



Regiment Basic Primary School: Lusaka, Zambia

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Nestled just off one of the busy streets of Lusaka sits a thriving primary school led by headmistress, Mrs. Mutaka. The Regiment Basic Primary School is home to some 1,200 students who attend school in three shifts beginning at 6:45am with the final classes finishing at 5:00pm. Their ages range from 7 to 18 years old.

Despite peeling paint, broken windows, and long hours, 44 teachers provide an atmosphere of community and a standard for learning that would surprise most. Just a few short weeks ago, their lives became a lot easier with the addition of the Play Pump® water system on the school grounds.

Until now teachers and students relied on water from a neighboring school. On most days the supply was not enough. The school's 22 flush toilets had stopped working long ago, but now several times a day a simple hose is attached to the PlayPump system tap. Just outside the toilets, buckets after buckets are filled so that children can wash their hands and flush the toilets.

The merry-go-round seems to be constantly spinning with a steady stream of children arriving throughout the day for the various school shifts. Mrs. Mutaka is delighted with the pump, which was sponsored by the U.S. Government, "The children now come early to school because they want to play. The children think they are just playing but they are really pumping water. The PlayPump is keeping them busy and off the streets." She laughs and says, "One child even told his mom he wants to be transferred to our school so he can play on the pump too!"

A school garden is also now in the works. The vegetables produced from the garden will be sent home with the children that Mrs. Mutaka and her teachers have identified as the most vulnerable. As the garden grows with time, the school hopes to sell the surplus so they can provide books and supplies to those students who cannot afford them.

"When I came to the school almost two years ago there were a lot of problems. There were a lot of plans but without

water they couldn't be achieved. If we had to pump water with electricity we simply couldn't – that costs money, we couldn't afford it. The PlayPump doesn't cost us anything and helps us so much."

As students play on the PlayPump, 13 year-old Loveness Hikalungo reports, "I had not heard of a toy that can pump water. I enjoy it very much. We are now able to take a drink and wash our hands. Our vegetables are growing very well."

As the school day draws to a close, a group of boys gathers for their turn at the PlayPump and one shouts out, "Can we please have another one? It's a good thing to do with your friends. It's too nice. "

A smile comes over Mrs. Mutaka's face and she says, "See, all schools in Zambia should have a PlayPump."

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