

Dear Friends,

The water project in Nepal was a success although it took a lot of frustrating attempts!

My teammate, Jennifer, and I worked with an organization called "Living Water Nepal" in a few small villages in the region of Chitwan (which was the lowlands "jungle" area in Central Nepal).

Bijay, founder/operator of Living Water Nepal, is a national who is a civil engineer who has been supplying wells in undeveloped villages around the region for the past two years.

We went there to introduce Bijay and his organization to our drilling equipment as a supplement to support his organization. Currently, he pays local contractors to drill the wells and install the pumps. Bijay only has enough funding for one more year of service so we were hoping that our equipment would work so he could drill the wells on his own without the contractors.

Over the course of the trip, we attempted 11 boreholes and failed at every single one of them. Talk about humbling!

9 out of the 11 were stopped by layers of large stones. It wasn't a bedrock layer but a layer of stones too big for our bucket to grab. We even went to a welder to make a new attachment we designed in an attempt to get the rocks up but it didn't work either. It was hard, hot and frustrating work. The other 2 boreholes collapsed due to the sandy soil.



Bijay and I attempting to drill pass the rocks

I thought, often, of the following verse and we moved on from each failed borehole.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

It is really easy to get discouraged by failure so I had to remind myself that we were doing the very best we could in each village. We worked hard at every location- only giving up when we absolutely could not drill the boreholes any deeper.

This area was different from my projects in Tajikistan and Sudan because in every village we attempted to drill; access to safe water was available but not convenient because many families had to share one well (where in Tajik and Sudan, no wells were present at all).

I don't want to give the impression that we didn't work as hard as we would have had it been Sudan or Tajik, but my heart didn't ache as much as it would have had we left them with no water and only a series of failed boreholes. In addition, Living Water Nepal will head back to those villages and use a local contractor to finish the boreholes that we were unable to complete.

In the end, we went back to the first village and hired a local contractor to break through the rock and finish the remaining few feet of drilling before reaching the water source and installing the pump. The fee was cut by about 60% since we had dug most of the borehole with our equipment before hiring the driller.



Little girl using the new well we helped install

Bijay became familiar with our equipment now as we spent hours talking about where it works best and modifications that can be made to make it work in his regions.

I am confident that Bijay will be able to use it successfully in areas with different soil layers and before we left, Bijay shared that he believes he knows of areas where he thinks our drill will work. Most importantly, Bijay has the technical ability and access to machines to make modifications to the drill as needed.

Hydromissions considers a project successful if we have trained and equipped the locals, not necessarily if we complete a well. We focus on training and equipping so that projects can continue long after we leave. We know it is more important to "teach a man to fish" and although I would always rather report back in the States that wells were completed, it is more important to leave the equipment with trained, trustworthy locals who will continue to work on the projects after we depart.

So, in the end, we were only there for the completion of one well. It was located in the first village we worked in and will serve 3 families who, in my opinion, were the nicest families we had met on the trip.



Completed well and one of the families who will use it

Lastly, I told you all that since I was going to be in Nepal, why not trek to Everest Base Camp?! It was AMAZING! The trek was brutal and beautiful and I am so glad Kimmy and I did it!



Everest Base Camp (I am on left, Kimmy on right)

Take Care,
Caitlin

P.S. A lot of crazy stuff happened while we were in Nepal - the earthquake was so scary because Kimmy and I were in the Himalayas in the middle of the trek and it was dark and we thought it was an avalanche at first...terrifying, actually. The earthquake also caused landslides and closed a bridge we needed to cross to make it out so it turned our trek into an even bigger adventure than we anticipated. Also, while we were trekking, the plane crash happened. The same type of small plane we were going to have to fly on to get back from the Himalaya's had crashed days before our flight killing 19 people. Lastly, a bus slid off a cliff killing 43 people a couple hours outside of Kathmandu the day before Jennifer and I had to travel over cliffs to get from Chitwan to Kathmandu en route home. All in all, we were reminded of how delicate life is and how thankful we were for being alive and well. **We thank God for His protection and were reminded to not take anything for granted!**