

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD: EASTERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

Working within existing MESVTEE systems and with ministry stakeholders in the Eastern Province has enabled SPLASH to build a sustainable and replicable system for integrating WASH and MHM into schools throughout Zambia.

SPLASH is a USAID/ Zambia-supported WASHplus activity, working in 370 government and community schools in Zambia's Eastern Province promoting learner achievement through sanitation and hygiene.



## Integrating WASH/MHM into Existing Government Systems

From the beginning of the USAID-funded Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene (SPLASH) activity, Zambia's Eastern Province has served as a model for the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) to demonstrate: integration of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) into schools and the curriculum; development and use of school monitoring instruments with WASH/MHM indicators; establishment of in-service WASH training for teachers under the School Program for In-Service Training for the Term; and implementation of efforts to establish school-to-community links. SPLASH developed guidance and technical resources to support sustainability and encourage national scale adoption of comprehensive school WASH/MHM. SPLASH also worked within existing MESVTEE systems to develop, carry out, and refine the school WASH/MHM program so that these activities are already embedded in the ministry in one province and will be replicable in others.

The key stakeholders are MESVTEE at the provincial, district, and zonal levels—district education board secretaries (DEBS) who set local policy and manage development of strategic plans; buildings officers responsible for all school infrastructure development and maintenance including latrines; and standards officers who support WASH/MHM through school monitoring with instruments that include WASH/MHM indicators. School WASH is further integrated in and supported at the district level by the District WASH Education (D-WASHE) Committee, which coordinates all WASH activities in district schools and communities. Zonal schools host resource centers where teacher in-service training takes place. SPLASH supported the strengthening of the resource centers with WASH/MHM training of trainers workshops and access to WASH materials. Working closely with the Department of Housing and Infrastructure Development under the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and other stakeholders, SPLASH supported the provincial WASH governing body, the P-WASHE Committee, to also include school WASH in its strategic plans and oversight program.

Below, three stakeholders involved with SPLASH activities in their respective districts explain SPLASH's impact on education.

### A Project with a Difference



*Herbert Mwiinga, Lundazi District Education Board Secretary*

In the words of Herbert Mwiinga, Lundazi District Education Board Secretary: "My goal is to provide quality service to the people of Lundazi regardless of tribe or background. I have been the DEBS for the past 15 years, but never have I worked with a project such as SPLASH. The project is exceptional because it addresses several hygiene aspects that are normally ignored by most educationists and projects. It is normal for anyone to forget they need water and only need it when they



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are truly thirsty. Unfortunately, it is sometimes true that schools are built without latrines and proper water facilities. Reality only strikes when pupils want to use the latrine and a quick makeshift one is constructed that often creates a health hazard because of little care and investment in its construction.

“The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education within the Eastern Province, particularly in Lundazi District, remains committed to delivering good services, providing direction in the management of education, and ensuring schools have an environment that supports learning for boys and girls. When I heard that a water and sanitation project was coming to the district, I did not know what type of a project SPLASH was going to be. But after working with the team, I realized that SPLASH was indeed a project with a difference in that it not only worked within the existing structures of the MESVTEE but it also worked with the local community to construct the latrines and water facilities. In addition, in all the schools that SPLASH went to, it engaged local communities to bring up-front materials such as grass and blocks, which went toward the building of toilets and other sanitation-related facilities.

“From the initial start of the project, I kept saying SPLASH was adding value to the infrastructure at the school. For example, when you visit schools like Chisemwa, Mwata, and Kapondo, you will note visible and vast infrastructure improvement. For the Lundazi DEBS office, SPLASH couldn't have come at a better time than now when the government did not have enough resources to build and rehabilitate the latrines. SPLASH has galvanized local communities in working with the government.

“I am a proud DEBS because all the good work of SPLASH has happened during my tenure in office. SPLASH has afforded me an opportunity to work so closely with the local communities. I have used my tongue to whip communities in the right direction so that they can embrace SPLASH water and sanitation facilities and take full ownership because the schools belong to communities and not teachers. Teachers can be transferred to other schools, but the surrounding communities will always remain.

“If you visit most SPLASH intervention schools, you will be told that enrollment has increased. Though tying attendance to improved performance is still difficult, I hope to see it move. I want to thank USAID through the SPLASH project for the great work that it is doing in my district. It is exciting and fulfilling to work for the benefit of the children because it yields insurmountable joy.”

## Bringing District Stakeholders Together

SPLASH has been actively working with the D-WASHE team in Chadiza District since October 2013 to help improve and encourage WASH activities in schools. Samson Tembo is the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Coordinator at the Chadiza District Council and is secretary of the D-WASHE Committee, which has the mandate to coordinate all district



*Secretary of the D-WASHE at the Chadiza Municipal Council  
Samson Tembo*

WASH stakeholders. He had this to say about SPLASH, “The relationship between the D-WASHE and SPLASH has been good. We have been coordinating and interacting well through meetings, and plans on WASH activities in schools have been shared. In addition, reports on the successes and failures on WASH activities, budgets, trainings as well as capacity building have helped improve water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools at the district level.”

Mr. Tembo elaborated on the strengths of working with SPLASH at the district level. Jointly planned WASH activities between the D-WASHE and SPLASH are well coordinated during the planning and budgeting process through tracking of finances and assignment of stakeholder responsibility. In addition, he notes considerable reduction in the duplication of work thanks to clear documentation of who is doing what and in which area. Participation of different actors coming together to work with SPLASH on the modification of WASH facilities in schools has improved the coordination among stakeholders within the D-WASHE team.

Among the challenges facing Chadiza District are convening meetings at a time that is convenient to all. Some meetings have been cancelled due to lack of participation, and this affects overall progress of activities. Another issue of concern is that the D-WASHE is predominately male, which means the female perspective on WASH interventions in schools is not represented during the meetings. Mr. Tembo added, “It would be good to have individuals who are trained in WASH coming to the D-WASHE to help the committee continue running their operations smoothly.”

Mr. Tembo concludes, “As SPLASH comes to a close this year, projects won't be left without sustainability, they will keep on, and the D-WASHE will ensure they serve their intended purpose.”

## SPLASH Contributions from the Provincial Perspective

Speaking of his experience with SPLASH, Abraham Banda, an engineer for DHID (Department of Housing and Infrastructure Development), and the secretary of the P-WASHE Committee says, "The committee and SPLASH have a very good relationship; it has been a committed stakeholder and attends meetings regularly. SPLASH donated testing kits to the P-WASHE to help test the water quality as well as motor bikes that have helped facilitate monitoring of WASH activities."

He observed that the committee has learned quite a lot from SPLASH, "The first lesson is the need to invest in schools when it comes to issues of hygiene, sanitation, and handwashing facilities, and that the focus should not only be on the community. Secondly, there needs to be a correlation between the number of latrines and the number of pupils at any given school; good quality toilets should be built and in such a way that benefits the physically impaired and the old within the community. Lastly, the importance of menstrual hygiene management in schools, which is an area that has been overlooked."

The Provincial Permanent Secretary of the Eastern Province is the chairman of the P-WASHE, and Mr. Banda views having a representative of the government on board as a strength. Furthermore, the P-WASHE provides policy guidance on the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program and on other WASH matters. In addition, stakeholder mapping of who is doing what and where helps increase the impact of WASH activities within the province, and the sharing of information and resources helps the P-WASHE achieve much more than one stakeholder would be able to do on its own. Working with all WASH stakeholders helps expose the weak and strong districts within the province and prioritize the committee's work.



*Abraham Banda serves as the secretary of P-WASHE under DHID.*

## About WASHplus

The WASHplus project supports healthy households and communities by creating and delivering interventions that lead to improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and household air pollution (HAP). This multi-year project (2010-2016) was made possible with support from the American people delivered through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Global Health and led by FHI 360 in partnership with CARE and Winrock International. The project uses at-scale programming approaches to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under age 5 globally.

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