even gained admission at Delta State University (DELSU); she is currently studying law, and I am paying her fees."

Ijeoma Okorie (Airport Zone)

"I was introduced to Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2016. The founder brought people who taught us how to make cake. I can now make cake and even liquid soap; I am now empowered and I train my children from the gain I make."

Theresa Okafor (Nyanya Zone)

"I was empowered in 2014 by Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) with a sewing machine. I had one machine at the time and when I got the second one I moved out of my shop because I had been living in my shop at the time. My business has grown since then as a result of the empowerment and this dress I have on, was made by me. I want to thank the founder because I can now pay my rent and train my children in school"

Mrs Joy

"I learned how to make chin-chin, fish roll, meat pie and other pastries under Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF). As a result of this empowerment, I now have a business and I now even supply these pastries and snacks to schools, churches, and store. I can also now pay my bills and train my children in school"

Ladi Emmanuel (Gwagwalada)

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2012 and was empowered in 2015 with N10,000.00 (Ten Thousand Naira only). After that, I started producing soap, Vaseline, air freshener, perfume and hair cream. I supply disinfectant to hospitals. I am glad God is helping me. I now have one child in higher institution. I thank God for the founder. This knowledge he imparted in our lives has really helped me. I now train others on how to make these things and I make money from the training. I also have a place where I supply soap. I want to thank Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation. I tell my children that the Founder IG Newman is God sent and a blessing to mankind. He has been a father. He has given us hope. This business now keeps me busy. I also pray for the founder that his wife will never suffer what we suffered."

Eze Theresa

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2012 and was empowered in 2013. I also got a contact in Lagos through someone I met in this foundation and today, as a result of that contact, I now supply stock fish and crayfish and I train my children."

Esther Sule Ameh

"I was empowered in 2016 by Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) with N10,000 and frying pan and spoon. The money helped me a lot as I learned to make tea tree oil from plants. It is a very expensive oil. I sell 10 liters of the oil for N30,000. People call me from all over for this oil. I even planted some of the seeds in my house and it is growing. I used the money I was empowered with to buy a grinder and now I make tea tree oil and supply to people."

Rosemary

"I am so glad that I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2014. In 2015 I was empowered. I learned so many things like how to bake, hair dressing and production of other products like Vaseline, powder etc. In the school where I teach, 95% of the parents and all my neighbours use my products. I even make white powder and brown powder. I'm so happy now."

Lucy Samuel

"I am Mrs. Lucy Samuel from Gwagwalada. I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2016 and was empowered that same year. I started baking donuts, chin-chin, bread cake and I also make a lot of money from home-made bread and cake-bread I produce. I have 3 children, all in school and I also train 3 extra children of other people. I even present snacks as wedding gifts to people and I also bake wedding cakes. I want to appreciate the founder and Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation."

Christy Adamu (Masaka Zone)

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in 2013 and was empowered in 2014. I usually sell *kunu* (a local drink) out of a cooler, but after the empowerment by RAEF, I bought a deep freezer and now I do not have to buy ice block again and I do not use cooler again. I paid for the WAEC and NECO for my two children from the business and I train them in school."

Janet Madaki

"I joined Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation (RAEF) in June 2012 and was empowered in 2013 with a sewing machine. I started sewing bags, school bags, travelling bags, and so on. Now I sell these bags for N1,500 or more. I train my children with the proceeds from these bags. I am so grateful to the founder because if not for him, my eyes would not open like this."

Pictures from 2018 International Youth Day





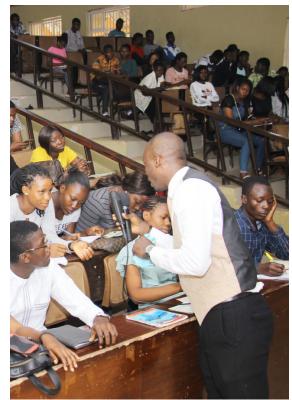


























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2018 International Youth Day Activity Report

The Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation organized 2018 International Youth Day on the 24th of August 2018. The event which was tagged **"Creating Safe Spaces for Nigerian Youths through Entrepreneurial Development"** was in conformity with the United Nations International Youth Day theme for the year 2018 which was **"Safe Spaces for Youths"**. The event was the first of its kind to be organized by the foundation. It took place at the Lecture Theatre Hall 1 of the University of Abuja Gwagwalada Campus. The event witnessed a huge turnout of students from the institution and other neighboring institutions.

The event commenced at 10am following a welcome address led by RAEF Program Director Mrs. Rita Ndubuisi. One of the student leaders Mr. Richardson Ojeka who anchored the program took everyone through the event of the day and encouraged the students to key into every activity and program outlined in marking the youth day celebration. He further advised them to write their expectations and areas of interest in life and relate it to the theme of the day as the program advances.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE DAY

A lot of activities took place on the slated day which includes;

Lecture and creating awareness on "YOUTHS AND ENTREPRENUERSHIP"

Mr. Odedele Tosin, a trainer, public speaker, entrepreneurship and a leadership expert, an author and business development consultant delivered a lecture titled '**Youth and Entrepreneurship**'. He engaged the students on the need for them to empower themselves with different skills and trainings that will benefit them even while they are in school. He emphasized the importance of engaging in other residual sources of income especially as it relates to their immediate environment. He cited the total dependence of students on the government as one major cause of joblessness in the society, low level of creativity among youths, even in the school. He encouraged the students to take advantage of every opportunity they get while in school to make them productive and impactful to the country and the world at large.

Lecture on "SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH USING ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT"

This was delivered by Mr. Maurice Chima, an ICT Expert, entrepreneur, and an official of the Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation. Mr. Maurice in his address to the students made emphasis on the concept of the theme of the year, **"Safe Spaces for Youths**", He stated the need for students to appreciate the privilege they have as students and how important it is for them to take advantage of the privileges it provides them through education which is their primary reason for being in school such as networking, trainings both formal and informal and more.

He enumerated some benefits the school provides as a safe space to the students, and also complimented the first speaker on the importance and value of skills acquisition as alternate sources of income with specific emphasis on proper and legitimate use of the internet as a means of income and gave examples of various platforms they could use to their advantages both academically and financially. Mr. Maurice on a final note encouraged the students to source for beneficial skills, products, platforms and information that will help them grow and also gave references where they could get some of the opportunities mentioned.

MESSAGE TO THE STUDENTS

The Program Director of Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation Mrs. Rita Ndubuisi, on behalf of the founder welcomed the students for coming in their numbers for the program. She expressed her joy on the active participation of the students in all the outlined activities. She also encouraged the students to believe in themselves not withstanding the challenging economic situation in the country at the moment, further bolstering the messages of the first two speakers and promising that the next international youth day program in the school will be better packaged to include other programs that will suit the students.

The highlight of the Youth Day event was the entrepreneurial training. Trainings on different entrepreneurial skills like, making of liquid soaps, perfumes, toilet disinfectants (Dettol, Izal), Vaseline, bags with local fabrics, pastries like small chops, pies, cocktails with low start-up capitals and advice(s) on target market for the students as well as training on photographing.

The trainings were grouped into the following:

- **BAG MAKING**: The bag making category, comprised of about 45 students who indicated interest and were taught how to make bags with local fabrics (Ankara), the procedures where well outlined for them from measurements, cutting, fitting to sewing and finishing.
- **PERFUME, POMADE AND LIQUID SOAP MAKING**: This category had about 76 students, and they were taught how to make liquid soaps, pomade, air fresheners, disinfectants and perfumes, they were very happy as they expressed their feeling about the training and its degree of simplicity as made by the facilitators.
- **MAKING OF SMALL CHOPS, PIES AND COCKTAILS**: As expected, this category had more students in participation than others. About 92 students in all, were taught on how to make small chops like samosa, spring-rolls, pies, cocktails and different types of fruit juice.
- **PHOTOGRAPHY:** This category had about 25 students, the least amongst all, but had a procedural training measure wherein all participating students were fully engaged in the operation of the camera with practical test of the usage of the camera before the end of the program.

The students at the end of the training expressed their satisfactions and appreciated the management and staffs of Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation for bringing such program to their school and requested that the next program coming up should be made to accommodate more students and provide more empowerment platforms and opportunities for them. Items produced as a result of the training were shared to the students.

Monitoring Visits to Widows that Received Empowerment in 2018





























Unicef's Wash Program Organized by Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation

ccording to a paperwork published by UNICEF on safe water supply and sanitation, it recorded that a whooping estimated 1.9 billion school days can be gained if the MDG's related to safe water supply and sanitation are achieved and will help to reduce the incidence of diarrhea in these affected areas.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (WASH) is a strategic approach by UNICEF to promote awareness on sanitation facilities, hygiene education and the encouragement of healthy living and lifestyle practices. WASH program has two (2) main targets as defined by UNICEF, They are

- **TARGET 1:** To halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to good/quality drinking water and basic sanitation as defined in the MDG target 7c.
- **TARGET 2:** To ensure that all schools have adequate child friendly water and sanitation facilities also with quality hygiene education.

The Rock of Ages Empowerment Foundation as part of her desire and mandate to align with UNICEF's WASH program has been conducting series of health trainings on WASH for its members. These trainings have included many practices like, "HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY" as defined by UNICEF's global hand practice, also teachings on the usage of hand sanitizers, disinfectants and other preventive measures that can be employed upon use of public places/tools. These and many more forms part of the much-listed programs and projects outlined for the year 2019 by the foundation. Other related projects include

- Provision of healthy sanitation facilities to schools to encourage students to come to school.
- Trainings on proper waste disposal measures
- Provision of proper waste disposal means for a better and healthier schooling environment.

Rock of Empowerment Foundation has keyed into these projects nationwide and it hopes to partner and donate to this cause. We welcome anyone, organization, company that wishes to join us in making Nigeria a healthy place to be in line with the **UN MDG target 4** which proposes reaching 1.1 billion people with access to improved sanitation facilities and to provide them with good healthy and safe water.



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RAEF TEAM: Medical Team, Volunteers and Staff Members





Eze Hyginus Eze



RAEF Volunteers



Theresa Ify Ezeoma



Chima Maurice



Euphamia Eze

RAEF Proposed Permanent Site



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