

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD: EASTERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

Schools in the Eastern Province take creative approaches to maintaining and sustaining their SPLASH-funded sanitation and hygiene improvements and the acquisition of needed supplies with the help of WASH Committees and Clubs.

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.



## Sustainable Approaches: Strategies for Operations and Maintenance



*A WASH Club member washes her hands using a tippy tap at Nthombimbi Primary School, and the waste water helps the garden grow.*

Clubs at schools to think of ways to fund the needed maintenance and repair. SPLASH works in schools in four districts of the Eastern Province of Zambia—Chadiza, Chipata, Lundazi, and Mambwe—and a sampling of stories below show how these schools have put energy, creativity, and commitment into sustaining their improvements and changing hygiene habits for the better.

### Fundraising Ventures for Sanitation Necessities

Nthombimbi Primary School is located in the Chipata District of Zambia's Eastern Province. Melody Mumba is both a teacher and WASH coordinator for the school. SPLASH first arrived at the school in 2013, which is when the hygiene situation at the school changed for the better. The WASH Club members and the pupils are grateful for the improved toilets and are determined to maintain the facilities and the good hygiene behavior they have adopted.

School WASH Club members and others pupils are engaged in a variety of different money-generating ventures to support the purchase of sanitation and hygiene necessities, such as sanitary pads, toilet tissue, soap, and cleaning material for the toilets. The different ventures include making tippy taps, digging rubbish pits, and slashing grass in the community. The pupils charge the community members different fees for their services. For example, tippy taps range between K5 and K10 (less than a penny USD), and a 1 meter ditch costs K10. The pupils also repair tippy taps for a fee. Produce from the school's garden—such as beans, pumpkin leaves, and tomatoes—are also being sold to the community to support purchase of hygiene products. Community sensitization has raised the awareness of the importance of maintaining good hygiene, and the parents are supportive of their

Building new sanitation facilities and providing functioning water points to schools is just the first step in the USAID-funded SPLASH project's goal of creating healthy school environments that encourage learning and achievement. The schools and surrounding communities learn the importance of these improvements, how to adopt healthier practices in their homes, what additional supplies are regularly needed to support student hygiene, and how to maintain these facilities for the long term. SPLASH (Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene) supports local School WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) Committees to develop operations and maintenance (O&M) strategies. These committees work with WASH

children's efforts to keep the school well supplied.

Another way the WASH Club members sensitize the community is by making sure that all WASH Committee members serve as role models with tippy taps, toilets, and clean surroundings at their homes. Mrs. Mumba says, "The biggest change I have noticed in the pupils and the community since SPLASH arrived is that no open defecation is taking place both at the school and in the villages." Nthombimbi has adopted good hygiene behavior as a normal way of life, and new young pupils are taught how to live this way.

## Swapping Honey for Sanitary Materials

Chiparamba Primary School in the Chipata District is a model school for other schools in the area. It not only embraced WASH activities through the SPLASH project with great enthusiasm, but it shares WASH knowledge with families in the surrounding community and is now exploring creative ways, including producing honey, to provide much needed WASH and hygiene supplies for its students and teachers. The SPLASH project supports the provision of safe drinking water, improvement of sanitary facilities, and the promotion of lifelong health habits for children and their families in schools throughout Eastern Province, including the Chipata area where Chiparamba Primary School is located.



*Tending a beehive at Chiparamba Primary School.*

Chiparamba is an especially large school with 1,165 students (554 girls and 611 boys) and 25 teachers, 13 of whom are female. Before SPLASH, the school had no handwashing facilities or drinking water stations, and it had inadequate latrines. Additionally, no one was trained in school WASH practices so this information was not shared between the school and surrounding community. As a result, both the school and the nearby community had poor WASH conditions, which can lead to greater incidence of diarrheal diseases and in turn poor school attendance.

Working with SPLASH, the school and community constructed 19 ventilated improved pit latrines (seven double latrines and two single latrines for boys, and eight double latrines and two single latrines for girls). The project also constructed a handwashing facility and rehabilitated two dilapidated water points at the school, which also serve the surrounding community.

Furthermore, SPLASH trained Yvonne Chanda, a teacher who is also the School Hygiene and Nutrition coordinator, in school WASH. Mrs. Chanda worked with SPLASH to form a school WASH Club where students learn WASH practices through role play, drama, and song. Adamson Sakala, the head of the school, and Joseph Chiwala, the zonal coordinator, were also trained in school WASH and together they are working toward the goal of making Chiparamba Primary School a model "WASH-Friendly School."

Chiparamba is also unique because it provides sanitary materials such as toilet paper, sanitary pads, soap, and other cleaning agents for menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for girls who have reached puberty. This is made possible through the school's Works Committee and WASH Club, which has now embarked on a beekeeping project as a way to obtain MHM supplies for girls in the school.

## Enlisting Community Support for Operations and Maintenance



*Edith Nhlane shows the chart developed to keep track of community contributions to the school's water point.*

Mchereka Primary School in Lundazi District is the beneficiary of a new borehole, toilets, handwashing stations, a water tank, and a drinking water station thanks to the SPLASH project. More than 500 people benefit from the new borehole.

To facilitate ongoing maintenance of these facilities, the school developed an O&M strategy. The school administration together with the school WASH Committee came together and discussed the borehole's maintenance, from which the surrounding villages of Mchereka also benefit. It was decided that each household would contribute K2.50 toward maintenance. A spreadsheet was developed to track payment and nonpayment by household.

Edith Nhlane, head teacher at the school, noted, "The response so far from the teachers has been overwhelming and from the community members it has been a bit of a challenge as some pay and others don't. The school WASH Committee is sometimes forced to call a public meeting to address the issue of nonpayments. It sometimes locks the

borehole to ensure payments are made from the community members still owing,” added Ms. Nhlane.

Despite these challenges, the strategy is working well. When the borehole breaks down, the school knows there are funds for repair because an operation and maintenance account was set up. The school administration and staff support the SPLASH team, recognizing that many other donor-supported boreholes were eventually abandoned when the project was completed. Mchereka school staff was adamant that would not happen and pushed for development of the O&M strategy.

Ms. Nhlane expresses the joy of her community when she says, “We are so grateful to the USAID-supported SPLASH project for the water facilities and for educating the school on how best to maintain the borehole. We know that even when the SPLASH project is gone we will be able to sustain our water point. The school and community have really taken full ownership of the borehole because they know that without it life would go back to the same old way of drinking water from shallow, dirty, and unprotected water wells and walking more than 6 kilometers for clean water.”



*Agnes Banda showing the diagram that has helped improve tissue use at Kamuna.*

## Filling in a Supply Gap to Meet Market Demand

Agnes Banda is the WASH coordinator at Kamuna Primary School, a SPLASH intervention school in Chipata District. When SPLASH first visited in 2012, staff were trained to guide the school on improving the sanitation standards and hygiene habits of students and teachers as a critical first step in improving the sanitation facilities.

SPLASH oversaw the construction of the toilets at Kamuna beginning in August 2014 with input from the community members who contributed upfront building materials and labor. By October 2014, the toilets were installed but challenges remained. Behavior change was needed to acquaint students with the use of tissue paper for anal cleansing, and how to use the sink taps to turn the water off and on. Indeed, even the appearance of the toilets was new to the pupils.

As Mrs. Banda explained, “The pupils and the community as a whole have been using papers, leaves, and other materials whenever they visited traditional toilets.” To change these

behaviors, many of which were also the norm in their homes, required some thoughtful approaches. Ideas were suggested and tried and the solution that emerged as most feasible was to have each student buy and bring tissue to the school.

Slowly by creating an enabling environment where students were shown what tissue looked like and that it was available for purchase in shops, students changed their attitudes. Another piece that helped create this enabling environment was encouraging the private sector shops that were nearby the school to stock toilet tissue, something that these shops had not previously done. Mrs. Banda asked a local businessman near the school to stock tissue so students would not have to travel 5 kilometers for the nearest tissue supplies. “I spoke to Mr. Ngoma, owner of the shop, and encouraged him to stock tissue, and now his business is booming as are other shop owners that have taken up the selling of tissue.

“I thank SPLASH for picking our school for its intervention program. This has helped change hygiene at the school and the business market in the community,” added Mrs. Banda.

## 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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