



## Basa Primary School: Diespsloot, South Africa

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It is the lunchtime break at Basa Primary School and as the children release some pent up energy the volume is turned up. While a clump of boys and girls spin exuberantly on the PlayPump® water system, an orderly line of children are taking their place at the connecting tap for a drink of water.

“We’ve seen water pumps before, but never with so much fun and the clever storage tank” Sijabulisiwe Khumalo. She is just 12 years old, but already her impeccable English and immaculate school uniform tell of her commitment to learning. The PlayPump system is also a constant source of inspiration for Itumeleng Mpane who dreams of becoming a scientist one day. “When I grow up I also want to invent clever things that will help my community.”

Basa Primary School lies at the epicenter of the sprawling township of Diespsloot. What was once a vast tract of open land has in just twelve years become the home for over 56,000 people. Currently only 2,000 families have formal housing with basic infrastructure to municipal services, while the rest wait out the government’s redevelopment plan in squalid shacks, without access to water and sanitation.

The PlayPump system was installed in the school grounds long before the school had even erected classrooms and toilets. In those days, a few dozen children crammed into a makeshift shelter and used pit latrines. When the system was first installed, its water was even used to mix the cement that resulted in the two rows of classrooms that now stand proudly alongside it. Today the school has sturdy classrooms with doors and windows, flushing toilets and the PlayPump system tap where the children can wash their hands and fill up their water bottles.

Mrs. Ghazi, Principal at Basa Primary School believes that every child has the right to an education. “So often we have seen the water being switched off in the township, preventing people cooking their food or keeping clean. Since the installation of the PlayPump we have opened our gates to the community and allowed them to come and take what they need,” says Ghazi.

Water is occasionally supplied to the community in tanks at random intervals and when these run dry, disease can creep in. If the school had to request tanks like the rest of the informal settlement, chances are that the teachers and children would be taken away from

their classes and be preoccupied with the business of collecting water.

“You can see people really struggling when the water tanks run dry” explains 12 year old Brian Nxumalo. “People rush around trying to get just a basin of water so that they can get ready for work. I am glad that I can at least take a bucket of clean water home from the school when this happens.”

With the water harvested from the PlayPump system, the school has been able to begin a large scale food garden that form part of the school’s feeding scheme. “Even if we can provide just one balanced meal to the children who come from the poorest homes, we know they stand a chance of being able to concentrate through their classes” says Mrs. Ghazi. Each row of vegetables is under the guardianship of a particular class, and the children take tremendous pride in clearing their patch of weeds and watering their precious plants.

“We cannot live without water. Our lives are better now,” says Palesa Mkhabela – a 12 year old student. “When I become a doctor and can help other people I will always remember that health starts with clean water.”