

2016 Annual Report



empower
playgrounds

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a blue button-down school shirt, stands outdoors. He is looking slightly to his left with a gentle smile. The background is softly blurred, showing large trees and a building in the distance. The lighting is natural, suggesting daytime.

I am grateful for the lantern
because now I am doing well in
school from the lantern group
studies.

-Daniel, 14, Afransua Dedawa

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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Simple Things

During a recent PTA meeting at an EPI school, Bahankra, a mother excitedly reported that the lanterns and the systems were working. Just the previous week she had been frustrated because of her inability to find a name in her cell phone to call a friend. You see, this mother, like the majority of her community, cannot read. Her eight-year old-daughter who attends Bahankra Primary School, asked for her mother's phone and confidently told her she would find the name. This mother beamed with pride at her eight-year-old daughter's simple ability to read and thanked EPI for making this possible.

Empower Playgrounds is so grateful for the support of parents, teachers, donors, and communities that make our projects a success. Thank you!

Crys Kevan Lee
Executive Director

Life-Long Relationships

Enabled by hundreds of donors, EPI employees, interns and volunteers pursued the objective of improving educational opportunity in deprived villages. Anticipated results are achieved: reliable hardware providing usable light; learning through hands-on experience and night time study; and increased attendance of students and faculty. Deep relationships of trust formed between EPI and the schools and villages, open opportunities to further enhance education through new and repaired classrooms, libraries, computer labs, scholarships for high school, and clean sanitary and water systems.

The dream of rural villages where moms can read to their children, and children can expect to go to high school and beyond is coming true. Please accept my deepest appreciation for your continued support. Your contributions are making a huge difference.

Ben S. Markham

Founder, Empower Playgrounds, Inc.

Mission

Empower Playgrounds enhances educational opportunities for children in deprived villages.



EPI Overview

SINCE 2008

2 boreholes providing clean and safe water.

11 BioFil odor-free washrooms disposing waste.

50 merry-go-rounds are providing light.

900 science kits providing hands-on learning.

1,500 lanterns creating study environments.

17,000 students empowered to learn.



**PLAYWORLD
SYSTEMS**
The world needs play!

Merry-Go-Rounds

Our merry-go-rounds (mgr) are a renewable energy source that allows schools to charge lanterns students use to study and read at night. We currently have 1,516 lanterns powered by 50 mgrs to be used by over 10,000 children in 50 schools. In 2016, we temporarily delayed mgr installations while we continued the search for the perfect replacement for the discontinued Energizer lantern. We are happy to report that we found the Tough Light lantern, which is water and drop resistant and can last for 100 hours at the middle setting. These lanterns will need to be charged less frequently than the current lanterns and they will endure the harsh conditions of rural Ghana.

New Merry-go-rounds in 2016:

- TunTum
- Wurudu Wurudu
- Fatwa Kosie
- Yonguase M/A Basic School
- Mosipanin D/A Basic School



Science Kits

Empower Playgrounds provides schools with a set of science kits and trains teachers on how to incorporate them into existing Ghanaian curriculum. Within the 50 schools we have in Ghana, each school has sets of 6 different types of science kits, 5 created by our partners Thames and Kosmos. We have 900 science kits distributed to our schools throughout Ghana. We added our 6th unique science kit option during 2016. The 6th science kit is a miniature, hand-held microscope that is durable and portable and contains a one-inch focal length lens. These are created by Discovery Scope. The goal of the EPI science kit program is not to add to a teacher's workload, but rather to give them needed resources and tools to succeed. The science kits not only give the children hands-on learning experiences, they also help inspire a love of science in the students.



SOMIETES BY
EKAMPONG (KONGKONG)
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE



Sanitation Projects

Empower Playgrounds partners with a private family foundation to provide sanitation projects that support education in rural Ghana. In 2016, EPI installed a set of BioFil washrooms at Watro Watro Primary School and renovated a toilet at Nyapienya Primary and Junior High School. Empower Playgrounds has 2 borehole wells providing drinkable water and 3 BioFil toilets providing sanitary and private restrooms for students and teachers at three schools. If children are sick they cannot attend school. Therefore, ensuring access to clean water and sanitary toilets at schools can help lower the rate of sicknesses spread while at school, enabling a healthier environment for our students and helping keep more of them in school and learning. This is why EPI has worked to provide these projects.



Construction

Since the installation of our merry-go-round in 2012, Empower Playgrounds has developed a close relationship with the school and community of Bahankra. In our last annual report we highlighted all the projects Empower Playgrounds--and subsequently the government--has incorporated into Bahankra's school. Due to these projects, Bahankra D/A Basic School has experienced a significant growth in student enrollment and attendance, from 70 in 2012 to over 400 in 2016. To help accommodate the incredible growth of the school, Empower Playgrounds built a new 2-classroom block in late 2016.



Girls' Scholarships

The girls full-ride scholarship program was created in partnership with the Roberts Family Foundation to provide opportunity for girls with a desire to continue their education and attend high school from the island villages of Peditorkope and Alorkpem. There are currently three scholarship recipients: Gladys, Jennifer, and Martha.

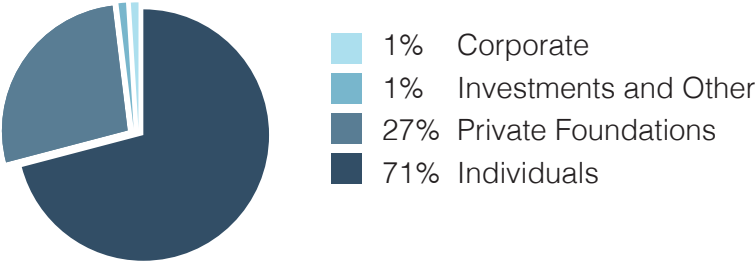
Gladys deeply wants to impact her community and knows that if she can receive higher education she will have a bigger impact and bring forth a better change in her community.

Jennifer is motivated by her family and community's past to work hard in school and change the lives of those around her.

Martha became interested in science after exposure to our science kits. It propelled her forward into a future of schooling, with the desire to be a nurse. This will enable her to benefit the lives of others.

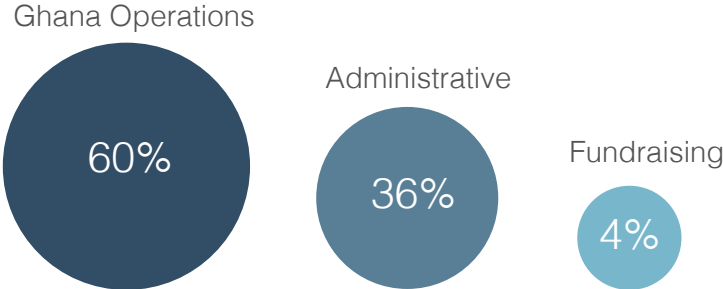
Financials

Donation Breakdown



The founder of EPI covers all administrative costs, so 100% of our donations go to the children and programs in Ghana!

Program Expenses



2016
REVENUE
\$209,296.64

Get Involved 2017




Donate Books



EPI is partnering with the African Library Project to establish libraries at our schools.

Spread the Word



 @playlightlearn
 @empowerplaygrounds
 empowerplaygrounds

Volunteer



Use your skills in the US to help fundraise and support EPI.

Learn more at: www.empowerplaygrounds.org/take-action

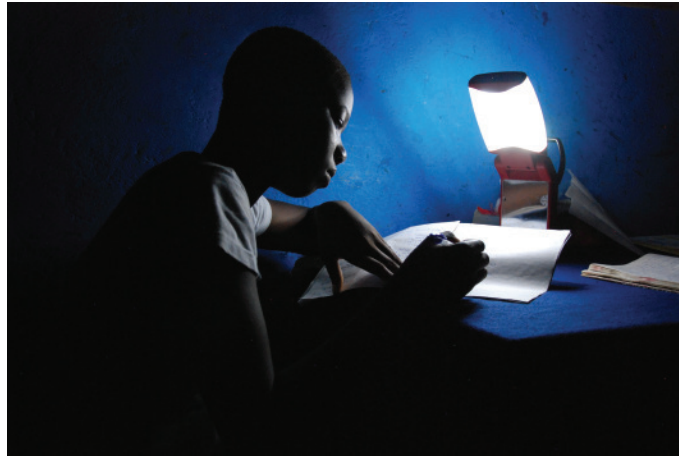
Lessons in 2016

Lanterns. We learned many of our lanterns that have been in the field for 6-7 years were beginning to fail and needed to be replaced. In early 2017, we will order 1000 Tough Light lanterns to use for new installations and to replace the failing older lanterns.

Lantern Groups. We learned that some of our groups were between 10-18 students per one lantern instead of the suggested 4 to 5. Children in the groups' community not attending EPI schools were joining their group so they could study as well, but it was difficult for all 18 to study under one lantern. This had been going on for months without anyone knowing. We changed how we collect information so we can address such problems sooner and partner with the teachers to find a solution.

Merry-go-rounds. We learned one of our merry-go-rounds on an island had been immersed in salt water and was beginning to erode. We made a deal with a local engineer who will make repairs to the machine in exchange for toilet systems built on a nearby island.

GIVE A LANTERN



\$40 for a lantern
for 5 students to read at night.

Play for Light Event



Date: October 14, 2017

Time: 11:00AM

Where: Provo, UT

What: Brunch

In 2016 we had our annual Play for Light fundraising event with EPI board members and staff who presented to the community on current and future Empower Playgrounds projects. Please join us for our event in 2017! We are enthusiastic to share more information with you regarding this event as it becomes available in the coming months.

A young boy with a bright smile is the central focus of the image. He is wearing a yellow t-shirt with dark trim. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with a tree trunk on the left and a field of dry grass. The text 'Thank you for putting the smile on their faces!' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Thank you for
putting the
smile on their
faces!



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