

Play and learn Foundation, Accra

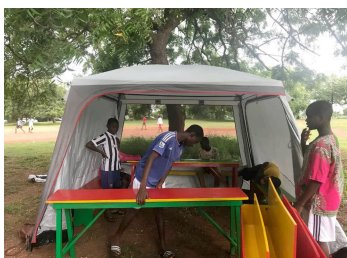
Nana Kwasi Ohene has an MBA from the University of Ghana, and works in a real estate firm near that university. He is a passionate believer in youth development, especially for underprivileged and marginalized children. He came to know some of the children living near the university, who came from deprived homes. He realized that these children lacked basic communication and analytical skills.

Mr Ohene became interested in this problem, and concluded that the main explanation was that the children were selling food on the streets of the local poor areas to help generate money for their families - in fact, the money the kids raised was often needed to pay the costs associated with their education. So the children were not free to play, and to study in the hours outside formal school.

Mr Ohene decided to take this issue in hand, and in August 2013 he started developing the Play and Learn Foundation, to offer children from the area free and accessible after school programming "to feed and grow their minds and spirits through study and play".

The Play and Learn Foundation (PLF) became a recognized non-profit organization at the end of 2015. It works with the help of dedicated volunteers (up to 100 since 2014) and has grown steadily in the intervening years. The Foundation has developed several program activities to improve in particular communication and literacy skills. Activities include reading texts aloud and analyzing content; participating in spelling contests; organizing debates; studying grammar; and creative writing and storytelling. These activities broaden the children's minds and imagination as well as improving their reading and comprehension.

The University of Ghana has given an area to PLF for its activities.



FdE was asked to contribute to the work of the PLF by financing a mobile library and outdoor classroom.

Before we became involved, classes were conducted with material printed from the internet or photocopies of books provided by the volunteers. A local carpenter built a mobile library so that it could be easily moved and stored, when not in use, in a unit offered by the University.

FdE provided the financing for books, including both educational and academic tools such as dictionaries, and history, comic and entertaining books.



The classes were held in the open air, so there was neither shelter from the rain in the rainy season, nor from the sun in the hottest months. FdE provided a tent, benches and tables, as well as a mobile projector and screen to enhance the teaching possibilities.

The photos - worth more than a thousand words - show how far a little help can go in Accra.



*Maeve Doran Schiratti
Project Committee*