

## International Friends Committee of Bebor Model Nursery/Primary Schools

### 2024 Annual Report

June 21, 2025

Fuel subsidies consume “2.3% of GDP, four times the health budget.... Other petrostates try to turn fossil-fuel revenues into human capital. Nigeria, not so much. Annual public spending per head on education is a derisory \$6; on health it is \$4.... Primary school enrollment is only 65%. In Sierra Leone, which is much poorer, it is 97%. The World Bank estimates that Nigerian children achieve barely a third of their potential. If they received proper health care and education, they would be 2.8 times more productive as adults.” – *The Economist*, “Fuel in Nigeria: No Petrol, No Peace,” 14 September 2024.

“People who travel to emerging markets like India or Nigeria often see only the problem of a billion hungry mouths. What they miss are the billion minds, and the potential of those minds.” – Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys.

This is the twenty-second 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/>.

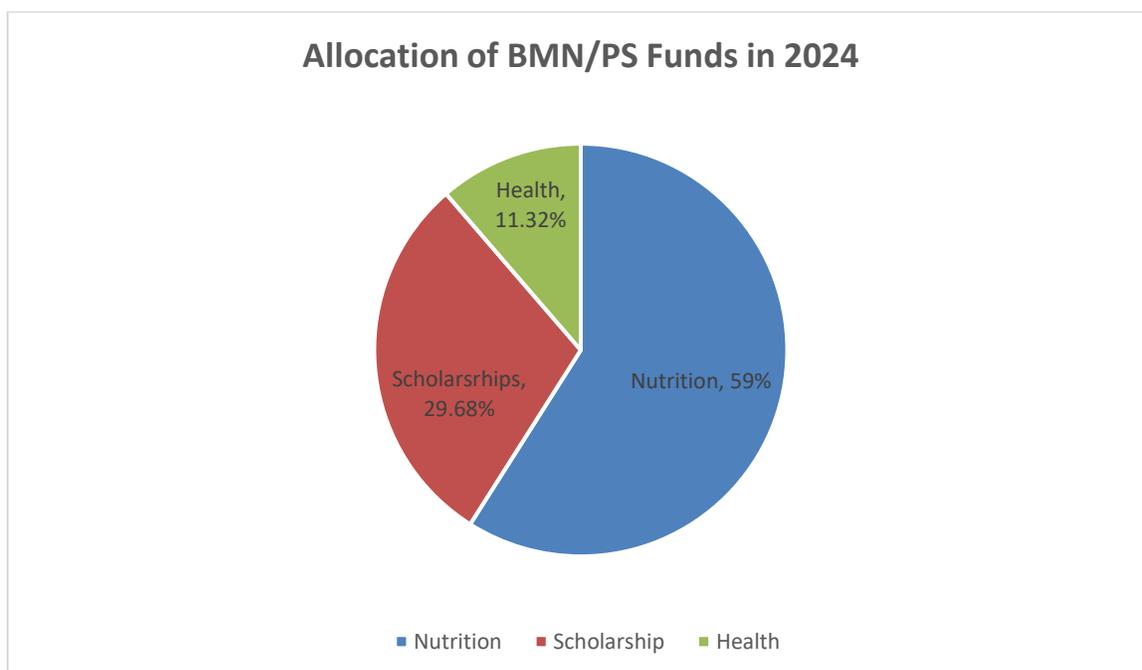
Starting with numbers, we sent \$26,950 in three separate rounds of funding to the six schools we support in 2024, down from the record \$34,465 we sent them in 2023. By the end of 2024, the International Friends Committee and [Timmy Global Health](#) had provided BMN/PS with \$373,905 worth of funding. 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 \$386,005.

As frequently noted, our funding numbers fluctuate every year. Fluctuations in funding levels are inevitable with a micro-scale project like this, and they are not necessarily the best measure of this project’s overall health or success. That said, the decision to expand our nutrition program from one school to three schools in 2020 to combat widespread malnutrition in the communities we serve, 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 \$29,240 of annual funding we have so far averaged in the 2020s. Our costs in 2023 were significantly aggravated by persistently high food price inflation in Nigeria, which was a major explanation for the record \$34,465 of funding we sent that year. In 2024, particularly in the first half of the year, we benefitted from reduced costs for our nutrition program as the collapse in the US\$ value of the Nigerian naira exceeded Nigerian food price inflation, thus reducing our nutrition program costs in US dollars. As noted in a [separate report](#), the costs of our nutrition program fluctuate regularly depending on whether food price inflation (which raises our costs) outpaces currency depreciation (which lowers our costs) or vice versa. In 2024, our US\$ nutrition program costs were down, and we did not fund any specific infrastructure projects. Those two factors were approximately equal contributions (ca. \$4,000 each) to lowering our funding needs in 2024 as compared to 2023. Our costs will continue to fluctuate for different reasons and the amount of funding we send to the schools we support going up or down from one

year to the next usually reflects those dynamics and not our project either doing dramatically better or worse than it did the previous year.

I noted last year that Bebor received general international program funding support from our partners at [Timmy Global Health](#) for the first time in 2023. Timmy had previously supported Bebor on several occasions, often quite generously, but that support was provided on a one-off or case-by-case basis. In 2023, Timmy's board of directors (which I have chaired since May 2022) voted to allow Bebor and Mercy Missions (the other program it supports in Nigeria) to become eligible for general program support. In 2024, Bebor received \$9,500 from Timmy Global Health which was used to help fund our nutrition program expenses. Timmy's funding can obviously go up or down along with its relative level of success in fundraising, but their support has made an enormous positive difference in our ability to sustain programming at all six schools we support. Thank you, Timmy!! We appreciate it. Two other huge contributions to the funding we raised in 2024 came from several very generous stock donations (a fantastic way to avoid capital gains taxes) and a growing number of donors securing corporate matching gifts to double or triple their contributions. Thank you to everyone who made wonderful use of such options.

As I have noted before, our funding portfolio has shifted over time from providing infrastructure (classroom buildings, boreholes, toilets) that enables our students to attend schools with good facilities to more direct investments in the children themselves, through our health, nutrition, and scholarship programs. As the chart below shows, in 2024, our funding profile was approximately 59% for our nutrition program, 29.68% for our scholarship programs and 11.32% for our health program. We never try to hit a specific percentage of funding devoted to health, nutrition, infrastructure, scholarships, or anything else. Yet, 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.



Let me break the funding we provided in 2024 down into three main categories. First, we provided \$3,050 in funding to our health program, up slightly from \$2,850 in 2023. 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 do not yet have their own permanent facilities. \$2,050 of the health program funding we sent was to re-supply our five sickbays with medications, basic first aid materials and West African-specific supplies like anti-malarial medication and oral rehydration salts throughout the academic year. \$1,000 was to support the non-sickbay components of our health program. This part of our health program now covers all six schools that we support and the more than 1,400 pupils at those schools. The non-sickbay part of 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, yellow fever and Vitamin A supplements; 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 2024, local Nigerian doctors, nurses, teachers and volunteers delivered every element of our health program.



Deworming treatment at St. Bernard's Nursery and Primary School in Biara.

Second, we provided \$15,900 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). Due to currency devaluation early in 2024, this was down from the \$19,715 of funding we provided for our nutrition program in 2023. Persistent food price inflation in Nigeria leads me to fear that this \$15,900 figure will be significantly exceeded next year. The funds we sent in 2024 ensured the continued operation of our nutrition program from March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. A subsequent funding round in February 2025 that will be addressed in next year's annual report has the program currently funded through August 31, 2025.



Two students being silly for the camera during a nutrition program feeding at our original school in Bodo.

Third, we provided \$8,000 in scholarship funding in 2024, up slightly from the \$7,850 we provided in 2023. We provided \$6,000 in general scholarship funding to all six of the schools we support in 2024, up slightly from the \$5,850 in general scholarship funding we provided in 2023. This difference reflects 2024 being the first full year where all six of our schools received the same amount of scholarship funding (\$500 per school, twice a year). 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. In 2025, we plan to increase general scholarship funding to \$600 per school twice a year, which would bring our general scholarship funding up to \$7,200 for that year.

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. This initiative, the vision of two of our longest-term supporters, Bjarne and Alessandra Tellmann, launched 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. As part of the agreement establishing the PLMS endowment, we pledged at least \$2,000 of annual PLMS scholarship funding for a five-year period. Thanks to the continued generous support of the Timmy Juniors club at the International School of Indiana, the Tellmanns, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and other donors, we will be able to extend this funding well beyond its original five-year mandate. We sent our inaugural \$1,000 of PLMS funding in April 2021. In 2024, we provided two additional \$1,000 funding rounds for this initiative in February and September. We plan to increase this to \$1,200 twice a year in 2025. The students with disabilities who benefit from this funding include children with mobility challenges, children who are amputees or missing limbs, and children who have other serious cognitive or physical challenges. This is a revolutionary initiative for the rural Niger Delta. I remain profoundly optimistic that it will have a positive long-term impact in combatting the stigma these children face and in helping them to realize the true potential of their abilities.

In 2024, we contributed \$3,260.96 to our partners at [Timmy Global Health](#) as part of the 7% administrative fee they instituted in June 2010 for dedicated donations to specific projects like Bebor. As noted previously, even before the general program support provided to us throughout 2024, Timmy had generously provided far more support to our work in Nigeria than we have contributed to them as administrative fees. As has always been the case, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that the other 93% of your donations go directly to our schools in Nigeria (in contrast, during its 2024 fiscal year, USAID provided approximately 12% of its funding directly to its local partners). I personally absorb costs like hosting our website or buying postage to mail thank you letters. Our local Nigerian partners at the Center for the Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) also provide 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.

The two quotes at the beginning of this annual report highlight both the urgent necessity of the work we do in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the incredible promise of it. *The Economist* emphasizes how derisory the Nigerian government's support for health and education is and how unacceptably low Nigeria's primary school enrollment rate is. It observes that a World Bank study found that if Nigerian children "received proper health care and education, they would be 2.8 times more productive as adults." Obviously, a micro-scale initiative like this cannot address a huge country's macro-scale problems (by population, Nigeria is currently the sixth largest country in the world) but we are doing everything we can to ensure that the more than 1,400 children we support across six different schools in Rivers State every year have the benefits of a quality primary education, basic health care, access to safer drinking water and sanitation, and improved nutrition in the hopes that they will have a dramatically better chance at becoming one of the more productive and prosperous adults the World Bank highlights. In terms of Nandan Nilekani's quote, we can only address a tiny fraction of the "hungry mouths" he describes, and we are doing so because we share his infectious optimism about "the potential of those minds."

Looking to the future, as always, we will maintain our existing physical infrastructure including classroom buildings, water boreholes and toilets and address any problems that might arise with any of the buildings or facilities at any of the six schools we support. As or when they can secure land for a permanent home, we hope to transform 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 maintain our nutrition program at the three schools (Bodo, Our Lady's, and St. Bernard's) it currently serves. Nigeria is constantly full of surprises, and we will always try our best to address whatever other challenges or opportunities arise from time to time in a thoughtful, careful, and deliberative manner.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to Dr. Nabie Nubari Francis, CEHRD's coordinator and our health and nutrition program coordinator. We thank all our other Nigerian partners including Father Denis Asomugha, Reverend Moses Nyimale Lezor, Father John Poroma, Father Dennis Sibeate, Leelee Wiwa Tanen, Dr. Owens Wiwa, and Dr. Nenibarini Zabbey. In addition to our Nigerian partners, we remain profoundly grateful to Dr. Chuck Dietzen, Dr. Mercy Obeime, Melissa Dulaney, Emely Sanchez Baez, Timmy board members and all our partners at Timmy Global Health. We're very proud to have such great partners in Kevin Michaels and all our other friends at [AeroDynamic Advisory](#). We 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, nutrition, and basic healthcare to more than 1,400 children every year in the rural Niger Delta. We remain incredibly grateful for your continued vote of confidence in the work that we do on behalf of the communities we serve in Rivers State, Nigeria. Thank you! We simply could not have done anything described in this annual report without your support.

If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me via [smpogg@iu.edu](mailto:smpogg@iu.edu) or (+1) 317-361-8329. Once again, thank you so much for your past, present, and hopefully continued future support of this project. It is greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

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

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