

## 2 drown in Abakaliki on sanitation day

By KENNETH OFOMA, Abakaliki

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Two young men aged between 23 and 24 were drowned yesterday morning in a hand-dug well during this month's sanitation exercise in Ebonyi State.

One of them was said to have climbed down the well with a ladder in an attempt to clean up the well by removing debris and mud from the well, but got trapped as he suddenly started shouting for help and gasping for air at the same time.

The second person rushed down the well in an attempt to rescue him and equally died in the process, even though the water in the well was not up to waist-level.

Sympathizers, officials of the state fire agency and other security agencies like the Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps battled in vain to save the lives of the young men, one of who was said to be the son of the landlord. The incident took place at No. 29 Nnobi Street Abakaliki.

The rescue operation led by the men of the fire service lasted for more than two hours as they were hampered by faulty and obsolete breathing equipment.

The fire officer stated that hose connecting the oxygen cylinder and the mask was perforated and they had to look for rubber to tie round it to avoid leakage of oxygen and to save the life of the person going down the Well.

The victims' bodies, one of who was identified as Chinedu were taken to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Abakaliki where a medical doctor confirmed them dead.

The parents of the victims including the owner of the house, Mr. Mike Okonkwo were too grief-stricken to speak to the press.

Some people were over-heard gossiping in hushed tones, saying that some people had died in the well before the latest incident.