



Sakhe Primary School: Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

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Nozuko Nkamana has been the administrative powerhouse of the school for over fifteen years. In her time she has learned to accept two truths: first, that a marginalised school such as Sakhe would never be able to afford play equipment for the kids, and second, that access to water would always be a challenge. Nkamana never expected that both of these issues could be dealt with in one fell swoop.

“The year I joined the school was the hardest year ever,” Nkamana remembers. 1992 was the year of one of the country’s most devastating droughts, which caused the wells and the rivers to run dry. “We had to buy water from those wealthy enough to have boreholes on their farms and then pay for transport to bring it to us,” Nkamana says.

Before the PlayPump® system was installed at the school, the children were encouraged to bring drinking

water from home. Often attendance would go down on the days that the water was cut off. “We understood that the children were helping their mothers collect water and that this took priority,” explains Nkamana.

Today the picture at Sakhe Primary School has been completely transformed, thanks to generous donors like Pioneer Foods who have helped fund 20 PlayPump systems across South Africa - including the one installed at Sakhe Primary. Now the children are able to attend classes and take water home.

As secretary of the school, Nkamana is acutely aware of the health of the students. Access to clean drinking water has visibly improved school attendance. “We no longer hear complaints of sore stomachs and we have over 200 children aged between 6 and 14 who are eager to make something of themselves,” she says.

Even though the PlayPump system is enclosed in the school grounds, the school allows the community access after school hours. “Our gates are never locked” says Nkamana.

As the sound of children’s laughter and singing rises up from the merry go round, the message to conserve their most precious resource looms above on one of the water tower’s billboards: Water Sustains Life – Use it With Care.