

International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School

2017 Annual Report

August 15, 2018

“We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” – Mother Teresa

This is the fifteenth 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.

In terms of numbers, we sent \$13,500 in two separate rounds of funding to our schools in 2017. This is lower than the \$16,100 of funding we sent to our schools in 2016 and it is slightly lower than the \$14,550 of funding we sent the schools on average from 2010 – 2016. By the end of 2017, the International Friends Committee had provided BMN/PS with \$195,850 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 \$207,950.

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 provide them and how quickly (or not) they can document that the funds have been used properly. 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 do not. Please don’t be too worried that 2017 was down compared to 2016 and please don’t get too excited if 2018 is up compared to 2017. Such fluctuations are inevitable with a micro-scale project like this.

As I noted in last year’s annual report, our funding portfolio has shifted over time from providing infrastructure (classroom buildings, boreholes, toilets) that enables the children we serve to attend schools with decent facilities to investing more directly in the children themselves, principally through our health and nutrition programs. I noted in last year’s annual report that we had transited from 70% infrastructure funding in 2015 to 90% health and nutrition funding in 2016. I also noted that these numbers could change or shift in any given year. In 2017, our funding profile was approximately 51.85% health and nutrition funding and 48.15% infrastructure funding. A little over one-third of our infrastructure funding, though, was to construct and equip sickbays at our schools in Bane and Bori and at St. Patrick’s Nursery and Primary School in Bodo. If that is reclassified as health spending, then our figures would be 68.15% health and nutrition funding and 31.85% infrastructure funding. To be honest, I don’t think there is a necessarily ideal balance here and I certainly don’t think there is much point in trying to hit a specific percent of funding devoted to health, nutrition, infrastructure or anything else. We sometimes need to respond to events beyond our control and that might lead these figures to shift up or down in any given year. In general, though, as I noted last year, I think the broad pattern of less investment in physical infrastructure and more investment directly in the health and well-being of the children we serve is likely to be the longer-term trend for our work in the rural areas of Rivers State, Nigeria.

In discussing the funds we sent to the schools in 2017, let me break things down into three parts. First, we provided \$2,000 as the second half of funding to our health program which now covers the 600+ children at our three schools plus another almost 600 children at St. Patrick's Nursery and Primary School (a Catholic school in Bodo which already had its own facilities and infrastructure in place before we extended our health program to their students in 2015). Our health program currently features four main components: 1) public health education for the children, parents and teachers; 2) sickbays at three of our four schools (see below for more on that) which are stocked with some basic first aid materials and Nigeria-specific medications like anti-malarial medication and oral rehydration salts; 3) providing basic vaccines and immunizations including measles, polio, tetanus, typhoid, Vitamin A supplements and yellow fever for the older children (if you have not already seen it, a wonderful video of our health immunization work is posted on the main home page of the school's <http://www.bebor.org> website); 4) deworming treatment by providing the children twice a year with chewable 400 mg tablets of Albendazole which keeps them worm-free. In 2017, all four elements of our health program described above were carried out at all four schools we serve – our schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori and St. Patrick's Nursery and Primary School in Bodo.

Second, we provided \$5,000 of funding to continue a pilot nutrition program for 50 of the poorest students at our school in Bodo that was originally launched in the Spring 2017 academic semester. As noted last year, the pilot nutrition program features something called Ogi Soy Plus which was developed by a Nigerian nutritionist named Pastor Ben Inaku. Ogi Soy Plus is based on three main ingredients: crayfish, millet and soybeans (every 1 kilogram of Ogi Soy Plus comprises 0.5 kg of soybeans, 0.3 kg of crayfish and 0.2 kg of millet). All three of these ingredients are available locally and are widely used. In combination, they provide an incredible array of nutritional benefits. Given shipping costs and the problem of corruption at Nigerian ports of entry, we felt it was imperative to use only locally available ingredients. We also wanted foods that the parents and students would already be familiar with. In the Fall 2017 semester, Dr. Nabie Nubari Francis who coordinates our health program continued testing and measuring the children participating in the pilot nutrition program in several ways to generate before and after intervention data that will hopefully demonstrate the effectiveness of Ogi Soy Plus in addressing widespread malnutrition among the children we serve. We hope that the data generated will ultimately help us secure additional funding, so we can expand this effort to all the children in Bodo and then to the children at our schools in Bane and Bori and St. Patrick's as we have already done with the health program. The first photo below shows me and my 12-year-old son Kerem joining the students in Bodo for a nutrition program feeding in June 2018:



In this photo, the Ogi Soy Plus is in the bowls or containers. The bread that is served with it is just to help the children get all the Ogi Soy Plus (in this day, done in a porridge or oatmeal-like formulation that the Nigerians call “pap”). The second photo shows some of the kids with their empty bowls demonstrating that they really were hungry and did eat it:



Third, we provided \$6,500 in funding for three different infrastructure projects. \$2,200 was provided to construct and equip sickbays at our schools in Bane, Bori and St. Patrick's in Bodo (Bebor in Bodo already had a sickbay in place). \$1,000 was provided to construct and equip a computer room at our school in Bane. \$3,300 was provided to start construction on a security wall or perimeter around our school in Bori. The first and third projects noted above were somewhat forced upon us by the Government of Rivers State's increasingly strict and more tightly enforced licensing requirements which required sickbays and security perimeters at all licensed or approved schools. The security perimeter at our school in Bori has been started but not completed. The sickbays at our school in Bori and at St. Patrick's Nursery and Primary School are completed, equipped and functioning. Because our school in Bane did not have adequate space for either the sickbay or the computer room, they decided to start construction on a 2-room sickbay/computer room building. This building has, to date, only been partially completed. It should be done in time for the start of the 2018-19 school year.

From January 4, 2017 to December 31, 2017 (see previous annual reports for earlier figures), we contributed \$1,291.57 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 their programs starting in June 2010. Given the numerous 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 work in Nigeria than we have contributed to them as administrative fees and we remain extremely grateful for that support and proud to work with them. 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 several free services and absorb many costs themselves. Anyone who travels to Nigeria to visit the schools, will continue to pay all their own costs out of pocket with no support coming from donated funds (as one example, no donated funds were used to cover the costs of me or my son Kerem travelling to Nigeria in 2018).

If you have not already done so, please like Bebor's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/BeborSchools>. Facebook is a good venue for brief updates and it has reached some people that were not previously connected to this project. A lot of stuff gets shared there before it makes it onto the school's website or into one of these annual reports.

Looking to the future, we will maintain our existing physical infrastructure including classroom buildings, water and sanitation at all three of our schools and address any problems that might arise with any of our buildings or facilities. We plan to continue our health programming at all three of our schools + St. Patrick's Nursery and Primary School in Bodo. As funding permits, we hope to expand our pilot nutrition program to serve more children than just the 50 we have started with at our school in Bodo. Other opportunities or challenges might arise but continuing to sustain our health program and trying to expand our nutrition program are our most immediate objectives for the next few years.

The Mother Teresa quote at the beginning of this annual report sums up our work in the rural Niger Delta very well. We always have been and likely will remain a micro-scale initiative. We are never going to fix or transform Rivers State, let alone Nigeria or sub-Saharan Africa or the world. We're not even trying. We're also not interested in comparing how much money we have spent vs. how much money some other organization has spent and seeing whose stack goes higher. But, we can do small things and we always strive to do them with great love. In 2017, we provided safer drinking water and improved sanitation for the 600+ kids at our three schools and we ensured that more than 1,200 kids were free from debilitating worm infections. We also helped one beautiful girl named Bariala (see photo below) that people used to shun because they thought she was a child witch because she couldn't walk properly continue to grow and develop worm-free and with better nutrition. Most gratifyingly, she has now become accepted as one of the kids at our schools, just like any other kid. Those are all small things, but they can be transformative in the lives of the children we serve in Rivers State, Nigeria. Please know that the small things you have generously supported over the years do have great impact.



We will continue to move forward with this project as we always have by remaining humble, sincere and accountable in our service to some of the poorest people in the rural Niger Delta. It remains a great honor to work with and on behalf of them. We remain indebted to our local partners in Nigeria whose dedication, creativity, talent and honesty provides the foundation for everything we do. It simply would not be possible to do this work 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, the coordinator of CEHRD, Nenibarini “Doc” Zabbey, Patrick Naagbantou and our Ogi Soy Plus partner Pastor Ben Inaku. They have all done and continue to do incredible work on behalf of the more than 1,200 children we serve. We also remain profoundly grateful to Dr. Chuck Dietzen, Kristina Graff and all our domestic partners at Timmy Global Health.

We also remain indebted to you, our international donors, who have so many worthwhile charitable or philanthropic options to choose from and yet support this micro-scale development project that strives to bring the benefits of primary education and basic healthcare and nutrition to hundreds of children every year in Rivers State, Nigeria. We will always try to do small things with great love and remain focused on using our limited funds wisely and generating tangible results that directly benefit the children at our schools and demonstrate to you that your donations are having positive impacts.

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 future support of this 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