

International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary Schools

2021 Annual Report

June 22, 2022

“There is good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for. So, what if you can’t work 37 miracles in whatever time is accorded you? There’s so much you *can* do humbly, persistently.... It’s a tall order, I’ll grant you. But humble persistence might just win the day.” – Dr. Paul Farmer, *To Repair the World*, p. 98.

Dedicated with love and admiration to Dr. Paul Farmer (10/26/59 – 2/21/22), a giant in the field of global public health, a faithful friend to the destitute sick, and a humble and persistent inspiration.

This is the nineteenth 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 <https://www.bebor.org/> website.

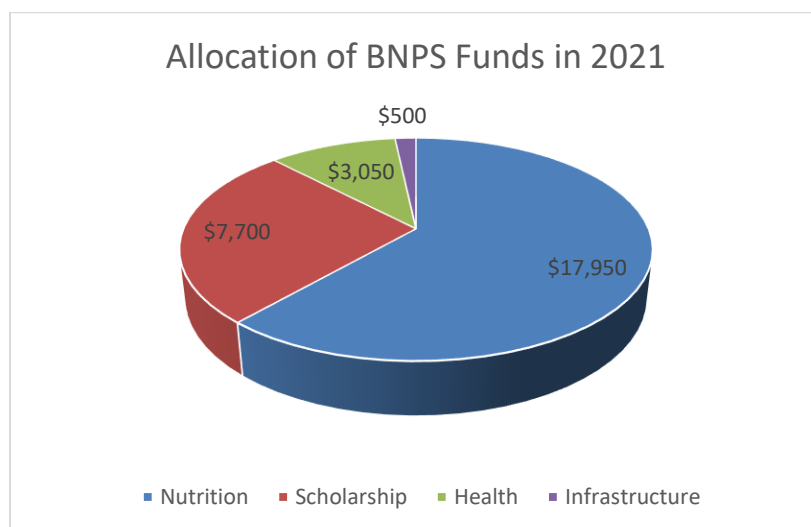
Fortunately, 2021 was not quite as defined for us by the COVID-19 pandemic as 2020 was. Schools remained open in Rivers State, Nigeria throughout 2021 and the biggest impact we faced from COVID was the continued increase in food insecurity and child malnutrition brought on by the pandemic and escalating food price inflation in Nigeria. Thanks to your incredible support we were able to provide record levels of support in 2021 and enter 2022 in reasonably decent shape. Thank you so much.

In terms of numbers, we sent \$29,200 in four separate rounds of funding to the six schools we support in 2021. This eclipses our previous annual record of \$25,750 of funding sent in 2020. It is also significantly higher than the \$14,721 average of annual funding we sent the schools from 2010 – 2019. By the end of 2021, the International Friends Committee and [Timmy Global Health](#) had provided BMN/PS with \$282,655 worth of funding. Including just the water-related contributions of our partners at Safe Child Africa who funded boreholes for drinking water at our schools in Bane and Bodo brings this figure to \$294,755.

As noted many times before, our funding numbers fluctuate every year. As has always been the case with this project, we are not obsessed with dollars of output. Please do not get too excited that we had a wonderful year in 2021. Fluctuations in funding levels are inevitable with a micro-scale project like this, and they are not necessarily a great measure of its overall health or success. That said, the decision to expand our nutrition program from one school to three schools in 2020, food price inflation in Nigeria, and increases in the amount of scholarship funding provided have generally increased our costs from the \$14,721 of average annual funding we sent in the 2010s to the \$27,475 of annual funding we have so far averaged in the 2020s.

As I also noted in our last five annual reports, 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, nutrition and scholarship programs. We transited

from 70% infrastructure funding in 2015 to 90% health and nutrition funding in 2016. In 2020, our funding profile was approximately 68.15% for our expanded nutrition program, 20.19% for our health program and 11.65% for scholarship funding. As the chart below shows, in 2021, our funding profile was approximately 61.47% for our nutrition program, 26.37% for scholarship funding (an increase discussed below), 10.45% for our health program and 1.71% for infrastructure (\$500 for a new generator for our school in Bane).



We do not try to hit a specific percent of funding devoted to health, nutrition, infrastructure, scholarships or anything else. These figures have shifted over time, and they will continue to shift as we respond to specific needs at our schools or requests from them. In general, though, 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 will continue to be a longer-term trend for our work in Rivers State, Nigeria. The one major potential exception to this will be if we can help Our Lady's Nursery and Primary School in K-Dere get into better facilities. Their existing infrastructure is painfully inadequate, but they first need to secure land in K-Dere where improved facilities could be built. There is no point at present in investing to improve rented facilities on land the school does not own.

In reporting on the funds we provided to the schools in 2021, let me break it down into four main categories. First, we provided \$3,050 in funding to our health program. This is down from \$5,200 in 2020 largely because we did not have to spend any money constructing any new sickbays at any of our schools. We currently have five functioning and equipped sickbays with the only school not having one being Our Lady's Nursery and Primary School in K-Dere for the reasons noted above. \$900 of the funding we sent was to re-supply our five sickbays with medications, basic first aid materials and Nigeria-specific supplies like anti-malarial medication and oral rehydration salts throughout the academic year. \$2,150 was to support the non-sickbay components of our health program. Our health program now covers all six schools that we support and the more than 1,450 pupils at those schools. In addition to the stocked and equipped sickbays at five of the six schools we support, our health program currently features three other main components: 1) public health education for the children, parents and teachers; 2) providing

basic vaccines and immunizations including measles, polio, tetanus, typhoid, Vitamin A supplements and yellow fever for the older children; and 3) deworming treatment by providing the children twice a year with chewable 400 mg tablets of Albendazole which keep them worm-free throughout the year. As has been the case in previous years, in 2021, every element of our health program was carried out by local Nigerian doctors, nurses, teachers and volunteers.

Second, we provided \$17,950 of funding for our nutrition program which, since May 2020, has operated at our schools in Biara, Bodo and K-Dere. We sent funds for the nutrition program at these three schools in February and September 2021. Collectively, these funds ensured the continued operation of our nutrition program from March 1, 2021, to February 28, 2022. A subsequent funding round in February 2022 that will be covered in next year's annual report has the program currently funded through August 31, 2022.

Our nutrition program is premised on the late Dr. Paul Farmer's observation that our students deserve "the only known treatment for hunger: something called food." As noted previously, the heavy lifting in our nutrition program is done by Ogi Soy Plus which was developed by a local Nigerian food scientist. 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. We have funding on hand to maintain our nutrition program at the three schools it currently serves throughout 2022. My great fear now is rapidly rising food price inflation in Nigeria which promises to make maintaining our nutrition program a greater challenge in the coming years than it has been in previous years. In an ideal world, we would love to expand the nutrition program to additional schools as or when funding allows. In this world, I will be happy if we don't have to reduce it at some point.

Third, we provided \$7,700 in scholarship funding including the launch of one incredibly important new initiative in April 2021. We provided \$5,700 in general scholarship funding to all six of our schools we support. This is an increase on the \$3,000 of scholarship funding we provided in 2020, largely because our schools were open for the entire year and not shut for more than half of it as they were in response to COVID-19 from March – November 2020. The \$3,000 of scholarship funding we sent in April 2021 was trimmed slightly to \$2,700 in October 2021 in anticipation of higher food costs for our nutrition program. The \$5,700 of general scholarship funding we provided was divided into the following increments: \$1,250 for our original school in Bodo, \$1,000 each for our schools in Bane and Bori and for St. Patrick's in Bodo and \$725 each for St. Bernard's in Biara and Our Lady's in K-Dere. As we have done in the past, we allow our school directors to provide smaller scholarships (say, tuition fees or partial tuition fees only) to a larger number of students or to provide more generous scholarships (including, say, school uniforms, books and supplies) to a smaller number of students based on local needs. We plan to provide broadly similar levels of general scholarship funding throughout 2022.

Our most exciting new initiative of 2021 by far was the launch of the Priscilla Lezor Memorial Scholarship (PLMS) fund for students with disabilities at our original school in Bodo. This initiative is unprecedented throughout Rivers State where students with disabilities often face far greater levels of stigma and prejudice than they do in more developed countries. The PLMS initiative was the brainchild or vision of two of our longest-term supporters, Bjarne and Alessandra Tellmann. It was generously endowed by initial contributions from the Tellmanns, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and a GlaxoSmithKline corporate matching gift and has since received

additional donations from others. As part of the agreement establishing the PLMS endowment, for the first time ever we have been able to pledge at least \$2,000 of annual PLMS funding for a five-year period. This is the first time that we have ever had a separately endowed fund just for one specific purpose. We sent our inaugural \$1,000 of PLMS funding in April 2021 and our second \$1,000 of PLMS funding in October 2021. The students with disabilities who benefit from this funding include children with mobility challenges, children who are amputees, and children who have other cognitive or physical challenges. This is a revolutionary initiative for the rural Niger Delta, and I am optimistic that it will truly have a profound long-term impact in combatting the stigma these children face and helping them realize the true potential of their incredible abilities.

Finally, we sent \$500 in funding to our school in Bane to purchase a new generator to help them run their computer center.

In 2021 (see previous annual reports for earlier figures), we contributed \$3,407.94 to our partners at [Timmy Global Health](#) as part of the 7% administrative fee they instituted in June 2010. This figure is significantly higher than last year's \$2,115.38 largely because of the various donations establishing the PLMS endowment for students with disabilities discussed above. In the absence of such a major new initiative in 2022 (please feel free to prove me wrong on this), I suspect our figure next year will be closer to the 2020 figure than it will be to the 2021 figure. Timmy Global Health has generously provided far more support to our work in Nigeria than we have contributed to them as administrative fees and we remain grateful for that support. 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 costs like postage to mail thank you letters or having our website hosted and our local Nigerian partners at CEHRD also provide several free services and absorb many costs themselves. Anyone who travels to Nigeria to visit the schools, myself included, will continue to pay all their own costs out of pocket with no support coming from donated funds.

Looking to the future, as we have always done, we will maintain our existing physical infrastructure including classroom buildings, water, and sanitation at our schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori and address any problems that might arise with any of the buildings or facilities at any of the six schools we support. At some point in the future, we would very much like to improve the physical infrastructure at Our Lady's Nursery and Primary School in K-Dere which currently lags far behind the other five schools we serve. We plan to continue our health programming at all six schools (Bane, Bodo, Bori, St. Patrick's, Our Lady's, and St. Bernard's) and to maintain our nutrition program at the three schools it currently serves and expand it to additional schools if we can. Other opportunities or challenges might arise but continuing to sustain the physical infrastructure at our schools and our existing health, nutrition, and scholarship programs remain our most immediate short-term objectives.

We extend our gratitude to Dr. Nabie Nubari Francis, our health and nutrition program coordinator, Dr. Nenibarini Zabbey, the coordinator of CEHRD, and all our other Nigerian partners including Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor, Leelee Wiwa Tanen, Dr. Owens Wiwa, Father Anthony Bakel, Father Denis Asomugha and Father Dennis Sibeate. In addition to our Nigerian partners, we remain profoundly grateful to Dr. Chuck Dietzen, Melissa Dulaney, Emely Sanchez Baez and all our partners at Timmy Global Health. We also remain tremendously indebted to you, our donors, who continue to support this micro-scale development project that

strives to bring the benefits of primary education and basic healthcare and nutrition to more than 1,400 children every year in the rural Niger Delta. In challenging times, your support has remained rock solid. I am humbled by your support and your continued vote of confidence in our work in Rivers State, Nigeria. We always remain focused on using our limited funds wisely and generating tangible results that directly benefit the students we serve and demonstrate to you that your donations are having significant positive impacts. We simply could not do anything described in this annual report without your support.

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

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Pegg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" being more prominent than the last name "Pegg".

Scott Pegg,

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