

HOSPITALS IN NIGERIA

Building a hospital, growing my family

I am often asked why I work full-time leading the GEANCO Foundation. And my motivation to push through the significant challenges and disappointments that constantly rise up to hinder our progress towards building a world-class hospital in a needy area of the badly-maligned country of Nigeria. Why have I chosen to work day to day running a non-

UK GOVERNMENT NIGERIA PROFILE

Nigeria is the world's 11th largest producer of oil with a current output of 2.2 million barrels per day (mbpd) of quality crude. In 2006, oil accounted for just over one fifth of GDP, 85% of government revenue and over 90% of export earnings. Agriculture accounted for around 40% of GDP, the services sector for just over 30% and manufacturing 5% of GDP.

Despite Nigeria's oil wealth, a large population means Nigeria's GDP per capita is low. Few Nigerians, including those in oil-producing areas, have benefited from the oil wealth. In 2006, estimated GDP was over USD100bn but less than USD800 per capita. The trade in stolen oil, alongside poor governance, has fuelled violence and corruption in the Niger Delta.

Nigeria has some of the worst social indicators: 1 in 5 children die before the age of 5; 12 million children are not in school; approximately 6% of the population are infected with HIV.

The World Bank ranks Nigeria 108th out of 178 countries on the 2005 global competitiveness index. It was 142nd out of 163 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2006, up from 152nd out of 158 the previous year.

SUMMARIZED FROM [HTTP://WWW.FCO.GOV.UK](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

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In its struggle against malaria, Nigeria carries perhaps the developing world's heaviest burden: humans living in Nigeria sicken with malaria 100 million times each year. Malaria is responsible for 30% of child deaths in Nigeria, and costs the country an estimated USD1 billion a year, according to Nigeria's health minister.

Nigeria's strategy includes distributing 6 million doses of artemisinin-based combination (ACT) malaria drug free to children under 5, 1.9 million doses of drugs for pregnant women, and 3 million treated bed nets, free to children under 5 and pregnant women.

profit Foundation, rather than exploring the many lucrative opportunities that came from my education at Harvard and Stanford Law School? The answer is simple: because I love to see my family grow.

In my immediate family are 2 parents and 3 siblings, and we are all involved in GEANCO. Since I began to seek support for GEANCO, I have been overwhelmed by the strong support of those with no connection to Nigeria or to Africa. Moved by the seriousness of the crisis there, and guided by the expansiveness of their generosity, these men and women have willingly given themselves over to our mission. They devote precious time and treasure to help save nameless and faceless souls half a world away. This conversion from stranger to supporter and family member is miraculous, and I am always amazed and inspired by it. Visions of their bright, loving faces flood my mind whenever I hear yet another "No" from yet another prospective donor. Memories of their warm words of encouragement always come to mind whenever I get frustrated by the slow, deliberate pace that I must maintain in order to build GEANCO properly as an organization. I see these faces and hear these voices, and tired eyes see clearly again; weary muscles gain strength. I get a new, full dose of hope.

My new family members are not restricted to my home continent of America. A few years ago, the governor of Anambra State, Nigeria agreed to give us 200 acres of land for this hospital and future projects. When the governor visited the plot of land to talk about the project and gauge local support for it, he literally could not move through the streets because hundreds of villagers had come out. My uncle painted the picture for me over the phone. The throng waved crude, hand-made signs that read, "We want GEANCO", and they chanted that same declaration for hours and hours. The governor



Model of the hospital GEANCO Foundation is building in Nigeria. From <http://www.geanco.org>.

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was overwhelmed. Our family in Nigeria had our back. The throng included blood relatives and those who are now bonded to us through their passion for this project that will transform their lives and give their children the chance at a healthier, happier future.

I think about my new family members - the lawyer in the Manhattan skyscraper and the elderly weaver at work in Anambra under a rusted, corrugated roof. I know that we are united in our devotion this important, life-saving work, and that knowledge is all I need to greet each day, and each new challenge, with courage and joy.

By Afam Onyema JD

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The GEANCO Foundation

A Hospital in Stages

Augustine Memorial Hospital will serve both the local and international community and will provide the best healthcare in all of West Africa.

Stage 1 of the hospital project will consist of an outpatient facility; an AIDS/Malaria/Infectious Disease Treatment Center; maternal and pediatric care clinics, and living quarters for hospital staff and international visitors.

In Stage 2 of the project, a 100-bed hospital with the following capabilities will be constructed: triage, medical, surgical and intensive care units, a major trauma center, a cardiac care center, an emergency room, a pharmacy, laboratory services, and ear, nose and throat, dental surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedic, radiology and urology departments.

In Stage 3, the hospital will be expanded into 200-bed tertiary care facility. A burn unit, cancer center, dialysis clinic, physical therapy and rehabilitation center and a mental health department also will be added.

