

## **International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School**

### **2012 Annual Report**

October 11, 2013

“In Nigeria, the average poor rural female is just above the two-year threshold for extreme education deprivation, with less than 40% the national average for years of school and around one-quarter the average for rich urban males. There is a three-year gap between poor rural females and poor urban males.... The Nigerian case powerfully illustrates the mutually reinforcing effects of poverty, rural location and cultural factors in creating extreme disadvantage.” – UNESCO *Reaching the Marginalized* report, pp. 142-143.

This is the eleventh in a series of annual reports delivered by the International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School (BMN/PS). Previous annual reports are posted online in the documents and reports section of the school's <http://www.bebor.org> website.

2012 was an exciting year for our work in Nigeria as we branched out into two new directions and deepened our partnership with Timmy Global Health. I also personally had the chance to visit the schools in Nigeria in June 2012 and there is nothing quite as satisfying as seeing the students whose lives your generosity directly touches in person.

In terms of numbers, 2012 was one of our best years ever. We were able to send three separate rounds of funding to the schools totaling \$18,250. The only previous year we ever exceeded this amount of funding was 2009 when we sent \$20,100 to the schools. The \$18,250 we sent to the schools in 2012 compares to a longer run average of \$12,917 in annual funding provided to the schools from 2006 – 2011. By the end of 2012, the International Friends Committee had provided BMN/PS with \$116,750 worth of funding. Including the non-scholarship contributions of our partners at Stepping Stones Nigeria which funded boreholes for drinking water at the schools in Bane and Bodo brings this figure to \$128,850.

In last year's annual report I noted that 2011 was not as much of a down year as it appeared originally (we only sent \$6,000 of funding in 2011) because some of the delays we encountered during 2011 were ultimately resolved successfully and this was what ultimately enabled us to send three rounds of funding to the schools in 2012. If 2011 and 2012 are taken together, our average annual funding over that two year period of \$13,125 is very close to the \$12,917 average annual figure from 2006 – 2011.

In discussing the funds we sent to the schools in 2012, let me break things down into three parts: our more traditional work as the first part and the two new initiatives we started in 2012 as the second and third parts. In terms of our more traditional work, we sent \$8,000 of funding to the school in Bane to finish construction on boys, girls and teachers' toilets that had been previously started and to re-roof the first classroom building we opened there in 2004 with a new rust-proof aluminum zinc roof. Both of these projects were successfully completed. The rust-proof roof on the first classroom building means that both of our buildings in Bane now have rust-proof roofs that should never need to be replaced. As was the case in Bodo in 2009, seeing the toilets in Bane was tremendously exciting for me personally. To people living in the West who take the existence of functioning toilets for granted it might not seem all that exciting

to take the ceremonial first pee in one of the new toilets in Bane. Having visited that school on multiple occasions since 2002, though, and knowing what it was like without toilets, I can't adequately convey what a tremendous sense of victory and relief it was to see the toilets flushing. Pictures showing both the re-roofed building and the toilets are available on the "Bane extension" page of the school's <http://www.bebor.org> webpage.

Our other traditional effort in 2012 was to provide \$500 in financing to the school in Bodo to purchase a new portable generator that they could use to power the borehole for drinking water which Stepping Stones Nigeria provided for them in 2009. The previous generator we had helped fund for the school was having increasing maintenance problems and was not well suited for moving between the nursery and primary sections of the school. The new generator is mounted on wheels so it can easily be taken wherever it is needed. Pictures showing the new generator as well as students and teachers filling water from the borehole to deliver to elderly residents of Bodo are available at the bottom of the main homepage on the school's <http://www.bebor.org> webpage.

We also embarked on two new initiatives or directions in 2012. The first of these was to begin helping a new school in Bori, the commercial capital and transit junction of the Ogoni region which is located between our existing schools in Bodo and Bane, albeit closer to Bane. The school in Bori was started by our school directors in Bane, Steve and Leelee Wiwa Tanen. To be honest, I had no idea they had started this school and the whole thing came as a great surprise to me during my visit. I was initially less than enthusiastic about the idea of a third school in a third location largely because I know how difficult it is for me to raise enough funds to support our first two schools in Bodo and Bane. There were two things that ultimately swayed me and led to me enthusiastically embracing this project. First, seeing the nearly 300 students there packed into 6 different "classes" meeting in the Assemblies of God Church in Bori with another 4 "classes" meeting outside the church reminded me of what it was like in Bodo when we first started helping the school there with our first round of funding in 2001 when they were meeting in St. Andrew's Anglican Church and their first building was not yet completed. It also reminded me starkly both of how few options children in the rural Niger Delta have and that our schools must be doing something right if so many parents are choosing to send their kids there. Second, I was deeply impressed with how much local support Steve and Leelee had been able to generate for the school in Bori. They had secured sufficient local funding to build two main classroom buildings up to roof height. Thus, give or take half of the work on the buildings had already been done by them. We would not be starting from scratch but instead chipping in to help something that was already off to a pretty good start. We sent \$6,000 to the school in Bori to construct porticoes outside each building and start putting a rust-proof aluminum zinc roof on the first classroom building there. Ultimately, this funding not only finished roofing the one building but it also started roofing the second building. Because we are not building the entire buildings, we went straight to the more expensive rust-proof roof so we would not have to revisit this issue years later as we have had to do with four of our earlier buildings in Bane and Bodo. Pictures showing where the school was before we started helping them and where it is now are available on the "Bori extension" page of the school's <http://www.bebor.org> website. We hope to finish roofing the second building and doing the finishing touches on both buildings (window and door frames, plastering the walls, putting in a cement floor) in Bori in 2013. If we are lucky, we might have a borehole for cleaner drinking water and toilets established in Bori during 2013 as well.

Our second new initiative was to start a pilot health program at our school in Bodo. We had already begun addressing some of the links between public health and education when we provided boreholes for cleaner drinking water (funded by our partners at Stepping Stones Nigeria) and toilets for better sanitation at our schools in Bodo and Bane a few years ago. This new program expanded upon that earlier work and took us in a much more purely health direction than we have ever been before. We provided \$3,750 of funds to the school in Bodo to implement the first half of our 2012-2013 academic year pilot health project. Approximately two-thirds of this funding came from our partners at Timmy Global Health and we are grateful to Matt MacGregor, Anna Butterbaugh, Dr. Mercy Obeime, Mercy Medical Missions and the Indiana University student chapter of Timmy Global Health for making this funding possible. Our health program is coordinated by Dr. Nubari Nabie and run entirely by local Nigerian doctors, nurses and health workers. We directed our initial efforts toward 100 of the poorest and most vulnerable Bodo students as identified by Dr. Nabie and Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor, the school director. Students enrolled in the health program received measles and polio immunizations, deworming treatment, Vitamin A supplements and had blood samples analyzed for HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia and other basic health measures. Pictures detailing the work carried out by our health project are available on the “Bodo health project” page of the school’s <http://www.bebor.org> website. We will continue this health initiative during the 2013-14 academic year in Bodo. If and when sufficient funds can be secured, we would also like to expand this health program to our schools in Bane and Bori.

As was the case in both 2010 and 2011, we did not provide tuition fee scholarship funding to the schools in order to allow our partners at Stepping Stones Nigeria (please see <http://www.steppingstonesnigeria.org> for more information) to operate their own expanded and improved scholarship scheme for the poorest students at our school in Bodo. We will continue to engage closely with them to help solve any problems they encounter and to coordinate our work to ensure that we are not unnecessarily duplicating efforts. We will also work closely with them to evaluate our relative successes and failures with this program and make whatever adjustments are needed to ensure that the poorest pupils benefit as much as they can from this effort. We remain grateful to Stepping Stones for all their continued support here.

During my visit to Nigeria in June-July 2012, one of the things I was able to do was to conduct an informal one day snapshot census of enrollments at all three of our schools. Essentially, I walked into every single class and did a headcount of all the students in attendance that day. I personally counted 248 students in Bane, 346 students in Bodo and 280 students in Bori for a grand total of 874 students across all three locations. These numbers are almost certainly understated as they do not take into account any student absences on the days visited. I foolishly forgot to break these figures down by gender (it is sometimes hard to figure out exactly who is a boy and who is a girl in a crowded classroom and in a part of the world where many of our girl students have closely shaved heads). When we last did a formal school census in 2005, our student populations in both Bane and Bodo were over 52% girls. I have no reason to believe these figures have changed substantially but I cannot confirm them based on the non-gender specific headcounts I did in 2012.

From January 24, 2012 to March 15, 2013, we contributed \$930.59 to our partners at Timmy Global Health (see <http://www.timmyglobalhealth.org> for more information) as part of the 7% administrative fee they instituted on all of their programs starting in June 2010. Given all of the various services that Timmy provides to us (not the least of which is enabling me not to

have to set up my own foundation and report directly to the IRS); I believe this is a fair charge to help ensure their longer-term viability as an organization. Timmy Global Health also generously provided far more support to our pilot health project in Bodo than we contributed to them as administrative fees and we remain extremely grateful for that crucial support which enabled us to embark on this exciting new direction. As noted previously, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that the other 93% of your donations go directly to our schools in Nigeria. I personally absorb a lot of costs like postage to mail thank you letters or registering the bebor.org domain name, our local Nigerian partners at the Center for the Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) provide a number of free services and absorb a number of costs themselves and our internet website costs are covered by my cousin Andrew Nelson and his firm Accurate Image, Inc. Anyone, me included, who travels to Nigeria to visit the schools, will continue to pay all of their own costs out of pocket with no support coming from donated funds. The overwhelming majority of your donations will always go directly to supporting our programs in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The quote at the beginning of this report from a recent UNESCO report illustrates why we still do the work that we do and why we still need your continued support in order to do it. Our interventions are slow and on a micro-scale but over the past twelve years they have added up to significant, real and tangible improvements for the hundreds of children who attend our schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori every year. More than 50% of our students are girls and we are doing everything we can to address the kinds of disparities in educational achievement between poor rural females and poor urban males that the UNESCO quote highlights. Poverty, rural location and cultural factors can create, as UNESCO puts it, “extreme disadvantage” but they can also be challenged and confronted on a daily basis in the schools that your generous contributions help support.

Our most immediate priorities for the near future remain completing the physical infrastructure needs at all three schools, a goal we have now accomplished in Bane, largely accomplished in Bodo (other than re-roofing the last school building), and made significant progress on in Bori. As funding allows, we also hope to move forward on construction of the permanent home for the Tijen Pegg Mothers’ Association in Bodo and their sewing machine workshop. We are committed to refine, maintain and improve our pilot health project in Bodo. Should we ever have sufficient funding on hand to do so, we would love to expand that project to all the kids in Bodo and then to our other locations in Bane and Bori. As noted before, there are other projects we would like to undertake in the future such as providing better teacher training, providing nutritious school lunches, installing solar panels for power generation, building a secondary school in Bodo or creating additional income-generating opportunities, but those are more distant goals as compared to the most pressing immediate goals listed earlier.

We will continue to move forward with this project as we always have by remaining humble, sincere, honest and accountable in our service to some of the poorest people on the planet. We remain indebted to our local partners in Nigeria whose dedication, creativity, perseverance, talent and honesty while working on the ground in the villages underlies everything we do. We simply could not do the work we do without them. We also remain indebted to you, our international donors, who remain loyal to this micro-scale international development project that incrementally strives to bring the benefits of primary education and primary healthcare to children in the rural Niger Delta.

We will obviously do everything we can to maintain your trust and confidence in the coming years so we can continue providing scholarships, classrooms, water, sanitation and improved health for hundreds of beautiful children every year in the three villages we now serve in Rivers State, Nigeria.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me via [smpegg@iupui.edu](mailto:smpegg@iupui.edu) or (+1) 317-722-1978. As always, thank you so much for your past, present and hopefully continued support of the school project.

Thanks,

Scott Pegg,  
Chairman, International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School