



April 2016

Help Teachers Build Clinic & Expand Their African School

By Phillip Martin

The people of Tugbaken live their lives without so many things that Americans take for granted. The villagers didn't own much, but I found them some of the most generous and welcoming people I'd ever met.

The village shares an elementary school with the neighboring village, Parken, which is three minutes away. The school has no government support. There are no NGOs that assist the school. The buildings are constructed by adobe bricks and have zinc rooftops. Daniel Copeland, teacher and principal, said that it was the teachers who constructed the school. In all my travels around the world, I've never heard of teachers building their school.

They would like to expand with three more classrooms for a junior high facility. There is the possibility of teaching volunteers through UNICEF but they would need to construct three houses for these teachers and original classrooms eventually need to be replaced.

- Help create a clinic and contribute to basic medical supplies and soap.
- Large solar panels at the school are needed to light the clinic and very dark classrooms.
- Funds to create basic classrooms - cost starts at \$2,500.

Read more what is needed to help on pages 2 & 3

The Mural Man Phillip Martin

Help School Expand in
Tugbaken, Liberia, Africa

Mural Man Mural Paints with
Ebola Survivors in Liberia
[Blog](#)

The Story of Patrick
“...his work must be seen.”
[Blog](#)

Contacts

Phillip Martin, The Mural Man

phillip.martin@gmail.com

Official Safe to Learn Project

www.safetolearn.com



Links

Wander My World With Me
[Blog](#) by Phillip Martin

[The Mural Man](#)

“In all my travels around the world, I've never heard of teachers building their school and working together to start a clinic except in Liberia.” ~ Phillip Martin

Going to the village of Tugbaken is a life-changing experience. It's something that Americans rarely, if ever, experience. It's difficult to fully comprehend.

Just getting to the village is an African adventure. The journey required a four-hour drive on the paved road into Liberia's interior to Ganta. That was the easy part. Then, I rode for seven hours in a land rover over a dirt and mud road to get to



Zwedru, the largest town in the southeast of the country. From there, it was a six hour shared taxi ride south to Fish Town, the capital of River Gee County. Finally, to get to the village of Tugbaken, I still needed an hour and a half ride on the back of a motorcycle taxi on a path that took me off the main road and into bush that I'd never seen before.

Plan on a little more than three days of travel.

It's hard to imagine a place like Tugbaken. There were about twenty homes in the village. All were mud block with thatch roofs. If you walked there from the main road, it would take an hour and a half. And, the main road is where the closest town is that has any kind of shopping for any supplies. Once in Tugbaken, there is no electricity.

Tugbaken has no running water. The community shares one well for clean drinking water. There are no shops. There is no clinic. There is no doctor. If you need any kind of medicine, go to Daniel Copeland's home. An NGO supplied him with a five-gallon bucket filled with an assortment of medications. Hopefully, maybe, you'll find what you need for a small price.

Many Liberians in the interior of the country are subsistence rice farmers. They have what is called "hunger season". That's when the rice from the last harvest has run out and the next crop of rice is not yet ready to be harvested. It's a real season in Liberia.

And, it is only compounded by the poor roads that turn to mud in the rainy season, cutting off supplies for two or three months of the year.



© Photos by Phillip Martin

The village shares an elementary school with the neighboring village, Parken, which is three minutes away. The school has no government support. There are no NGOs that assist the school. The buildings are constructed by adobe bricks and have zinc rooftops. Daniel Copeland, teacher and principal, said that it was the teachers who constructed the school. In all my travels around the world, I've never heard of teachers building their school.

I spoke with Principal Daniel Copeland about the needs of the community. It could be a long list, but he mentioned three things.

1. **Help with Medical Supplies and Build Clinic**

There are five or six villages in the Deabo Region. Tugbaken is the closest one to the main road. None of the villages have a clinic. Medication is limited. Help with a clinic is needed.

2. **Help Light the School**

Surprisingly, one small piece of technology is missing from the school. It was not requested, but I'd like to see large solar panels at the school to light the very dark classrooms.

3. **Help Expand an African School**

They would like to expand with three more classrooms for a junior high facility. There is the possibility of teaching volunteers through UNICEF but they would need to construct three houses for these teachers. And, original classrooms eventually need to be replaced



© Photography by Phillip Martin

1



Help African Teachers Build Their School



Across Africa, if you are truly welcomed, you're presented with a rooster, a symbol of wisdom. When you accept the bird, you raise it to your forehead. The first sound you hear in the morning is a rooster. And, by raising that rooster to your head, the hosts acknowledge your wisdom. They will listen to you just like they do that rooster. But in Liberia, guests are also greeted with kola nut and hot pepper.

I've live in Africa for six years and seen these presentations. But, I never had a one in my honor. That is, until I visited Tugbaken. In less than twenty-four hours, I was

welcomed with five kola nut ceremonies, four chickens and an African gowning ceremony. Nobodywelcomes you like the Grebo people.



© Photography by Phillip Martin