

Okomu Oil Company Awards Bursaries To 34 Indigent Students In Edo



By Francis Onoiribholo

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Dr Hefer in a group photograph with the benefiting students

Okomu Oil Palm Company Plc has given out cheques of N110,000 each to no fewer than 34 students of tertiary institutions from over 20 communities in three local government areas where it operates in Edo.

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Dr Graham Hefer, the Managing Director of the company, presented the cheques to the beneficiaries at a ceremony which was held at the company in

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Okomu in Ovia South West local government area (LGA) of Edo State.

The communities from where the beneficiaries were drawn are located in Ovia South-West, Ovia North-East and Uhunmwode LGAs.

Hefer said the gesture was part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to encourage educational pursuit among indigent students in its neighbouring communities through the award of bursaries.

The managing director said, "I know that things have gotten quite difficult these days with inflation this year I have agreed to increase the bursaries from N90,000 to N110,000 per student because I take you very seriously. "We need to have the people in the field, especially the youths for this company to keep going and sustained"

Addressing the community's representatives, Hefer asked them to always tell the truth about the company when they are asked what the management of Okomu has done ay is doing for them

"Tell the truth, don't lie, tell the truth please when you are asked what we the management at Okomu is doing for you tell the truth".



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According to the Managing Director,

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I want to ask some of the communities what is their problem, the problem is

they tell the management you are doing well for us then when the editors or newsmen come, they will say lies about the company, then they want the company to do roads and other things for them under such situations.

“We want you to help us to stay alive because you people are the ones around us. This way we will be happy to carry on and work with you.

“What I will be looking at going forward is that we will have an MoU because it is a partnership agreement so that we will know what to expect from you and you will know what to expect from us and the MoU is just to formalise it and also to help you as a community leader when you want to speak to your people you are able to present to them what we have agreed on and you can bring your legal adviser.

“The extension two communities have already got it so this will be the base, we will take it from there to make sure that we get better communication”.

Hefer also expressed disappointment over community representatives at any forum or meetings, saying that “the problem that we as a company has is that when we send to you (community) to send representatives and the representatives you send should be those who are capable of representing you well.

“So going forward, what will happen is that when we ask you to send representatives, you will send us a letter stating who these representatives will be and that they are officially representing your community and they have the mouth of your community so that whatever they say they cannot deny it.

“The good news is that I have also agreed and I am sure you will all agree that the Community needs more assistance and the company will be assisting them further”.

The managing director however advised that the community should delegate more responsibilities to the youths and that is one of the reasons why the company is encouraging them in Education with bursaries among others.

” Youth, you are the people that should be running the community because you have the longest to live, I want to see far more of you, the youth taking an active role because you are the future and if you do not take this seriously do

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not cry when things happen that will affect you negatively.

“I don’t want the youth to say the company have not done anything for us, the youth, you are the ones who have to come forward to say what you want and what is needed and how can we, the company help you.

“Most of you as you can see, I have a consultant coming to your community, they will have to do what I call “Needs Survey” and the reason why I ask for that to be done is that I felt it is nothing against the Executive Committees of the Communities but I felt that the Executive Committees are not going to the grassroots to find out what is really wanted to be done for the community because they thought that the community wanted this or the community wanted that but are given something else and that is where I want to get to by the needs survey.

“And that is maybe also why we are having difficulty bringing people to the town hall meeting because they feel that they are not being carried along. I think we can build better Bridges and bring more people in especially the youth and the women, then if you do not participate don’t cry” he said.

Also speaking, Austine Enabulele a member of the civil society organization commended the company for the bursary award which he described as the best way to empower the youths for leadership and development of a people. He called on the Communities to reciprocate the company’s benevolence by always creating a conducive environment for the company to operate to enable it to give them more assistance.

Earlier, a communication consultant, Mr Kingsley Erinmwionghae, said effective Community/Company Synergy among members of host communities and existing companies engendered growth, productivity and enhanced mutual relationships between the parties.

He was speaking at a training workshop for representatives of the communities as part of the company’s annual training and bursary presentation programme.

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Erinmwionghae presented a paper entitled “Community/Company Synergy; A Recipe For Progress. (ALAGHODARO)

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He said that effective Community/Company Synergy would bring about an understanding of the reputation of an organisation in its neighbouring communities, which was of vital importance for both parties.

A beneficiary of the bursary, Faith Agbonze thanked Okomu oil company for the gesture, expressing delight at being chosen as a beneficiary.



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