

International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary Schools

2022 Annual Report

May 24, 2023

“Free school meals can nourish minds as well as bodies, in three ways. First, in countries where many children are hungry, they create a huge incentive to show up to school. Research from Burkina Faso and Kenya, among other places, shows that providing meals increases attendance where it is low. Second, adequate food is essential for brain development. This includes essential micronutrients, which can be added to school meals. Third, children who have been fed find it easier to concentrate, so they learn more when they show up. Emerging evidence finds that school meals can indeed have this effect.” – *The Economist*, “Food for Thought,” September 3, 2022.

“Since October 2019, Nigeria’s inflation has been persistently high.... In 2021, at an average of 17 percent, inflation was above that of the previous four years and among the highest rates in the world.... inflation was mainly driven by higher food prices, especially for staples such as bread and cereals, potatoes, yams, and other tubers, meat, fish, fruits, and oils and fats.... [In 2022], the large shocks from the war in Ukraine and flooding in farmlands of rice and corn, added to energy and food inflation.... Inflation is not expected to decelerate in the near term, with the devastating floods in many food-producing regions putting further pressure on prices in the first half of 2023” – from The World Bank, *Nigeria’s Choice: Nigeria Development Update December 2022*, p. 5.

Dedicated with love and gratitude to three great supporters of Bebor that we lost in 2022: Paul Beckett (9/19/38 – 6/25/22), Gerry Gelley (1/4/32 – 8/22/22), and Sharon Pegg (4/22/38 – 11/4/22).

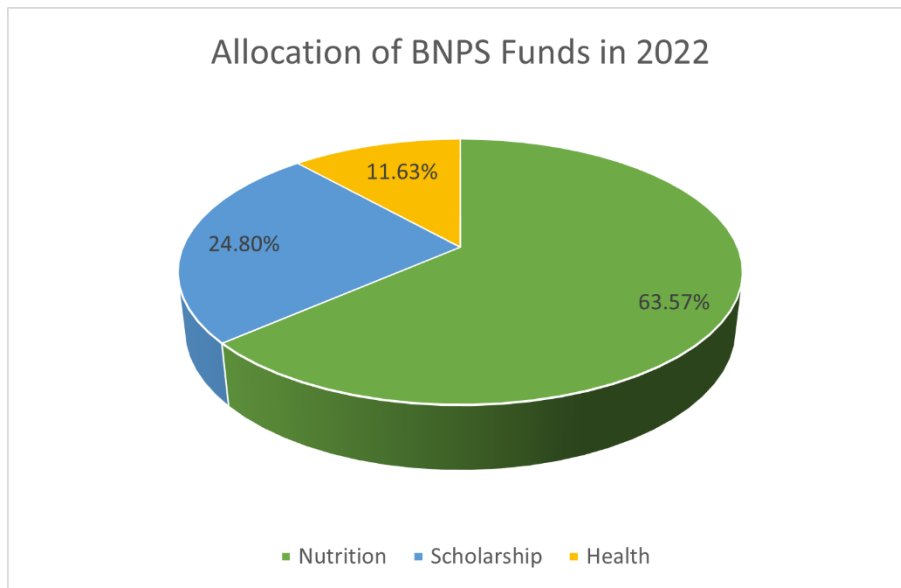
This is the twentieth in a series of annual or bi-annual reports delivered by the International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary School (BMN/PS). Previous annual reports are posted online at <https://www.bebor.org/information/documents-and-reports/>.

In terms of numbers, we sent \$29,835 in four separate rounds of funding to the six schools we support in 2022. This slightly eclipses our previous annual record of \$29,200 of funding sent in 2021. It is also significantly higher than the \$14,721 average of annual funding we sent the schools from 2010 – 2019. By the end of 2022, the International Friends Committee and [Timmy Global Health](#) had provided BMN/PS with \$312,490 worth of funding. Including just the water-related contributions of our partners at Safe Child Africa who funded boreholes for cleaner drinking water at our schools in Bane and Bodo brings this figure to \$324,590.

As previously noted, our funding numbers fluctuate every year. As has always been the case with this project, we are obsessed with results and not with dollars of output. Fluctuations in funding levels are inevitable with a micro-scale project like this, and they are not necessarily the best measure of its overall health or success. That said, the decision to expand our nutrition program from one school to three schools in 2020 to try to capture some of the benefits suggested in *The Economist* quote above and to offset the negative effects of food price inflation on our students’ nutritional needs, plus 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 \$28,262 of annual funding we have so far averaged in the 2020s. Given persistent food price inflation in Nigeria, we will almost certainly either set a new record for funding delivered in 2023 or have been forced to reduce our assistance because we didn't have enough funds to do so.

As I have noted before, 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. In 2021, our funding profile was approximately 61.47% for our nutrition program, 26.37% for scholarship funding, 10.45% for our health program and 1.71% for infrastructure. As the chart below shows, in 2022, our funding profile was approximately 63.57% for our nutrition program, 24.80% for our scholarship program and 11.63% for our health program. We did not provide any infrastructure funding in 2022 but do anticipate providing some in 2023.



We do not try to hit a specific percentage of funding devoted to health, nutrition, infrastructure, scholarships or anything else. Yet, 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.

Let me break the funding we provided in 2022 down into three main categories. First, we provided \$3,470 in funding to our health program, slightly up from \$3,050 in 2021. 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 because they are not yet in their own permanent facilities. \$1,205 of the health program 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. \$2,265 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 always been the case, in 2022, every element of our health program was provided by local Nigerian doctors, nurses, teachers and volunteers.

Second, we provided \$18,965 dollars of funding for our nutrition program which currently operates at three schools in Biara (St. Bernard's), Bodo (Bebor) and K-Dere (Our Lady's). Mainly due to food price inflation, this is up from the \$17,950 of funding we provided for our nutrition program in 2021. We will certainly again face additional higher food price costs in 2023. Collectively, the funds we sent in 2022 ensured the continued operation of our nutrition program from March 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023. A subsequent funding round in February 2023 that will be covered in next year's annual report has the program currently funded through August 31, 2023. As noted in last year's annual report, and for the reasons highlighted in *The Economist* quote above, in an ideal world, we would love to expand the nutrition program to additional schools as or when funding allows. In this world, in the context of the severe food price inflation noted in the World Bank quote above, I will be happy if we don't have to reduce it at some point.

Third, we provided \$7,400 in scholarship funding in 2022, down marginally from the \$7,700 we provided in 2021. We provided \$5,400 in general scholarship funding to all six of the schools we support in 2022, down marginally from the \$5,700 in general scholarship funding we provided in 2021. The \$5,400 of general scholarship funding we provided was divided into the following increments: \$1,000 each for our original schools in Bane, Bodo and Bori, as well as for St. Patrick's in Bodo and \$700 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 2023.

We also provided \$2,000 in scholarship funding for the Priscilla Lezor Memorial Scholarship (PLMS) fund for students with disabilities at our original school in Bodo. We launched this initiative in 2021 and it remains 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, including most recently, the Timmy Juniors club at the International School of Indiana. 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 our only separately endowed fund just for one specific purpose. We sent our inaugural \$1,000 of PLMS funding in April 2021. In 2022, we provided two additional \$1,000 funding rounds for this initiative in February and September. The students with disabilities who benefit from this funding include children with

mobility challenges, children who are amputees, and children who have other serious cognitive or physical challenges. This is a revolutionary initiative for the rural Niger Delta, and its ripple effects are only now just beginning to be felt. As one example, our PLMS scholarship students marched at the head of Bebor's delegation to a parade celebrating Nigeria's Independence Day on October 1, 2022. Several dignitaries and local politicians in attendance apparently asked why they had never previously seen students with disabilities participating in such a parade before. I remain profoundly optimistic that this initiative will lead to a positive long-term impact in combatting the stigma these children face and helping them to realize the true potential of their incredible abilities.

In 2022, we contributed \$2,187.47 to our partners at [Timmy Global Health](#) as part of the 7% administrative fee they instituted in June 2010. 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 before, 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. Our local Nigerian partners at the Center for the Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) also provide several free services and absorb many costs themselves. Anyone who travels to Nigeria to visit the schools, me included, will continue to pay all their own costs out of pocket with no support from donated funds.

Looking to the future, as we have always done, we will maintain our existing physical infrastructure including classroom buildings, water boreholes, 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 because they are in rented facilities. 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 hope to at least maintain our nutrition program at the three schools it currently serves. Other challenges and opportunities arise from time to time but continuing to sustain the physical infrastructure at our schools and maintain 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, CEHRD's coordinator, and all our other Nigerian partners including Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor, Leelee Wiwa Tanen, Dr. Owens Wiwa, Father John Poroma, 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 solid. We remain incredibly grateful for your continued vote of confidence in the work that we do for the communities that we serve in Rivers State, Nigeria. 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" and the last name "Pegg" clearly distinguishable.

Scott Pegg,

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