

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Abakaliki 31 December 2017

Dear Friends,

Warm holiday greetings to everyone from Abakaliki! This is the wedding season in Nigeria and four of our staff are getting married this Christmas further adding to the joy. We are in the Hamartan season, which means dust, hot days, dust, cold nights, and more dust. I spent Christmas at Offia Oji and Ephuenyim Health Centers with the health workers, for the seventh straight year. It was nice to welcome babies born on Christmas Day, and the dedication of the health workers who sacrificed the holidays to take care of patients, touched and inspired me deeply.

2017 was a year of greater recognition for AMURT Nigeria. Our primary healthcare model is now accepted as setting the standard Ebonyi State. We even got national and international attention.

In August we completed the **upgrade and expansion of Odeligbo Health Center to a Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care Center**. 15 cesarean sections have been done since August and with the support of the Mother and Child Survival Program a newborn care unit is no win place. As a result, Odeligbo had the highest number of births in 2017, including 75 in October. With the wards filled up, 81 admissions in November alone, Odeligbo Health Center is now functioning at the level of a secondary hospital or mission hospital.

In May a **communal war spread to Offia Oji**. Offia Oji and Ephuenyim Health Centers provided first aid to gunshot casualties as AMURT staff, (doctors, lab scientists, drivers, health workers) personally made emergency blood donations and saved many lives. Two AMURT ambulances shuttled up and down carrying over 50 victims to Federal Teaching Hospital in Abakaliki. AMURT provided support to victims that needing surgery. As the conflict dragged into August, more than 1500 families fled the conflict area, finding shelter in internal villages, still within our project areas. These IDPs (internally displaced persons) driven away from their homes, farms, and source of livelihood suffered as malnutrition and disease spread among their children. AMURT responded with free medical care for over 2000 children, rehabilitation for dozens severely malnourished children and food aid to 200 families. In the course of the fighting Offia Oji Health Center was destroyed by fire in a hostile fire attack. The dedicated health workers of Offia Oji operated temporary clinic in a school. As the security situation improved, AMURT repaired the health center and it reopened in December.

On 23 November, AMURT opened a **new health center at Mgbalukwu, Onicha LGA**. A building had been constructed for health center in 2013, but never used. In partnership with the communities, AMURT made repairs and structural fortifications, and furnished and equipped the health center. The government was able to post six health workers.

BIRTHS



2200+ births

UPGRADE OF ODELIGBO



Odeligbo Health Center is now a Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care center.

WAR RELIEF



Emergency relief, free treatment for children, food relief

New staff gave a **boost to the AMURT team** in 2017. Two NYSC doctors, Dr. Serge and Dr. Stephen; four new midwives, Mary Anne, Francesca, Juliette and Mary. Anayo joined as full time lab scientist for the Effium clinics, and Norah joined the family planning team, Steven joined the M&E team and Israel joined the Water & Sanitation team. We got three new Toyota Hilux trucks and a new driver Christian, to improve our logistics. In August we moved to a **new larger office**. We welcomed 20 additional health workers in the village clinics.

Paul and Sunday of the **construction** team were fully occupied, as we completed new staff quarters for Inikiri and Odeligbo Health Center. They also did major renovations and improvements at Offia Oji, Odeligbo, Mgbalukwu and Gmelina.

The **Water and Sanitation** Team were able to make new boreholes and train WASHCOMs in 17 villages in three local governments, as AMURT entered Iwo, Onicha and Izzi local government areas for the first time. They also repaired dozens of broken boreholes in the communities.

The **Economic Empowerment** program, for widows and women who are sole breadwinners in their families, grew from 90 to 160. With Afuluenu as the coordinator two more groups were started; one in Gmelina and a special group in Offia Oji for the women who lost their husbands in the violent communal conflict.

Our four **ambulances** did incredible service in 2016, saving so many lives. This year the number of referrals reached close to 280. Our reliable ambulance drivers, Emmanuel, John, Emmanuel and Kelvin never failed the patients and helped to save so many lives.

Nearly all our patients are poor farmers. Without **emergency financial assistance** many would simply refuse life saving referrals. As the capacity and care in the health center also grew, many were also supported for treatment in the health centers. AMURT came close to tripling the amount of money spent on medical assistance. Most were obstetric and newborn cases. In 2017 AMURT also assisted with lifesaving surgery for 15 children. We paid for eight women with suffered from uterine prolapse to be repaired. And we cared for about 90 children suffering from severe malnutrition.

The **laboratory** services in the health centers were expanded and strengthened. Daniel, Stephanie and Anayo worked very hard and provided invaluable service. More than 200 blood transfusions were done in the health centers in 2017, saving many lives.

Our primary focus remains maternal and newborn care. The final count won't be ready till next week, but we will reach more than **2200 births** in 2017, with a high of 308 births in October.

NEW HEALTH CENTERS



Mgbalukwu Health Center opened in November

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



160 women assisted to start own business

WATER & SANITATION



17 new boreholes drilled.



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Chinwendu and Norah, supported by clinic **family planning** focal persons succeeded to significantly increase the awareness, acceptance and access to family planning in the rural villages. By the end of the third quarter already 549 women had taken up implants. In a pilot project in the Ephuenyim project area, twelve boys and twelve girls were trained as peer educators to promote awareness of **reproductive health among youth**. They launched a program called 'I Needs 2 Know' and started teen clubs in ten villages. The rounds of **Health Rallies** in Gmelina and Akparata project areas spread awareness and strengthened ties between communities and the health centers. See this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8yZhGKK1Uc>

Ibiam and Ogonna worked hard to strengthen local participation and develop the relationship between the communities and the health centers. The **maternal health promoters** role grew as they took the lead in promoting child spacing through health rallies and health education programs. The monthly **pregnant women meetings** continue in over 100 villages and the number of home births have decreased. At the end of the year audits of the health centers, the community committees showed excellent progress in their bookkeeping and **management of the Clinic Drug Revolving Fund**.

Again, all this work is made possible by Philippe and his team at GMT Limited in Lagos, our main sponsors. The AMURT Team, and the people of Ebonyi State are deeply grateful for their fantastic commitment to service. We also thank Dangote Foundation, Hearts2Africa, Voice of a Child, Antola Foundation, AMURT Italy, AMURT UK, AMURT Spain, AMURT US.

We would like to specially thank all the individual donors in Switzerland, Norway, Italy, Australia, Korea, U.K., U.S. and other countries,. Your generous assistance enabled us to respond to every emergency case we met in the villages and save so many lives. To save lives is the focus of our mission here.

Encouraged from the progress made in 2017, and driven by the desperate needs that we face every day in the villages, AMURT Nigeria is preparing an **ambitious program for 2018**. We are determined to **upgrade the standard of service and quality of care** with more qualified staff, expanded facilities and better medical equipment. We are building on our partnership with government and other agencies, to **enter more remote rural communities**. We will continue to put community participation at the center of our efforts to meet the primary healthcare needs of those that have been neglected for too long.

Our mission remains the same: To save the lives of mothers, children and newborns. Looking forward working with all of you towards this end in 2018!

Happy New Year to All!

Dade Dareshanande

Project coordinator



SCHOLARSHIPS & TRAINING



Health workers in School of Health on AMURT scholarships.

HEALTH EDUCATION



Health Rallies and reproductive health clubs for youth.

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM AMURT NIGERIA

