

Together for West Africa (aka: 2gether4westafrica, 2g4wa)
Advisory Board of Directors FY21Q3 meeting: Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Meeting Minutes:

Members present:

Meeting held virtually via the Internet using online Zoom meeting application with the following members in attendance – Mike Hutchinson (Field Personnel), Lynn Hutchinson (Field Personnel), Ric Stewart (Secretary), Laura Clark (member), Allen Clark (member), Cindy Stewart (member)

Topics of Business

Ric Stewart opened the meeting with prayer.

1. Financial Reports – Ric Stewart, Secretary

- ***Fiscal Year 2021, YTD as of 4/21/2021*** – *Statement of Activity* and *Statement of Financial Position* were reviewed. Both reports indicated Together for West Africa is in very good financial standing.
- Point of discussion was revenue has so far significantly exceeded expenses since Program Ministry expenses have been primarily supported by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) partner program account.
- In FY20, this was explained on the IRS 990 form as during the organizational startup year (FY20) for the Together for West Africa 501(c)(3), the program services account needed to be built up for direct program services delivery in future years.
- Also, in the near future, one of the possible large-dollar items to be purchased will be a motorized three-wheel vehicle which will facilitate Mike and Lynn traveling to deliver program services at the Togo House and in the community.

2. Ministry Programs Report – Mike & Lynn Hutchinson, Field Personnel in Lomé, Togo, West Africa

[The following report is from an email update in March from Mike and Lynn. It reflects the essence of the oral report given in the Advisory Council meeting by Mike and Lynn.]

We seem to have more events [children and adults] at Togo House rather than normal day to day operations due to covid. But we are thankful that we have been able to keep ministry going with our team here.

I [Mike] go once a week to a market about 45 min from where the house is. It is always an enjoyable route. It is also the only East-West route in Togo, it links Ghana to Benin. It is 4-lane in the city but out to the Benin border it has been only 2-lane. All the other countries connected on this highway have already gone 4-lane so now it is for Togo. But that means it is a terrible drive and really too dangerous to take each week, so that has changed my routine somewhat. But it will really be nice when it is finished next year.

Part of the market trip is to stop at some friends' hotel that sits right on the beach. They are Belgian and enjoy having company, and the business. They keep their beach spotless. Most probably the only beach in Togo that is clean. Sometimes the fishermen are pulling in their nets and that is interesting. Very relaxing hour or two.

Today I was glad to get some Jalapeno peppers from a woman who is doing one of our basket gardens. She doesn't like them so I buy them from her. The peppers here are so much hotter these seem too mild for her. She also gave me a few cantaloupes which one never sees here. I will make sure she keeps getting seedlings. Today we are planting guava and tamarind tree seeds. We have a few other fruits that our kids have collected the seeds from but I don't know the name of these in English nor French. I do know that we are cutting down trees at an incredible rate here in our area and the price of these fruits are going sky-high and also, I am sure some will simply disappear. But 99% of Togolese don't care. In fact, they love to cut down trees. At present we have coconut and papaya seedlings ready to go the next time we have a compost demonstration at Togo House.

We will be starting some publicity to support Togo House. Normally we would have planned to be in the States right now to meet face to face with our donors. That looks like that may happen next year.

This week I am very concerned about a boy who lives in an abusive family and he has just quit coming to Togo House. His parents are evasive as to where he is. He is not at the house, or he is locked away. He has a step father who detests children. It would not be beyond him to sell this kid. So, I will send someone by the school again today to see if they can spot him. He had been out of school for over a week because his parents refused to pay his way. So, pray that we find him and that he will be safe.

3. *Open Conversation – All*

General discussion among those attending about the well-being of each person during these trying Covid19 pandemic times and the well-being of family members.

Lynn Hutchinson requested that in future meetings we take the time to discuss various suggestions that might continue to improve and expand the program services of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach of Together for West Africa.

Laura Clark closed the meeting with prayer.

Submitted by: Ric Stewart, Together for West Africa, Secretary

