



empower
playgrounds



2015 Annual Report



EPI ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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MEDA ASE THANK YOU 2015

My first merry-go-round installation was in July of 2014 at Afransua Dedewa Primary School. At the installation there were only 80 students enrolled and even fewer were in attendance.

I just received a report that there are now 108 enrolled and attending regularly. The Headmaster attributes this growth to the installation and use of our project at their school. Community members start to feel a renewed sense of hope for their children's future and a greater desire to invest in their education when they see our support.

The story of Afransua Dedewa is one we are hearing more and more as we continue our relationships with our schools. I feel honored to be a part of this project and the impact we have. Thank you for being a part of this great work. Together we are making a difference.

Sincerely,



Crys Kevan Lee
Executive Director



10 YEARS OF EPI

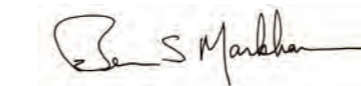
Ten years ago, I first contemplated an approach to provide improved educational opportunity to children in rural, off grid schools. The idea would involve play, hands-on learning and light for evening study. With strong support from interested individuals, students, professors, practicing engineers, small companies and large corporations, all of whom embraced the concept and were willing to contribute, a very successful model was developed. It includes much state-of-the-art technology and innovative processes. Most importantly it truly works and makes a huge difference in the lives of real students.

EPI has built effective relationships with the schools where our systems are deployed, and with the school districts. This has opened opportunities to leverage our efforts and provide additional resources such as library books and improved classrooms to people we know will use them wisely. We will continue to build on those relationships in our second decade.

Our promise that every dollar donated to EPI would go to directly benefit the children has been met. My wife and I pay all administrative and overhead costs and plan to continue to do so. This encourages efficient use of funds. Be assured that when you make a donation to EPI, children in rural schools are directly benefited. EPI started the first decade with a good concept, but a lot of unknowns regarding actual implementation. After successfully solving many unknowns, we begin our second decade with an established framework for success. This provides many children with a real opportunity for quality education which was not previously available.

Thank you for your support, you provide the fuel to move the dream forward!

Sincerely,



Ben Markham
Board President

Mission

Empower Playgrounds, Inc. enhances educational opportunities for children in deprived villages by providing renewable energy through electricity-generating playground equipment, smart LED lanterns, and hands-on science kits.



EPI OVERVIEW

since 2008

15,000 students served

3.5 million hours of light provided

46 merry-go-rounds installed

800 Science Kits Delivered

2 borehole wells installed

2 sets of Biofil toilet systems installed

1 school completely renovated

11 homes utilizing light-a-village renewable energy



MERRY-GO-ROUNDS



The first merry-go-round was installed in 2008 in partnership with many Empower Playgrounds supporters--including Brigham Young University. Currently we our schools have 10,250 children enrolled with 1414 lanterns and 46 merry-go-rounds installed--Including one installation in Mali. In 2015, 5 new merry-go-rounds were installed adding 800 new children to the EPI family with 180 lanterns and lantern groups.

Merry-Go-Rounds Installed in 2015:
Meyikpoi Primary School, Eastern Region
Community School 3, Western Region
Community School 9, Western Region
Ferekoroba Primary School, Mali
Nyapienya, Greater Accra Region



SCIENCE KITS

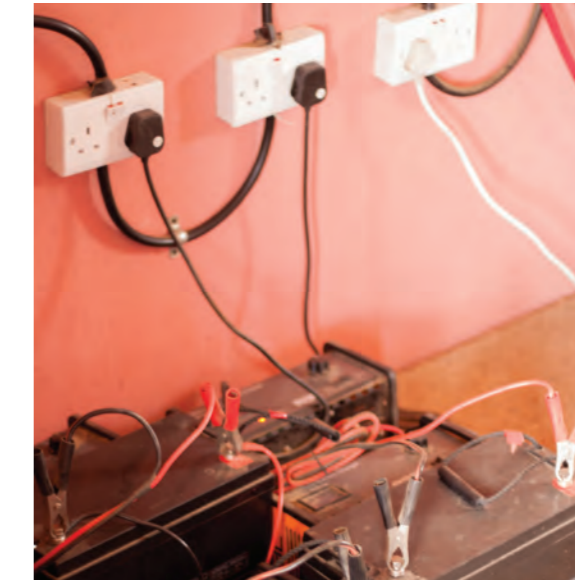


Since 2012, Empower Playgrounds Inc. has been working with partner, Thames and Kosmos, to distribute science kits to schools in Ghana so that students will have hands-on experience when learning about technology and engineering. These science kits include topics on Motors and Generators, Magnetic Science, Solar Power, and Learning Circuits. This year, EPI introduced a new science kit on Electricity and Magnetism with more than 60 experiments. Students create circuits and magnetic contraptions to learn how these two fundamental properties are related. This year, EPI introduced a new science kit on Electricity and Magnetism with more than 60 experiments. Students will create circuits and magnetic contraptions to learn how these two fundamental properties are related.

EPI employees train teachers on effective use of these kits and then continue to regularly follow up with schools on their proper upkeep and implementation within the science curriculum. This year 300 science kits were distributed to our schools, for a total of 800 science kits delivered.



LIGHT-A-VILLAGE



Empower Playgrounds installed the Light-A-Village (LAV) charging station in 2013 on Peditorkope Island. The charging station uses solar panels to charge batteries that villagers use to provide power in their homes. Currently, 11 homes are using the renewable energy provided by the LAV system. These homes use the electricity to power lights, radios, and cell-phones—a few have even connected televisions to watch local soccer matches.

“The lights have brightened all the household. Everyone uses it in the house now. When the light is on people can use it to do other work, like basket weaving. The kerosene light was only bright enough for one person, the battery lights are bright enough for everyone to use the light.” – LAV User



SCHOOL PROJECTS



So far, EPI has installed two BioFil Toilet systems – one in Bahankra and one in Nwowom. Both of these systems are still in use today. These facilities are an innovative way to eliminate waste in a sanitary and odorless manner. The BioFil toilets are installed at the schools but are used by the entire community.

In many rural communities, children have to walk 3 miles to fetch water. Oftentimes, their water sources are not clean and lead to many serious health problems. In 2015, the boreholes provided by EPI to Bahankra and Attabui continue to provide for safe and clean water for students and community members.

BAHANKRA'S STORY



This year, Empower Playgrounds, Inc. partnered with the film company, Elements in Motion, to document our current projects and the impact we have had in Ghana. The film focused on the story of Mirabell, a thirteen-year-old girl who lives in Bahankra, a small village in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Mirabell is a student at a school that has had an EPI merry-go-round since 2012 and has seen wonderful progress. You can watch the short film here: <https://vimeo.com/141139590>

In 2015, EPI raised funds to completely renovate the school. EPI upgraded the original classroom blocks, added a new classroom, as well as replaced a stick canopy, a dirt floor, and wooden walls. The classrooms were outfitted with new desks and chalkboards. Following these renovations, the Ghanaian government built junior high classroom blocks. The pictures to the right illustrate the significant impact Empower Playgrounds has had on the community of Bahankra.

The time line to the right tracks our impact in Bahankra since the installation in 2012. Most notably, when the EPI team first visited the school, there were only 70 students and 5 teachers. Now, the school has over 360 students and 20 teachers.

Gov builds first ever school in Bahankra.

EPI continues training teachers on science kits.

Gov builds 3 additional classroom blocks.

*EPI completes hand pump well (borehole).

*EPI upgrades original classroom blocks and adds one classroom block, replacing stick canopy, dirt floor, and wooden walls.

2012

EPI installs MGR System with lanterns & science kits

2013

Headmaster reports a jump in enrollment to 140. One classroom is meeting under a tree.

2014

Family Foundation hears Bahankra story & funds social welfare projects.*

*EPI installs 4 BioFil Toilets.

2015

Gov builds Jr. High School classroom blocks.

Headmaster reports that teachers are requesting to be posted to Bahankra.



2012



2014



2015

2015 PARTNERSHIPS

Empower Mali

Empower Playgrounds installed the first ever merry-go-round in Africa outside of Ghana. George and Isaac went to Mali to install the merry-go-round at Ferekoroba Primary School that has 215 students and 7 dedicated teachers. Empower Mali sponsored the cost of the merry-go-round and EPI covered the cost of installation, travel, and delivery.



Michel Foundation

In 2015, the Michel Foundation donated 7 indestructible soccer balls from the One World Play Project. We were happy to deliver them to our schools and the children were even more happy to receive them. Indestructible soccer balls can be punctured and they will deflate, perfect for the environment of the rural schools of Ghana.



One Million Pencils for Africa

One million Pencils for Africa, donated 2000 pencils to EPI in 2015. One Million Pencils for Africa sells pencils designed with artwork. For every one pencil they sell, they donate one to be sent to Africa.



In 2015 we had our first annual PLAY FOR LIGHT EVENT

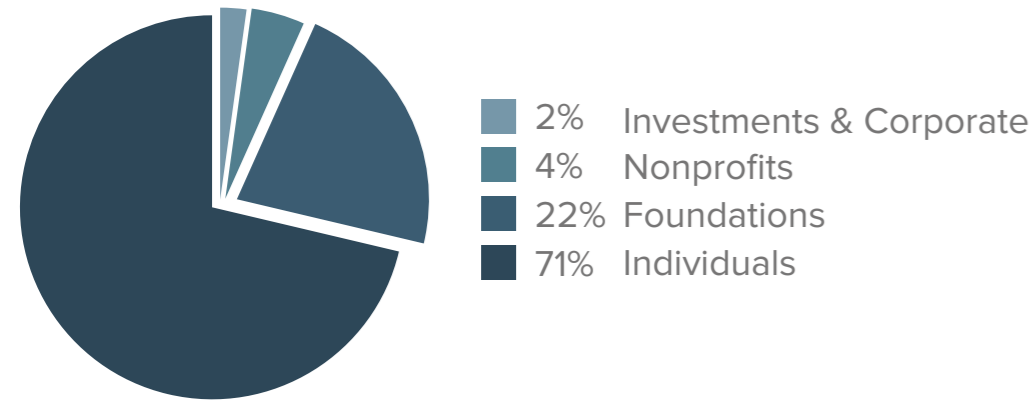
This year, Empower Playgrounds Inc. hosted our first charity breakfast event to raise funds to rebuild the classroom in Bahankra. More than 80 friends of EPI enjoyed a traditional Ghanaian breakfast of bofrot while hearing addresses from our guest speaker, Professor Aaron Miller, and founder, Ben Markham. To cap off the event, our donors were treated to a private viewing of our new film, "Lighting the Night: Mirabell's Story".



Join us for our next Play For Light Event September 29, 2016!

FINANCIALS

Donation Breakdown



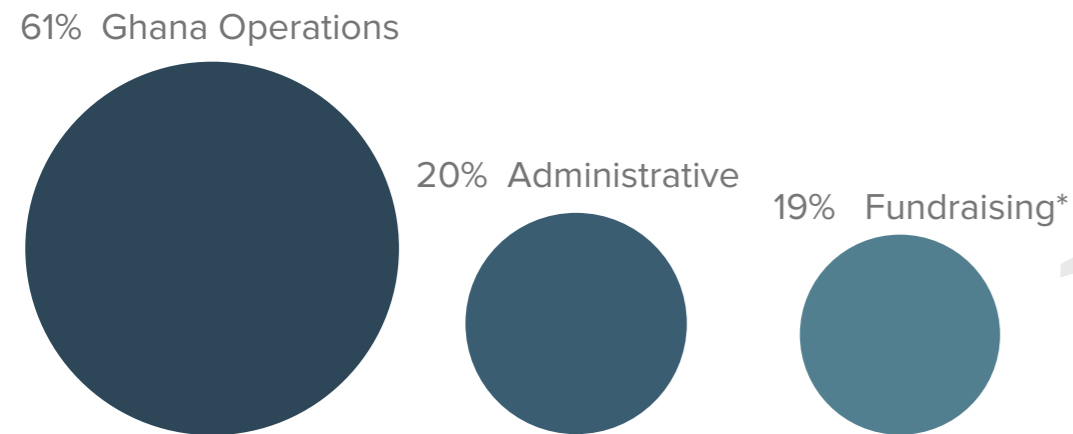
The founder covers all administrative costs, so 100% of your donation goes to the children and programs in Ghana!

2015

REVENUE

\$222,531.60

Program Expenses



*This year we increased our fundraising costs in order to collect more donations. We are happy to report that we received double the amount of individual donations that we did in 2014. This means that we will be able to spend even more on operations in 2016!

GET INVOLVED IN 2016

Join Our Book Drive

Donate books or volunteer as a book donation leader. Lead your community or school in donating 1000 books to help add libraries to our schools in Ghana!



Give What You Can

Donate money or time to our great projects. Volunteer as an editor or share your other skills. Contribute to EPI by looking over grant applications and other documents before we publish to make sure there are no mistakes!



Volunteer in Ghana

Volunteer with us in Ghana! Start planning your trip to come visit our projects in 2017! Help install merry-go-rounds and libraries, teach science kits, and meet the beautiful children we serve!



For more information contact us at: info@empowerplaygrounds.org
or visit us at empowerplaygrounds.org

\$10

PROVIDES A CHILD WITH
PLAY, LIGHT, & LEARNING



FOR ONE YEAR!

THANK
YOU AGAIN
FOR
MAKING
OUR WORK
IN 2015
POSSIBLE!



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