



**EMPOWER  
PLAYGROUNDS INC.**

A photograph of children playing on a colorful playground structure. The structure has yellow railings and a blue perforated metal platform. A young boy in the foreground is smiling broadly, wearing an orange shirt and brown shorts. Another child is visible in the background, also playing. The scene is outdoors on a sandy area.

# 2019 Annual Report

Lorem ipsum

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

11 Years of EPI	3	Feminine Hygiene Kits	16
Thank You	4	Borehole Projects	18
Mission	5	Girls Scholarships	19
EPI Since 2008	6	EPI Staff	21
Merry-Go-Rounds	8	Board of Directors	22
Science Kits	10	2019 Partnerships	23
Libraries	11	Play for Light 2019	24
Computer Labs	12	Get Involved	25
Classroom Blocks	13	Financials	27

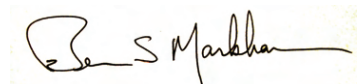
# 11 YEARS OF EPI

In all aspects, 2019 was the best year ever for Empower Playgrounds (EPI). Admittedly I am a bias observer, being the only person who has been deeply involved with EPI during its 11-year existence. Our organization in Ghana is mature and very capable. Our US based Board of Directors is dedicated and all have significant experience in Ghana with EPI. Our donor base, including many individuals, foundations and corporations, is solidly committed to supporting EPI's mission.

Most importantly, the thousands of children in the rural schools we serve trust EPI and have genuine confidence that educational opportunities will remain available to them. They, along with their parents and teachers, are seeing the value of learning, especially for young women. EPI is a mature, confident, successful entity that will weather the current pandemic storm and continue to provide meaningful educational opportunities in rural, off-grid schools.

This year we said goodbye to Crys Lee who had very successfully led EPI to significant growth for the last five years. We wish her well in her new endeavors. Amy Williams, our new Executive Director, has maintained the solid progress of EPI. Welcome, Amy!

Sincerely,



Ben Markham  
Board President



# THANK YOU 2019

2019 brought the winds of change to EPI. I became the new Executive Director in September and had my eyes opened to how Empower Playgrounds is changing Ghana for the better. Learning all about the projects that EPI is involved in has been exhilarating. The impact that is being made with your generous donations is life-changing for these villages and the people who live there. Heading over to Ghana to see these projects for myself brought an even greater sense of appreciation for you, our donors.

I wish you could have been with me to see the smiles on children's faces and listen to them laugh as they rode on the Merry-Go-Round for the first time. I would love for you to watch the excitement from children gathering clean water from a newly installed borehole instead of having to get it from the dirty water from the nearby river. I wish you could have seen the wonder and amazement in these students' eyes as they turned on a lantern for the first time.



Although you were not with me in person, I hope you will be able to see the impact you are making through these pictures. I want you to know that we could not be where we are today without you. I look forward to showing you what a difference you have made. One day I hope that you will join me on a trip to Ghana to be able to see for yourself the influence you have had. I know it will change your life, just like it has mine.

Sincerely,

Amy Williams  
Executive Director

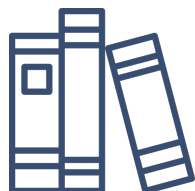
# Mission

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 SINCE 2008

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**15**  
Libraries



**834**  
Reusable menstrual kits



**19**  
Classroom blocks



**60**  
Merry-go-rounds



**23**  
Sanitation projects



**?**  
Science kits



**56**  
Homes with electricity



**1,880**  
Lanterns



**21,000**  
Students Empowered to Learn





# MERRY-GO-ROUNDS



In 2019 we were able to install 7 new Merry-Go-Round systems. Adokope, Mansokwa, Zippo Nyuinyui, Wenamda, Galelia, Akwanso and Obosono. It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank our donors who have made this possible to give the gift of light and power to over 1,000 more school-aged children this year. This will make a significant impact on them as well as their families. As Empower Playgrounds seeks to improve the reading levels and skills of these children we know their lives will be greatly impacted.

This year was our first year working with a Ghanaian corporate sponsor. Empower Playgrounds teamed up with Accra Brewing Company to install a Merry-Go-Round project in Obosono. We are grateful for the support from this local business and look forward to working with them again.



# SCIENCE KITS



Continuing to do research on the progress and the effectiveness of the Science Kit project. We found that students who have used our science kits are more interested in careers in STEM than those who have not. We also found that many teachers were not aware of our science kits. They had either been out sick during the initial training or they had moved to the school after the training. EPI has implemented ongoing teacher training for the science kits to ensure that each teacher knows the resources at their disposal. EPI has also begun hanging science kit posters highlighting the EPI Science Kits available at each school to help teachers know what lessons they can use each kit for.

This last year Richard has been able to help implement science clubs at several of our schools. The Government has allowed for an additional hour after school to support programs like this. These science clubs help to continue to educate our students in STEM activities.

# LIBRARIES



This last year we were able to add 5 new libraries to our schools. In 2019 Adenya, Manponshai, Nyienpeya, Kurosua and Nwowsua all received new libraries in partnership with the African Library project. According to many studies conducted by UNESCO, literacy is key to reaching a higher standard of living. In countries like Ghana, where up to 70% of rural inhabitants are illiterate, there is a shortage of educational funding and most resources go towards teachers and classrooms. There is simply no place in the budget for supplementary reading materials, let alone a library.

Our partnership with the African Library Project and through generous donations from our donors has enabled us to bring libraries to our schools in Ghana at an affordable rate.

# COMPUTER LABS



Our computer lab at Attabui Primary and Junior high School has continued to be a successful one as students have learned from the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Teachers. This year we have been fortunate to add computers in the following schools: Wurudu Wurudu, Nyienpeya, Adorkope and Bahankra. Each one of these schools received one laptop. We believe that even with one computer these schools will benefit by learning more about the technology and how to use it.

# CLASSROOM BLOCKS



In 2019 EPI completed two major construction projects. Both schools were in desperate need of new classrooms to support their growing student population. Like most of the communities that we build, Community 9 and Watro had previously built schools with whatever materials they could find. In a country like Ghana where there are multiple rainy seasons this is a serious problem and impediment to students' learning. Empower Playgrounds partnered with the Roberts Family Foundation for our Community 9 and Watro projects.







# FEMININE HYGIENE KITS



In 2019 Empower Playgrounds was able to donate 834 Days for Girls (a global organization) Kits to 12 more schools this year. Each kit contains reusable pads, soap, wash clothes, panties, absorbent liners, a drawstring bag or zippered pouch, and plastic zip bags for washing used pads. Peace Yeri is our menstruation kit project manager. She conducts the training at the schools and meets with the headmasters and PTA leaders to discuss the project. Whenever EPI introduces a new project to a school we try to inform and involve community members as well as school leaders to ensure the project's adoption and ultimate success. It is because of this program that girls in rural villages in Ghana are now able to stay in school everyday. They no longer are falling behind their male counterparts due to their menstrual cycles.



DONATED BY  
ENPOWER

# BOREHOLE PROJECTS



There are so many rural communities in Ghana that do not have access to clean water. In many cases children have to walk 3 miles or more to fetch water. Oftentimes, their water sources are not clean and lead to many serious health problems. In 2019, EPI with the generous donation from the Roberts Family Foundation was able to put in a borehole water project at one of our schools, Fawotrikosie. The children and families from this remote village area have been able to be blessed with access to clean water.

# GIRLS SCHOLARSHIPS

2019 was a major year for Empower Playgrounds and our Girl's Scholarship Students. All 3 of the girls: Martha, Gladys and Jennifer graduated from High School. Jennifer is waiting to hear on admission to Teacher Training College. Martha and Gladys are using their year of service to figure out what direction they would like to continue on. We know this will make a major impact on each one of their lives. As each girl decides what is next for their future we know it will be brighter due to the education that they have received. Together with the Roberts Family Foundation we have been able to change their trajectory.

2020 will be a re-evaluation year for this part of Empower Playgrounds as we search for others who could be future recipients. The Ghanaian government has now made High School free. This has reduced our need to fund scholarships. However, we are still looking for ways that we can continue to encourage girls to see the importance of going to high school and receiving those higher educational opportunities.



# EPI STAFF



**Amy Williams**  
Executive Director



**Isaac Darko-Mensah**  
Ghana  
Country Director



**George Thompson**  
Ghana  
Projects Director



**Richard Koomson**  
Ghana  
Program Associate



**Peace Yeri**  
Ghana  
Education Specialist

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Ben Markham**  
Board President &  
Founder  
Retired ExxonMobil  
Executive



**Betsy Eckton**  
EdD Educational  
Adjunct Professor,  
BYU



**Jeff Markham**  
MD  
Senior  
Teleradiologist at  
6Radiology



**Wes Marriott**  
Entrepreneur/  
Consultant



**Angie Trego**  
PhD Mechanical  
Engineering  
Trego Engineering  
President



**Jaron Dunford**  
Solutions Consultant  
Workday



**Larry Allred**  
Retired  
Entrepreneur and  
Consultant



# 2019 PARTNERSHIPS



*Lease in the Lab*

In 2019 we had our fourth annual

# PLAY FOR LIGHT EVENT

This year marked our 11th year of our Play For Light Fundraising Event. Guests joined us for a traditional Ghanaian breakfast of Boufruit and also were able to play on one of our merry-go-rounds. This year we were lucky enough to have one of our Ghanaian team members, George Thompson, join us at our event. It was unforgettable to have him attend and be one of our guest speakers. We also were fortunate to hear from one of our donor families, the Long Family, about their recent trip to Ghana with some of their children. It was touching and heartwarming to hear how they are working to impact the lives of those in Ghana. We love being able to connect with our donors and help them to see the children and projects they are supporting!



**We are sad to announce the postponement of our 2020 Fall Event, but will be in touch as we reschedule our event for early 2021.**

# GET INVOLVED IN 2020

## Run a Bookdrive

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!



## Spread the Word



@empowerplaygrounds



empowerplaygrounds



goo.gl/BCohp3



## Sponsor a Project

Sponsor one of our main projects highlighted in this report and support the children in Ghana.



For more information contact us at: [info@empowerplaygrounds.org](mailto:info@empowerplaygrounds.org)  
or visit us at [empowerplaygrounds.org](http://empowerplaygrounds.org)

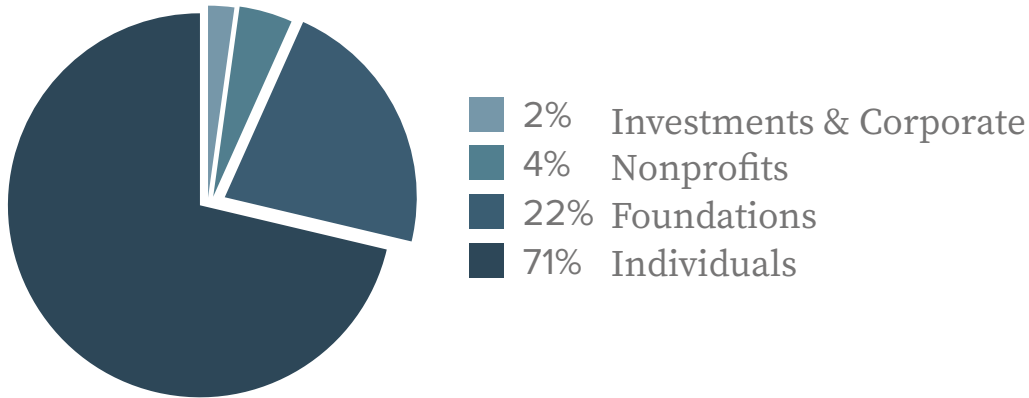
# \$45

PROVIDES A  
LANTERN FOR 5  
CHILDREN TO  
LEARN AND STUDY  
IN THEIR HOMES AT  
NIGHT

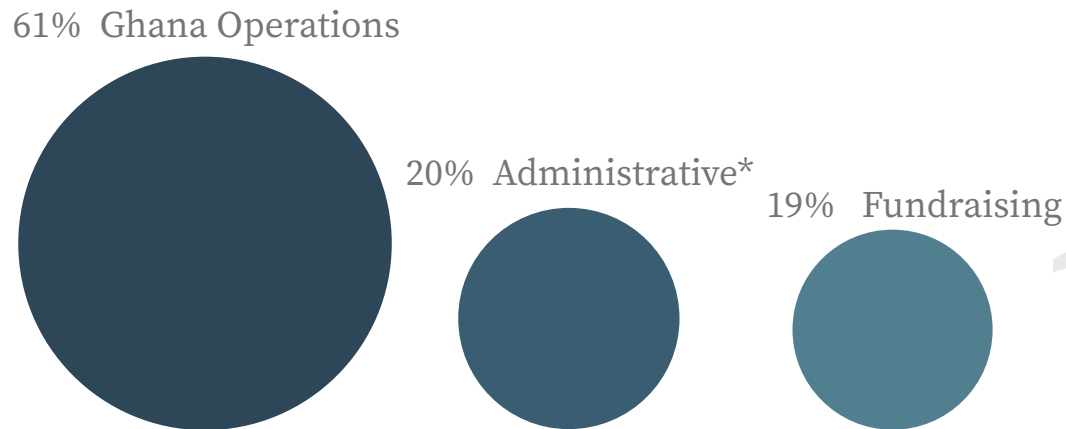


# FINANCIALS

## Donation Breakdown



## Program Expenses



2019  
REVENUE  
\$317,195.88

\*Please note that the administrative costs for our program is cover 100% by our founder. That makes it possible for 100% of your donations go to our projects in Africa. We want your money to be spent where it is needed the most, helping the children.

A group of smiling children and two women in a school setting. The children are wearing school uniforms, and the women are wearing blue and white checkered shirts. The scene is outdoors, and the children are looking towards the women with joy.

THANK YOU AGAIN  
FOR MAKING OUR  
WORK IN 2019  
POSSIBLE!