

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: EASTERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

SPLASH accompanies the installation of water points at school with outreach to the community to ensure all beneficiaries contribute to maintenance and upkeep and that behaviors taught at school will be carried over at home.

SPLASH is a USAID/ Zambia-supported WASHplus activity, working in 370 government and community schools in Zambia's Eastern Province promoting learner achievement through sanitation and hygiene.



Improvements in Water Access and Quality Extend beyond the Schoolyard

When an improved water point is installed at a school, the beneficiaries extend beyond the pupils and teachers to the community surrounding the school. Many benefits extend from this shared use—girls are spared walking long distances to fetch water and students can practice the hygiene behaviors they learn at school at home—but additional wear and tear on the equipment is inevitable. Working to update water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in 370 schools in four districts of Zambia's Eastern Province, USAID's SPLASH (Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene) project requires communities to contribute materials and funding to build and maintain the new infrastructure. SPLASH also takes advantage of the construction period to galvanize community support for improved sanitation and hygiene practices and to spread improvements beyond the school yard. Below are three stories from two SPLASH intervention districts that illustrate the profound effects new boreholes can have on schools and communities.

School Water Point Sets Stage for Bigger WASH Improvements

Prior to SPLASH's intervention at Mkanda Mateyo Primary School in Mafuta Village, Chipata District, the school and the nearby villages got their water from shallow wells. This was a big problem because during the dry season the wells dry up, and households would have to walk long distances in search of water. Often, the water in these shallow wells was dirty and made the pupils and others in the community prone to diseases such as diarrhea.

When SPLASH installed a new borehole at the school, teachers, pupils, and the community rejoiced because it meant an end to the long walks in search of water. Jessy Sakala, a parent at the primary school, explains that the community helps the school to take care of the water point, from cleaning it to making monthly contributions toward its operation and maintenance. The community treats the borehole as its own.

SPLASH also constructed ventilated improved pit latrines for the pupils and the teachers. Prior to these being constructed, the school was triggered in school-led total sanitation (SLTS), a participatory methodology to address hygiene and sanitation problems at the school and in the students' homes. In Jessy's observation, SLTS has had an impact: households in the village constructed their own latrines, handwashing is prevalent, and open defecation has come to an end. This has resulted in a reduction of diarrheal cases among the pupils and the people in Mafuta Village.

She also notes that the handwashing habits of the pupils continue even when they are at home. Ever since the SPLASH intervention at Mkanda Mateyo Primary School, Jessy's son washes his hands at



Jessy Sakala, a parent at Mkanda Mateyo Primary School has noticed hygiene behaviors taught at school being transferred to her home.



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home and this habit has rubbed off on the whole household, and in turn the neighbors. The impact of SPLASH on the school and the community is seen in the willingness of the members to change their hygiene practices to improve their quality of life.



Sylvia Gondwe draws water for her family from the borehole at Mchereka.

A Comprehensive Approach to Bringing Water to a Community

Sylvia Gondwe first heard about the SPLASH project during a meeting at Mchereka Primary School in Tebani Village of Lundazi District. SPLASH was installing a new borehole at the school, and the community was invited to learn how to take care of the water point, wash hands with soap or ash, clean toilets with ash instead of soap, and other healthy hygiene practices. Every household was encouraged to have a toilet and a tippy tap with soap or ash outside to wash their hands after using the toilets.

Households benefiting from the borehole were also assigned a day to clean the water point and required to contribute K2.50 toward its maintenance. "I thank SPLASH for coming to Mchereka as this has helped me acquire knowledge on hygiene that I didn't have before. I no longer have to travel far to fetch water, and my family and I now have safer water to drink and use for our daily needs," said Sylvia.

Different Community but Similar Results

Before SPLASH constructed a borehole at Nkazimwene Primary School in Lundazi District, Loveness Nyirenda had to travel about 2 kilometers to fetch water from a dam early in the morning. She had to go again later in the evening, and the water she fetched was dirty and unhealthy for her family. "The water I fetched had mud in it and when we drank it with my family we didn't drink it wholeheartedly. My family and I would suffer from diarrhea constantly and the food we eat was not tasty because of the water," said Loveness.

Nkazimwene is one of 100 schools in Lundazi District receiving SPLASH support constructing boreholes, toilets, handwashing stations, drinking water stations, and hygiene and sanitation education, all of which extend beyond the schools into the community as a whole. Loveness notes a big difference in the water drawn from the borehole compared to the dam. She thanks SPLASH for constructing the borehole as it has made life easier and healthier for her and her family. "I no longer have to travel a long distance to fetch water," she observed.



Loveness Nyirenda collects water with family members at the Nkazimwene Primary School borehole.

About WASHplus

The WASHplus project supports healthy households and communities by creating and delivering interventions that lead to improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and household air pollution (HAP). This multi-year project (2010-2016) was made possible with support from the American people delivered through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Global Health and led by FHI 360 in partnership with CARE and Winrock International. The project uses at-scale programming approaches to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under age 5 globally.

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