



## Our School in Ghana

**D**r. Senyo Adjibolosoo, professor of economics at PLNU, is convinced of the importance of the work he is doing in Ghana – but he is equally certain that it is not “Senyo’s work.” It’s “our work,” he tells those who want to help. It’s God’s work, too.

Adjibolosoo is a man with a surprising life journey – a journey guided by curiosity and life-altering questions. Born in a fishing village among “the poorest of the poor,” his grandfather took him to school at a nearby Catholic mission, and the transformational experience of education began its work in his life. His passion for learning led him to a teaching college after which he was an elementary school teacher in Ghana for two years before he earned his B.A. from the University of Ghana.

Still, Adjibolosoo wanted to learn more. “Somehow,” he says, he ended up in Canada, where he earned his master’s and doctorate. It was while he was

in Canada that the first life-changing question came to him. He looked at the city around him – so advanced, so clean – and wondered why it was so different from Ghana.

As Adjibolosoo worked on his Ph.D. in economic development, the question continued to preoccupy him. He eventually wrote a paper on Africa’s problems, making the claim that the reason Africa struggled to develop was not lack of resources but lack of leadership.

A few years later, Adjibolosoo was becoming more and more well known in the field of econometrics. He was publishing his quantitative research in top journals and receiving positive feedback from economists the world over. But then the next question took hold of his life.

Adjibolosoo was driving to work at Trinity Western University in Canada when the question came to him: “How is what you are doing today going to put food on

the table in your mother’s village?” Deeply shaken by the question, Adjibolosoo found himself at a sudden crossroads. Soon after, God gave him the opportunity to speak before Simon Fraser University’s African Student Association. Feeling haunted by the question, he chose not to speak on econometrics but instead pulled out his old paper on Africa’s challenges. For the first time, he spoke publicly about the idea that would become “the human factor.”

Essentially, the human factor refers to the spectrum of qualities that make people who they are and that “enable social, economic, and political institutions to function and remain functional over time.” A positive human factor includes Christ-like qualities, such as love, grace, compassion, and forgiveness. Adjibolosoo’s idea is that to develop a leader, education must develop the whole person – the human – not just the mind.

That night, at the meeting, Adjibolosoo spoke for about 45

minutes, but his ideas generated a discussion among the students that went on for more than five hours.

“On the drive home, peace flooded over me. A voice said, ‘This is what I want you to do with your life,’” he said.

A few days later, Adjibolosoo cleared his econometrics books and journals from his office bookshelves and rerouted his career.

When he came to PLNU with his wife and two daughters in fall 2000, he found a place where he was supported in his efforts. When his daughters (in 7th and 9th grade at the time) repeatedly told him they learned “nothing” in school, he also found a place to further his own education. He earned his educational specialist degree from PLNU’s School of Education to learn more about the American educational system.

What he discovered made him even more committed to his ideas

about the human factor. He felt that what schools were lacking was an emphasis on spiritual and moral capital, and there were others who caught his vision. In fact, Adjibolosoo is writing a book on the human factor in American education with two of his former professors.

It was also through PLNU connections that Adjibolosoo was finally able to start “our” Ghana project. In 2004, MBA student and businessman Jason Jenkins (MBA 05) was given a copy of Adjibolosoo’s book *The Human Factor in Leadership Effectiveness*, and he was captivated by what he read. Jason, the consummate doer, asked Adjibolosoo what his dream project was. The answer was to build the Human Factor Leadership Academy in Ghana – a school based on Adjibolosoo’s ideas about leadership that would run from preschool through graduate school.

Adjibolosoo estimated that completing everything would take about 25 years, so they started right away, beginning with the library. By 2006, Adjibolosoo had collected between 30,000 and 40,000 books that he felt would benefit Ghana’s children, and he had been storing them at his house. Jason and Adjibolosoo’s colleague, Randy Ataide, provided the funds needed to ship the first 15,000 plus 24 computers.

“I always thought the Lord would have one of my books become a best-seller to bring the money, but the book brought Jason instead,” Adjibolosoo said.

Since that initial library shipment, Jason, Adjibolosoo, and other PLNU students and alumni have continued to prepare the Human Factor Leadership Academy in Ghana. In the meantime, the library has been offering after school enrichment programs and serving as a resource center for local children and teens. Teams of students have gone to Ghana with Adjibolosoo in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

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“The Point Loma students teach and inspire the students from Ghana,” said Adjibolosoo. “What we are doing probably wouldn’t happen without PLNU students.”

For example, the library now houses more than 500 videos such as Disney movies and VeggieTales cartoons. The PLNU students watch the shows with the children and then talk to them about the moral issues implicit or explicit in them.

“Going to Ghana was one of the best decisions that God led me to make,” said student Isann Rose Credito, who was so moved by her experience that she is planning to start a similar project in the Philippines when she graduates. “Senyo’s vision of the Human Factor Leadership

Academy is inspiring and has raised a passion in my heart to help other developing countries. This trip was an eye opener and a heart shaper.”

Now, after all the preparation, the academy is starting its first official classes. The preschool is set to open by November at the latest, and the first class of college freshmen should begin either this fall or in January (they are just

awaiting final accreditation by the government). At first, the classes will be taught by “teachers from Ghana with faith and passion,” but Adjibolosoo hopes to eventually bring PLNU graduates to the school, especially at the elementary and high school levels. He is also hoping some of his colleagues will teach college courses during the summers.

In fact, colleagues are already highly involved. After Adjibolosoo polled students in the after school program to see what careers interested them, he reported his findings to PLNU School of Nursing professors Drs. Larry Rankin and Rita Callahan. “Seven out of 10 girls want to be nurses,” Adjibolosoo said. “And four out of every 10 boys want to

be nurses. So we decided to add a nursing program.”

Rankin and Callahan jumped at the idea. They have already been to Ghana twice, conducting a needs assessment and meeting with local officials, nurses, doctors, and students. They have also designed a preliminary, need-specific nursing curriculum. Callahan is collecting books and nursing equipment, and she has already set up a scholarship in her name to sponsor a young woman, Benedicta, who will be entering the program when it begins, hopefully next year.

Callahan and Rankin are also envisioning ways in which PLNU nursing students can be involved.

“I really believe that God is in the midst of this,” said Callahan. “And I just love helping the young people. We believe that these young people can truly have an effect on their country.”

Callahan and Rankin are grateful for the opportunity to participate in a project in which they truly believe. Adjibolosoo is thankful, too – thankful to God; to his wife, Sabina, and his daughters (both PLNU students), Selassie and Selorm; to PLNU for giving him his job and so much support; to his colleagues; and to his students, both current and former, including Jason. ⊕

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