

## Visit to Bo, October 2022

The last OWL visits to Bo had been in Jan 2020 by Richard Hall, Phil Clarke and Helena White, closely followed by a Teacher's visit in Feb 2020, led by Liz Garrett.

The Covid pandemic had prevented further visits. In particular, a planned visit by Teachers from Bo in 2020, was put on hold. However, a visit between 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022 Helena White, her son William, Zoe Milburn and Richard Hall went ahead. A problem with a flight cancellation caused extra expense and a re-arrangement of plans but, once there, the trip proved very enjoyable and a great success.

During the pandemic online meetings with counterparts in Bo, were a real gain out of a difficult situation. However, the visit showed once again that there is nothing quite like meeting in person and seeing the situation on the ground.

Helena was there to build on her Midwifery links and introduced Zoe, a fellow Midwife, to life in Bo. They also conducted training sessions at the OWL Centre and at Yemoh Town Clinic. William was there to re-connect with friends made during his visit 4 years previously.

The purpose of the visit for Richard was to meet with Bo OWL members again in person. To understand their current issues and to re-connect with as many other organisations as time allowed. With the Teacher visit programme on temporary hold, Richard was able to stand in for a Teachers' Group meeting and visit 8 schools. The tree-planting project had gone ahead and schools were keen to show what had been done.



**St Peter's  
Bo #2 School**

**The school is linked with Brookhurst in Leamington. William has been helping with football training at Brookhurst so was able to visit the link school in Bo**



An important objective of the visit was to explore the potential for expanding the health link beyond Midwifery. We met with the Medical Superintendent, Dr Alex Kanu, at Bo Government Hospital and discussed possible links with South Warks Health Foundation Trust. Following up on this after our return, Richard and Jane Knight held a meeting with the Chairman of the Board at SWHFT and a Dr Aldulaimi. We are hopeful of making progress with what is a very complicated project to put together, but one which has huge potential benefits for Bo and here.

**We were given a tour of the hospital wards and operating theatres**



A number of factors had led to limited communication with Bo City Council in the past 2-3 years. During the visit Richard had a meeting with the Chief Administrator and the Deputy Mayor of Bo City. The long-established links between Bo City Council and OWL and with Leamington Spa Town Council were fully recognised and Richard returned with an official letter from the city council commemorating the 40 years of friendship between the LSTC and BCC. They also thanked LSTC for the donation towards tree-planting in their area.





**Richard with (from L-R)**

**the Deputy Mayor of Bo City Council,**

**Haja Lukay (Development Officer, who has been very much involved in the Princes Foundation project which Phil Clarke was lead for on OWL's behalf),**

**The Chief Administrator, Veronica Fortune and**

**Wusu Sannoh**

Another friend of OWL in Bo is now Dean of Community Health at Njala University, Rashid Ansumana. A brief visit was made to discuss the potential for joint working. Perhaps linking to the Health project, with potential for communication between Warwick Univ and Njala Univ medical students.

**Wusu Sannoh and Rashid Ansumana at Njala University**



There have been communications with a group of younger people in Bo for some time looking at the prospect of re-establishing a 'youth group'. During the visit Richard arranged a meeting with the group and OWL Committee members, to discuss how things might progress. There is real potential for an exciting IT training project, led by the group. It needs more thought (and some finance) to make it work but the outcomes could be very positive.



**Meeting with the Youth Group at the OWL Centre.**

In conclusion it was a busy time, generating lots of ideas and potential to follow up, and was very enjoyable, but in making a visit we must recognise the burden that it places on our friends in Bo OWL. The OWL Centre was readied, Nancy and her team provided ample food and managed the accommodation. Wusu was forever busy arranging meetings and planning ahead. Francis Jesu, Bo OWL Sec, was very helpful on many fronts, not least IT support for training sessions. John Sandi was there to help with the Schools and Eric Moosa, a former Commonwealth Fellow, who visited Leamington years ago, was on hand each day to provide transport for visits. So thank you those mentioned and to all our friends in Bo OWL. We look forward to welcoming some of them over here in the not too distant future.