

Zambia - Falling in Love All Over Again

“Life in rural Zambia is unbearable.” This is the story that is always heard among newly trained teachers who are posted in rural areas. This reaction is due to the perception that rural schools have poor or inadequate water and sanitation facilities.

Mr. and Mrs. Fwankila, teachers at Chamsebe Primary School who have been married for two years, have a different story. When they were first posted at this school in the Lundazi District in late 2013, they did not know what to expect because they have spent most of their time in urban Lusaka.

When they arrived at the school, Mrs. Fwankila was surprised but relieved to hear that their official house was almost completed. The second thing she asked to see was the latrine, which according to her is very important and critical to her stay at the school. Each time she goes to a new place the first thing she looks out for is a toilet because she values clean facilities coupled with availability of safe and clean water. “I also love my family too much to expose them to unhygienic environments,” she said.



She sighed with relief when she saw a row of ventilated improved pit latrines. She later learned that the latrines were constructed by SPLASH, a USAID-supported project.

“I want to applaud USAID/SPLASH for the great work that they are doing. They have made my stay in Lundazi easy and very comfortable because of their facilities. I don’t complain about drinking contaminated water because of the water pump, which is available. Because of this I am always revitalized and energized to carry out my duties in the school because I have clean water, a clean latrine, and I know that even the pupils that I teach are well taken care of. This has helped me to spend more time in school thus increasing contact time between me and the pupils,” she says. The new facilities have contributed to helping young girls who have reached puberty to stay in school throughout the term, a phenomena that is unheard of in other schools.

Mrs. Fwankila explains, “The availability of water and sanitation facilities has made me not to see any big difference between rural and urban areas. My husband and I don’t even miss living in the city. We are much happier and spend a lot of time together. We will forever remain grateful to USAID /SPLASH facilities.”

Mr. Fwankila was quick to add, “My wife and I have fallen in love all over again because we have much more time to spend together. We don’t have to go long distances looking for water. SPLASH has brought clean and safe water right at our doorstep. We have a clean house, a backyard garden, and we love our new community.”

USAID/SPLASH continues to impact schools and communities in eastern Zambia by building latrines and installing boreholes, water tanks, drinking water, and hand washing stations, making sure that hygiene is a regular practice. The project has provided WASH facilities in 337 schools and its program has reached over 260,000 children.