

A reliable water supply makes a big difference to Kamaila school



The Kamaila Middle Basic School is one mile from the village; it was established in 1993. In 2004 it had seven hundred pupils aged 5 to 13 being taught in three minimally furnished classrooms. There were only ten teachers who taught classes of a hundred pupils at a time. Some of the children walk many miles to school, leaving home as early as 4 a.m.

Until July 2005 water was provided from an old borehole with a hand pump, which broke down with alarming regularity and had a low yield. The school borehole serves more than one thousand people in the school and the surrounding community, which includes housing for teachers and their families.

In 2003, when WfK trustees first visited the school, there were two latrines for the pupils at the school, which were almost full. Their structure was in such a dangerous condition that they were abandoned. The 700 pupils had to use just two makeshift toilets, separated by insubstantial grass fencing. There was no possibility of them washing their hands.

In July 2005 Water for Kids refurbished and relined the school borehole and installed a new hand pump, restoring a reliable supply of clean water for the first time in many years. Four new pit latrines were also built, this was not adequate toilet provision, but a significant improvement for the children.

In May 2006 Water for Kids trustees saw twelve further latrines being built at the school, these were funded by the District Water, Sanitation, Health and Education Committee. This is particularly important as three new classrooms were under construction, which will allow the school role to increase to 1,000.

The water distribution system was installed at the school in September 2006. A 10,000 litre tank was sited on the hill behind the school. A difficult task only achieved with the help of many villagers, who also dug trenches for all the pipe-work. The water is now pumped from the borehole via the tank to banks of taps at the school and standpipes near the teachers' and other homes nearby. The school kids now have water to drink and water for hand washing and cleaning the latrines.

The installation at the school was formally handed over in October 2006, by Delphin Kinkese (Project Manager for ZIEH) and Water for Kids trustees Natasha Franklin, Greg Warwick, Sara Emanuel and Barrie Whitehead. The school celebrated the occasion with a song and dance performance involving some very talented children. A poem "**Water is Life**", written by a teacher Cheyo Nyondo, was recited by one of the school girls Tisa Mawele, it was powerful stuff.

The study tour in October 2007 involved much work to improve Kamaila school. By then the new classrooms were in use so children in Kamaila up to the age of 15 could go to school and could get

more education close to home. We were very pleased to discover that the number of teachers at the school had increased to 17 so the 787 pupils could be taught in smaller classes of 45. In May 2007 **interviews were held in Kamaila** following the completion of the water installation. One of the teachers said “We have more teachers now, because when they come here they see there is water here they never try to go back, because there are very few schools in Chibombo District which have tap water.”

One of the problems with having more older girls in the school was that they would often stay away from school for up to a week per month when they were menstruating. This would be avoided if there were a private washing facilities for these girls to use.

In just two weeks in 2007, those from the UK on the study tour worked with local people and were able to improve the school by:



- building a **wash-room for girls**
- painting the classrooms and two fabulous murals
- setting up a computer room, with three computers provided by Civica PLC and a printer.

Amongst the many things the group brought for the school was a contraception game. Following the visit one of the teachers, Cheyo Nyondo, started playing the game with the other teachers. Once they were up to date with the subject, older children started coming to his house to play the game at the weekend. The sessions have progressed to discussions about personal issues and are so popular, that Cheyo has identified a building where he can continue his work; one day he plans to make it into a youth club. This could have quite an impact on the lives of some of the children. He told me that in his class there are eight girls who are pregnant, this is about a third of all the girls. They are only 13 or 14 years old and they will have to get married.

Kamaila school had changed a lot since the first WfK visit in 2003. In addition to the physical changes there were more children and attendance by the pupils and teachers had improved as a result of having clean water. During the interviews in 2007 one teacher said “There is some improvement in attendance and I am sure it is because the pupils are not walking long distances to fetch water..... They just wake up in the morning, they wash and they just come to school; they are on time, but before they used to come late.” The deputy head teacher said:

“We really appreciate your sacrifice and you have really changed the shape of this school..... There are few people who think of helping others and that of all the schools in Zambia just to come and choose Kamaila we really appreciate it. We thank the lord for bringing you here to help us.”



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