

International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School

2014-15 Bi-Annual Report

June 5, 2016

“As the economist George Psacharopoulos [recommended in a recent paper](#), the highest priority should be what works best: early education, especially preschool.... Based on the most extensive data available, Psacharopoulos determined that the most effective target would be to halve the proportion of children who are not attending preschool in sub-Saharan Africa, which would yield social and economic benefits of \$33 per dollar spent. This goal, which focuses on a single challenge-plagued region, may seem modest; but it is also realistic and achievable – and the potential returns are massive. As targets become more ambitious, they lose their impact.” – Bjørn Lomborg, “The Trouble with Universal Education”

This is the thirteenth in a series of annual or bi-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.

Thanks to our continued partnership with Timmy Global Health, throughout the 2014-15 period, we continued to expand the focus and reach of our health project which originally started in 2012 with just 100 kids at our school in Bodo. We also completed a series of infrastructure upgrades for our schools in Bane and Bodo.

In terms of numbers, we sent \$9,800 in two separate rounds of funding to our schools in 2014 and we sent \$15,750 in two separate rounds of funding in 2015. This works out to an average of \$12,775 of funding per year which is slightly down from but broadly in line with the \$14,829 of funding we sent the schools on average from 2007 – 2013. By the end of 2015, the International Friends Committee had provided BMN/PS with \$166,250 worth of funding. Including the non-scholarship contributions of our partners at Safe Child Africa (formerly Stepping Stones Nigeria) which funded boreholes for drinking water at the schools in Bane and Bodo brings this figure to \$178,350.

As I have noted previously, our funding numbers go up and go down in any individual year and that is often connected to how fast or timely the schools can both utilize the funds we have provided them and how quickly (or not) they can provide us with documentation that the funds have been used properly. Indeed, noting our record level of \$23,950 of funding sent in 2013, I wrote in our 2013 annual report that “Because 2013 was such a great year and we were able to send so much funding, 2014 will certainly appear down in comparison.” As has always been the case with this project, I want everyone to know that we are not obsessed with numbers or dollars of output. That is how many corporate charities measure what they do. We are not like that. There will always be times when we have higher than average years in terms of funding distributed to the schools and other years when we have lower than average years. We will continue to send funding as and when we feel the schools have properly accounted for the previous rounds of funding sent and as and when they have compelling needs that we feel we can help them address. Some years (2012, 2013) will inevitably look better than other years (2011, 2014) and that is to be expected.

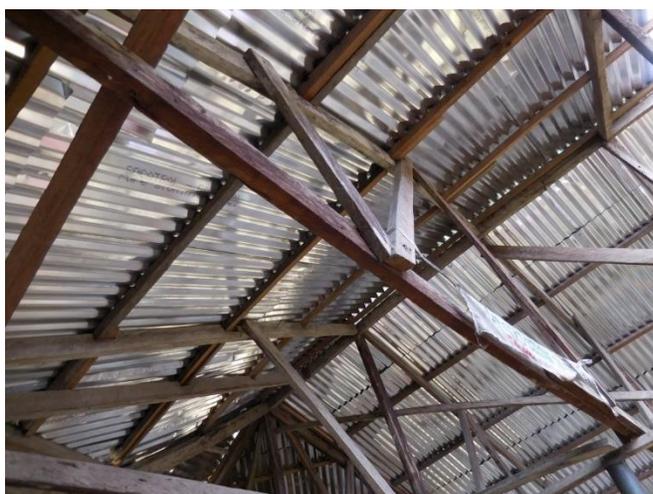
In discussing the funds we sent to the schools in 2014-15, let me break things down into three parts. First, in terms of our most traditional work or what I increasingly refer to as phase 1 of this project, providing classroom buildings, we sent \$6,000 to our school in Bodo in 2015 to finish re-roofing its final classroom building (what they call the “assembly hall”) with a rust-proof aluminum zinc roof (some of this funding was also used to purchase a new generator and pumping machine for the school’s borehole). I am very pleased to report that this project is now done and has been successfully completed. We went from this in 2013:



to this in 2015:



and, from the inside, this:



We also sent \$5,000 to our school in Bane to construct a “fence” or security wall around the perimeter of the school. The urgency of this project was brought to our attention by Leelee Wiwa Tanen, our school director in Bane and Bori. As Leelee explained to Kevin Michaels (one of our earliest and most generous supporters who visited Nigeria with me in 2015), the parents of the children in Bane had two main concerns. First, cars were regularly driving through the school grounds as a short cut to get to the main road leading out of Bane. The cars were doing this when the kids were entering and leaving the buildings and they were doing this during recess periods when the kids were outside playing. Second, the parents were also concerned about the safety of our girl students in Bane using the toilets. This should not be an issue but apparently a number of girls or young women have been sexually assaulted by local members of what the Nigerians call “cult” groups and we what would call militias or gangs. This photo shows the security fence or wall under construction in Bane a few months ago:



These two projects mean that we are now largely completed with our classroom building construction. I use the phrase “largely completed” because things can go wrong and maintenance issues arise but for the most part we should be more or less done with providing classroom buildings and related infrastructure for these three schools.

Second, we sent \$9,000 of funding (\$4,750 each in 2014 and 2015) to support our health project which originally started with 100 children in Bodo but has now expanded far beyond that. In 2013, we were able to extend our deworming treatment program and our basic immunization program (measles, typhoid, polio and yellow fever immunizations + Vitamin A supplements) to all of our students in Bodo. In March 2015, we expanded our mass deworming treatment program to the nearly 300 pupils at our school in Bori. In December 2015, we further expanded our deworming treatment program to the more than 500 pupils at St. Patrick’s Nursery and Primary School in Bodo. St. Patrick’s already has its own buildings, toilets, teachers, etc. and this is the first support we have extended to them. We had originally hoped to expand our deworming treatment program to the students at our school in Bane but the mothers strongly opposed this until we provided funds for the security fence shown above. I have not yet written my “if you want to deworm children, you might have to build a wall” blog yet, but you get the idea. We were able to extend deworming treatment to our school in Bane in March 2016 and we hope to continue it at all three of our schools (Bane, Bodo, Bori) + St. Patrick’s (Bodo) in the future.

In July 2015, during a trip to Nigeria to visit the schools, me, Kevin Michaels and Jesse Winter (a great supporter and very talented Canadian video journalist) were all able to witness the health program’s immunization efforts in Bodo. Aside from feeling bad for some of the little kids who were getting shots for the first time, it was an amazing sight to see. The entire program is run entirely by Nigerian doctors and nurses with help from some of our school teachers. Jesse Winter put together a wonderful 6:23 video of our health immunization work that day in Bodo.

If you have not already seen it, please take a few minutes to watch it. It is posted on the main home page of the school's <http://www.bebor.org> website.

As has been the case over the past few years, funding for our health project has largely been divided 50:50 between Bebor donors like yourselves and direct support from our long-term partners Timmy Global Health. My sincere thanks to Matt MacGregor, Mercy Obeime, Charla Cain, Anna Butterbaugh, Nancy Wright, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and everyone else at Timmy who made their support of our immunization and deworming treatment programs possible.

Finally, Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor, our school director in Bodo was struck by a personal tragedy in 2014 when his infant son Answer died a few hours after he was born because they could not get him to a functioning incubator fast enough. We sent \$1,300 of specifically dedicated funds sent by a few of our donors to help Reverend Moses and his wife Ledi with some of the funeral and medical expenses they incurred with the tragic loss of their child. No general Bebor funds were used for this.

From September 26, 2014 to October 26, 2015 (see previous annual reports for earlier figures), we contributed \$878.75 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. Aside from this, Timmy Global Health has also generously provided far more support to our pilot health project in Bodo than we have contributed to them as administrative fees and we remain extremely grateful for that crucial support which enabled us to embark initially on this exciting new direction and to sustain and grow it over the past few years. As noted on many previous occasions, 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 or having our website hosted and our local Nigerian partners at the Center for the Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD, <http://www.cehrd.org.ng>) also provide a number of free services and absorb a number of costs themselves. Anyone, myself 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 schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Speaking of trips, one of the great highlights for me of the period covered in this annual report was visiting all three of our schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori in July 2015 with Kevin Michaels and Jesse Winter. Kevin and Jesse now bring us up to nine people (not counting me and my wife Tijen) who have come to Nigeria to visit our schools. Travel to and from and within Nigeria has gotten much easier since I first started going there in 2000. The hotels, flights from the US, flights within Nigeria, cellphone connections, etc. have all gotten much better in recent years. Kevin and Jesse both had a blast and were super helpful in any number of ways to me and to the schools. I hope more of you will consider joining us in the future. Here is one of my favorite photos of the three of us in front of the nursery school building in Bodo:



During our trip in July 2015, Kevin and Jesse helped me do headcounts or school censuses at all three of our schools. A fuller summary is posted under the “Documents and Reports” section of the school’s <http://www.bebor.org> website but the short summary is this: during the days we visited, we counted 232 students in Bane, 201 students in Bodo and 295 students in Bori for a total of 728 students across all three schools. These figures are almost certainly underestimates as anyone absent that day for any reason was not counted. What made me happier than the overall numbers, though, was that we had 354 boys (48.63%) and 374 girls (51.37%). We are so proud that more than 50% of our students are girls!!

Another positive thing that came out of our trip was making some real tangible progress in helping one of our Bodo students, Bariala Tornuelbabari. Bariala, as many of you know, has trouble walking and is in a wheelchair. In Nigeria, rather than see her as suffering from a medical condition, many people believed that she was possessed by demons or crocodiles and that she was a “child witch.” We have worked assiduously over the years to break down the stigma surrounding Bariala and have largely succeeded in that. During our trip, Dr. Nabie arranged for a physical therapist to examine Bariala. As incredible as it might sound, for approximately \$217, we were able to fund 4 weeks of 3 times a week physical therapy for Bariala. We also purchased some crutches for her. Bariala has shown nice improvement and is now much more mobile on her crutches. Additionally, thanks to the suggestion of Nenibarini “Doc” Zabbey from CEHRD, we purchased an “okada” or small Chinese motorcycle taxi and hired one of Bariala’s relatives to drive it. Typically, in Nigeria, the okada driver pays the owner a set daily fee for use of the motorcycle and then keeps whatever is earned above that as his wage. In our case, we are charging the driver a lower rate and having him transport Bariala to and from school every day. The money he is paying will be set aside to purchase school supplies or food for Bariala. I never would have thought of doing this until Doc Zabbey suggested it. It’s another example of how we are fundamentally dependent on local knowledge and expertise. For about \$500, me and Tijen have now joined the okada-owning class and provided a long-term solution to Bariala’s transportation needs.

One other thing that came out of our 2015 trip to Nigeria was that Kevin and Jesse convinced me that I needed to create a Facebook page for Bebor. With help from Sarah Hollis at Timmy Global Health, I did this in July 2015. If you have not already done so, please like us at <http://www.facebook.com/BeborSchools>. Facebook is a nice venue for brief updates and it has

definitely reached some people that were not previously connected to this project. We also have all three of the videos Jesse Winter shot (one on Bariala, one on the school census taking and one on the immunization program in Bodo) posted there.

The quote at the beginning of this report comes from something called the Post-2015 Consensus project. This project started out of frustration that the UN had proposed 169 different goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expired in 2015. The Post-2015 Consensus folks were not against setting goals per se, but felt that having too many goals would make accountability for achieving them impossible and also risked spending significant amounts of foreign aid or charitable giving on some things that were not nearly as cost-effective as other things. Ultimately, the Post-2015 Consensus evaluated 169 proposed Sustainable Development Goals and identified 19 that it felt had the highest benefit to cost ratio and were therefore the goals that should be prioritized. Included among those 19 most effective interventions were: 1) “Triple Preschool in sub-Saharan Africa”; 2) “Achieve universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa”; 3) “Increase girls’ education by two years”; 4) “Increase immunizations to reduce child deaths by 25%,” and 5) “Lower chronic child malnutrition by 40%.” We have been doing our little bit to achieve goals 1-3 in that list ever since this project started way back in 2000. We have been working on and expanding our efforts to address goal 4 in that list since 2012. Dr. Nabie Nubari Francis (with a little bit of help from me) is in the final stages of developing a pilot program to address the 5th goal in that list during the 2016-17 academic year.

Looking to the future, we will maintain our existing achievements in terms of physical infrastructure including water and sanitation at all three of our schools and address any problems that might arise with any of our buildings or facilities. We are committed to refine, maintain and improve our pilot health project in Bodo and we plan to continue providing deworming treatment to all of the children at all three of our schools + St. Patrick’s Nursery and Primary School in Bodo. We also eventually hope to provide our basic immunization program to all of the students at all four of those schools. Funds permitting, we also hope to start a pilot nutrition program with 50 of the poorest and most health-challenged children at our school in Bodo. We have other more distant goals but continuing to expand our health program and trying to start a pilot nutrition program are our most immediate objectives in the next few years.

We will continue to move forward with this project as we always have by remaining humble, sincere, enthusiastic and accountable in our service to some of the poorest people in the rural Niger Delta. We remain indebted to our local partners in Nigeria whose dedication, creativity, talent and honesty while working on the ground in the villages underlies everything we do. It simply would not be possible to do the work we do without them. We especially thank our school directors, Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor (Bodo) and Leelee Wiwa Tanen (Bane and Bori), our health program coordinator, Dr. Nabie Nubari Francis, and the coordinator of CEHRD, Nenibarini “Doc” Zabbey. All four of them have done and continue to do incredible work on behalf of the more than 700 children at our schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori and they all make it possible for me to do the work I do and for you to support it. In that regard, we also remain indebted to you, our international donors, who remain loyal to this micro-scale development project that strives to bring the benefits of primary education and basic healthcare to hundreds of children at our three schools in Rivers State, Nigeria every year. As we always do, we will remain focused on using our limited funds wisely and generating tangible results that directly benefit the children at our schools.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me via smpegg@iupui.edu or (+1) 317-361-8329. As always, thank you so much for your past, present and hopefully continued support of the school project.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scott Pegg".

Scott Pegg,

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