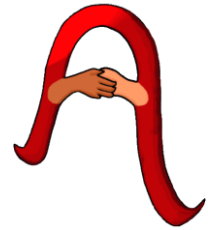


## NEWSLETTER – SPECIAL 01/2016



Dear friends and supporters,

In this edition of our Adesuwa newsletter you will find something very special: an intimate report from our member Barbara who was just in Nigeria two weeks ago to carry out this year's project days:

### **Coker Village: Report on my visit to Nigeria**

So many impressions and experiences!

The adventure began with the drive to Coker Village.

The noise! The crowds of people walking alongside and even on the streets - people selling everything from garden shovels to couches and SIM cards in their small street stands and shops.

The honking, when the cars were stopped (which was often) – or when the little golf cart-like taxis wanted to pass (which was often).

The main roads were mostly made of asphalt. But in some places there were holes so big that a jeep would have been advantageous. Here all the “normal” cars had to slam on the brakes and drive v-e-e-ry slowly down and out of the holes.

Naturally this was the place where hundreds of street vendors hawked their wares – cold drinks, Nigerian hotdogs, chewing gum, etc. When the traffic is stopped, what better place to do business?

Just when I thought, the streets could not get any worse – we entered a deep ditch with foot-high water. No problem for our driver – just drive through it!

Then we were in Coker Village where the enthusiastic welcome made me forget all the strain of the trip.

I was immediately surrounded – cautiously at first - by a 100 curious children. When I started to shake everybody's hand and rub their hair, they lost their shyness – everybody wanted to touch the Ojeba (white person). I must have shaken a thousand hands (some cheeky kids came again and again...)

I took several photos and the kids were overjoyed to see their pictures with me.

Then we went into the classroom.

Not to be confused with an American classroom. Old, partly torn but important, posters serving as decoration and illustrative material. Posters about cholera, the body, a map of the world. Concrete floors, wooden walls, wooden benches and desks, where sometimes 4 children sat. A blackboard and chalk.

The teachers give their best – they had drawn chalk illustrations on the boards to make the lessons more lively and clear. They help Adesuwa with reports about our kids. They enjoy an enormous respect – from the parents and the children (partly due to slaps on the head...) This could be a “lesson” for other countries (except for the slaps.)

A pity that the teachers were striking on that day because they hadn't been paid in months (see the following report on the economy). Nevertheless, they will resume teaching next week.

#### *Water Guard Project*

After I introduced myself, our “angels” Esther and Grace started the Water Guard training.

“What do we need water for?”

The answers came quickly: “Cleaning, washing, drinking” and many more.

“Clap for yourselves!” For almost every correct answer the kids clapped – it was pretty loud in the room sometimes!

“Is tap water clean?” “Yes!” shouted the children.  
 “Is river water clean?” “No!” came the answer.  
 “What happens when we drink impure water?” “Cholera, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach aches, HIV” (Grace had to explain - not HIV!)  
 It went on. “Do you want to be sick?” No! “Do you want to use Water Guard?” Yes!  
 And in special or important moments: “God bless you!” The children’s answer: “Amen!”  
 Esther and Grace explained how to use Water Guard very interactively:  
 “What happens when I put more than one Water Guard tablet in the bucket?” “Poison!”  
 “What?” POISON“  
 “How many tablets do you need for one bucket?” “One!” “How many?” “ONE!”  
 And so it continued until it was my turn to test the children with questions of my own.  
 Fortunately all the children could answer my questions about how to use Water Guard and so they each received their ration of Water Guard tablets and their bucket.  
 As each child got his bucket, he or she made a curtsy and said “Thanks, Ma.” All together in the courtyard, they called out “Thanks, Adesuwa!”  
 A very fulfilling and touching moment for me.  
 Even two such moments – one day for the older children and one day for the younger ones (in the next room the parents of the younger kids were trained by the teachers.)  
 Twice the feeling of making a good and important contribution – great!



(The Coker Village kids on project day)

*Our Angels - Our helpers in Nigeria*

Tope, who works for a bank, manages our finances on a volunteer basis and makes sure that the budget is correct. Tope recruits and coordinates Nigerian sponsors and collects used clothing for the Coker villagers.

Grace, the nurse, who masters small and larger medical emergencies, takes care of regular medical needs like worm prevention and teaches the kids how important hygiene and nutrition are.

Esther, who visits Coker Village twice a month to look after the kids – their progress, their health and sometimes even scolds the parents “ – X is not wearing a clean uniform! Y is not bringing his material to class!” She is our liaison between teachers, parents and children – our eyes, ears and hands in the village.

The situations she takes care of ... for example, our little foster child who fell down and twisted his elbow. He showed me how his elbow was sticking out and told me about his pain. Adesuwa will help!

The child who lost his mother (report in our last Newsletter). A generous Adesuwa sponsor will enable the older sister to train as a seamstress to support the family...



I was honored to get to know all of these angels who do so much for the children and Adesuwa, sometimes under difficult conditions. Angels who welcomed me with open arms and open hearts. Esther even invited me to her home!  
Friendship and joyfulness - that is Nigeria!



(Picture of Barbara in Coker Village: Water Guard project days)

### *The Economy*

All the more disturbing to see how badly this country is suffering.

The disaster – the oil price has fallen 50% – with 30% less government income and \$9 million less foreign reserves (I have this on good authority from “The Economist”). Economic growth – halved. Stock market – down by half.

Foreign investors are pulling out, the currency is continually losing value, banks are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy.

In the federal reserves is nothing that can buffer these development – due to decades of corruption.

The new president is trying counter-measures.

He is fighting against corruption- with some success, people say. Before my trip I was warned, “At Immigration and Customs – everyone will have his hand open.” Nothing of the sort!

Everything went smoothly.

Despite decreasing income he is investing in the infrastructure and initiating reforms (e.g. abolishing fuel subsidies).

To keep inflation in check, the Naira has been frozen at an artificially high rate. He has slashed imports to reduce the demand for hard currency.

Unfortunately this has devastating consequences for Nigerians. Imported articles are scarce or prohibitively expensive.

Gas is scarce and expensive (in an oil-producing country!) I saw the long lines in front of the gas stations – of those which were open. Most were simply closed.

Taxis and busses – which most people take to work – have increased their prices.

Regular citizens cannot travel abroad – no Nigerian bank has dollars or Euros to exchange for Naira.

Some people I talked to have a stoic attitude. “You can’t do anything anyway. Nothing will change...”

Others say, “We have to go through hard times before the reforms will bear fruit. We’re hopeful.”

I hope that the “others” are right. Nigeria and its people deserve the chance to get a stable economy so that they can finally profit from their natural resources –not only oil, but an extremely helpful and friendly population.

I am so happy and grateful that we from Adesuwa can make a small contribution.

(Author: Barbara)

**Additional information on these topics and Nigeria:**

1) Nigeria: Country, History and Politics

➤ <http://www.dailytimesofnigeria.com/>

➤ <http://www.punchng.com>

➤ [https://www.bmz.de/de/laender\\_regionen/subsahara/nigeria/zusammenarbeit/index.html](https://www.bmz.de/de/laender_regionen/subsahara/nigeria/zusammenarbeit/index.html)

2) The economy

➤ <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/nigeria-stillstand-im-oelstaat-1.2497692>

➤ <http://www.nigerianmonitor.com/wont-resign-fuel-scarcity-crisis-kachikwu/>

3) News about Boko Haram

➤ <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2016-03/boko-haram-nigeria-soldaten-befreien-829-geiseln>

➤ <http://www.punchng.com/bharam-still-operating-in-two-lgas-minister/>

Your Adesuwa e.V.