

NakRuDA Rural Access Project

£5959.42

A community project in the isolated Dadiya region of Nigeria, to facilitate access to healthcare and economic opportunities through the improvement of earth roads and stream crossings.

Work on the Dadiya road network project has been, as ever, a tale of extremes. Two new volunteers took up the roles of Engineers without Borders volunteers in Dadiya from September in 2006. A hard year's work by Nakruda and the volunteers was fraught with difficulties; the UNDP funding for the river crossing was delivered, but only three quarters of the budget was approved. The national elections (the first ever transfer of power between two civilian presidents) created political, social and inevitably, economic tensions, and the price of cement soared, stretching the budget still further. Illness meant that the volunteer engineers unfortunately had to return to the UK for treatment, losing a month of construction time at a crucial moment.

The crossing was finally completed at the end of April, an enormous achievement by the community and volunteers together. However, only a week later, Dadiya experienced its heaviest rains and flooding for several years and the crossing was destroyed. It is very much hoped that the efforts of the community, and their remarkable achievement in bringing such a project to fruition, despite its conclusion, will not go unrewarded, and can perhaps be used to leverage funds for a bridge, which would always have been the best technical solution if funding was not the dominant issue in project planning.

The delays have meant that the smaller, simple stream crossings have not yet been completed, but the hope and intention at present is to continue with work on these after the current rain season while searching for financial and technical support for a bridge construction programme (to be managed by external engineers rather than volunteers). Although at present, the project is at a difficult stage, there is hope to be drawn from the remarkable achievements of the community so far, and from the tireless resilience of the Nakruda chairman, whose first response to the disaster was to look to the future, and the challenges ahead.

Once the project review is completed, EWB UK will be in contact with individual donors to keep them updated on the outcomes of the review and the proposed way forward.