

Liberia Education Update

March 2020



David Worlobah and Theresa Garwo at launch of Inclusive Education Policy.

Inclusive Education Policy Launch

When I came to Liberia in 2008, the Division of Special Education was a locked room on the fifth floor of the Ministry of Education. There was no functional elevator to carry persons with physical disabilities to the fifth floor and there was no director in the office for anyone to meet. There was no policy on special and inclusive education and little encouragement for persons with learning differences and special needs to go to school. A lot has changed since then. In December 2019, the Ministry of Education and 5 other government ministries moved into the new Ministerial Complex in Congo Town, Monrovia. Special Education is now Inclusive Education and the office is on the ground floor of the Ministerial Complex.

David Worlobah is the director of the Hope for the Deaf Ministry which provides education to deaf students in Monrovia and Kakata in Margibi County. Bro. Worlobah began the ministry in October 2000 and continues to be a passionate advocate for persons who are deaf.

Theresa Garwo has been the director of the Division for Inclusive Education since 2017. She was determined to have an Inclusive Education policy and invited all interested persons and organizations to join her in crafting the policy and carrying on awareness. David Worlobah now has an ally at the Ministry of Education. On March 5th, we were together for the launch of the Inclusive Education Policy and Implementation Plan sponsored by the World Bank Group.



Margaret Logan looking at books given to J.L. Morris UMS.

East Ohio Team Visit

Friends from the East Ohio Conference helped to supply and set up the library at J. F. Yancy UMS on the Camphor United Methodist Mission Station in Grand Bassa County. A team from this conference comes almost every year to support teachers and students in the classroom. J. F. Yancy UMS is a junior high school so the students leave after completing 9th grade.



East Ohio Team members Analyse Sutton, Kim Bonar, Sharon Snell, Ginny Logan, Margaret Logan, and Janet Kleckner with Emmanuel Johnson in J. L. Morris UMS Library.

Give to Advance projects

#15125B Scholarships

#3020670 Construction of New School Buildings

#3021129 Missionary Support



On March 20th, Bishop Kulah went to his hometown to meet with the people. I joined him for this 3-day trip to settle the issue of the school ownership. The school began as a United Methodist School, but in 2012, the town decided the school should be a community school.

Emmanuel Johnson is one of the J. F. Yancy UMS graduates who was impacted by the positive relationship with members of the East Ohio Conference. He is now in high school at J. L. Morris UMS in Paynesville (the city that borders Monrovia) and asked his East Ohio friends to help with the school's library. After spending 10 days on Camphor Mission, the team came to Monrovia and purchased books for Emmanuel's new school. On March 6, we took the books to the library and visited the high school classrooms where the team met three J. F. Yancy graduates. The students are enthusiastically continuing their education.

Boway

Bishop Arthur F. Kulah was elected Bishop of the Liberia Annual Conference in 1980 and although retired, he is still an active consultant and teacher. He started his life in the rural town of Boway in Bong County. The only school in the town began in 1984, well after Bishop Kulah left to pursue education. Currently, the school has 58 female and 102 male students in nursery through sixth grade. The children begin in nursery school when they are six to eight years old. The school principal, Anthony Garteh, told me that there are over 400 school age children in the town, and this is still the only school in Boway. The other school age children do not go to school. As a United Methodist School, it has the potential for evangelism and nurturing students in the Word of God.

Nation-wide School Closure

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Liberia was announced on March 16 and the Ministry of Education closed all schools for one week. Two more cases have been confirmed and on March 21, schools and churches were closed for 21 days. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) suspended the Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) until further notice. The exams were to begin in April. I was at the Ministry of Education on March 27, when the Minister, announced that there will be classes on radio for all subjects, except chemistry and physics, so students can continue learning at home. We don't know when schools will open.



The decision to be a community school was based on the desire to have government funding which never came. At a meeting in the Boway United Methodist Church on March 21, the people agreed that the school was built by the church and is on church property and that the school should be a United Methodist School.

Thank you for your prayers, messages of encouragement, and financial support. I wish you the love, joy, hope, and peace of Jesus Christ during this time of COVID-19 and always. Be safe and well.

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In 2000, a team from Operation Classroom Minnesota went to Boway to construct a building for the school that was using three different structures. The building was painted in 2017 with support from Hands of Hope Foundation.