

hot off the Press



The Ripple Effect

Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

John F. Kennedy

SHARING THE STORIES OF BCS STUDENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

IN THIS ISSUE

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By Megan C. & Mahlah M.

Do you remember our most recent Character Connections class (CC)? The class began with each group coming together and playing a variety of games that helped us to build connections with others to get to know the students in our classes better. Students went to the gym for a whole school assembly where all of the people in our BCS community were honored for the work on PROJECT COPE, RAISING HOPE, our school-wide project that helped to raise money to buy two-wheeled tractors to send to our partner village in Zambia. The assembly ended with a job well done from our own principal Mr. Morawski as students headed back to their classrooms. As they were sent back each student had one question in their mind. "What is one question you can think of to send to a student in Chilupula that will help you understand them better?" The questions submitted to *The Ripple Effect* Newsletter were incredible! BCS students wanted to know answers to questions like, "What does the name of your school mean?" to "What do you for fun?" we can truly see how the students at BCS are all different and unique in many ways based on the questions they wanted to know about the students in Chilupula. In this article, you will be able to discover what makes each of the kids in Chilupula unique and different as

you read the answers to your questions submitted not long ago. This first "Hot Off The Press" edition will focus on the questions related to Mwachilele School.

Enjoy!

-Ripple Effect Team

Answers to your Questions about Mwachilele School:

What subjects/classes do the students learn in school?

Grade 1-7, English, Chinyanja(Zambian Language), Integrated Science, Social Studies, Maths, Literacy, Creative And Technology Studies, Expressive Arts. Grade 8-9, include Religious Studies, and Information and Technology.

NOTE: This curriculum is required in all public or government schools in Zambia.

What does the name of your school mean?

The name Mwachilele means, a baby or child still being nurtured by its parents. (Soli) language.



Mwachilele School

This is the school where the students in Chilupula go to school.



What is the best thing about your school and why? Students have different answers for this question depending on their interests. Some of the answers include: We have a Bole-Hole, (hand pump for water), at school. Teachers are friendly and help us to read. The school is near my home.

Did you know...

We would like to know more about your school. Mwachilele School was first established in 1959, but then students were learning under a tree instead of in a school building. In 1960, the school building was officially opened. The first Head Teacher was Mr. Dominic Matambo. There have been 6 head teachers since that time, the current one is Mr. Kellys Munkombwe.

Mwachilele primary school is located south-east of Lusaka the capital city of Zambia, which is about 50 miles. The school is in Rufunsa District in Chief UNDA UNDA Chieftdom. The first enrollment was 25 boys and 15 girls for a total of 40 students. The classes were known as sub A. To this day, there has been a tremendous increase in the enrollment of students from the initial 40 to about 500 currently. The school has a total of 11 staff (teachers), 8 are male and 3 are female. There is one night watchman. There are 10 teachers houses all located within the school compound. All teachers are trained. Each teacher has been allocated with a few acres of land where they grow their own crops, like maize. Almost all of them do not buy Millie meal, (staple food). For shopping, teachers go to the nearest town, (Chongwe), to buy their essential necessities. Chongwe is about 25 miles away. If they can't find what they want at Chongwe, teachers travel to Lusaka which is 50 miles.

Currently, the entire school has nine classrooms, but during its inception there was just a 1 by 2 classroom block. The entire school compound has just 1 Bole-Hole, (Hand pump for water), which serves as the only source of water for all the teachers and the surrounding community.

There is no running water for the school. The school has two special committees, a Parents Teachers Association, (PTA), and a projects committee. The function of the PTA is to mobilize local resources to build infrastructure, planning future activities, initiate new projects, and monitor progress of ongoing projects. The projects committee only implements the projects initiated by the PTA. The PTA Committee comprises of 10 people, 6 elected by the community, and 4 teachers. While the projects committee

consists of 4 people all of them are from the community.

The school has a uniform comprised of a light blue shirt for boys, pair of black trousers and a black jersey. The girls have a light blue skirt, blue shirt as well as a black jersey. There are 70 students in grades 1-4 and 50 students in grades 5-7. The standard classroom block is 20 feet (width) by 65 feet (length). Each teacher has a single stream, (one session per day with the same class). The normal teaching hours are 6 hours per day.

The teachers employ many teaching methods. The most commonly used are group work, discussion, role-play, and field trips. Other teaching aids are models like, skeletons, flip-charts, and science kits. However, the school has some limitations on the use of other advanced teaching aids partly because the school has no electricity or the materials are expensive.

How long is your school day and how often do you go to school? Students in grades 1-4 go to school for 4 hours a day. Students in grades 5-9 go to school for 6 hours a day and there is one hour for prep on 2 days a week.

What does a typical school day look like for boys and girls? For example, what sports do you play, what do you do for fun, what do you eat and how often do you eat? Do you eat at home or school? The day is a busy day for both girls and boys when they come to school. All of them are kept busy with school work. When it comes to school chores, there is no gender bias in the allocation of school work. All days look normal to us just like any other day. We do not often have sports, and we eat mainly nsima. We do not eat at school because the school does not provide food. If we have no food at home, we go hungry to school. We often go hungry most of the days because we do not have enough food to eat. We frequently run out of food most of the year because we do not grow enough to take us the whole year round.

What do boys and girls think about school? Do they like it? Some of the students said they want to be educated so they can help their parents and relatives who are suffering now. Students express optimism about their future if they are educated.

What books do you read? We read textbooks, special papers, (articles), and fiction books.

Is it challenging to find time to study? Yes, very challenging indeed, because we travel long distances and sometimes without eating our food. By the time we reach our homes, we are dead tired. By the time we want to study, it is already night and there is no electricity to help us read at night. Sometimes, even if we have homework, our parents will not help us solve our work because they are either illiterate themselves, (can't read), or they are tired too. There is no electricity to see so that is an issue at night as well.

Why can't the girls go to school all day? Most girls cannot go to school every day because of high levels of poverty, long distances, and working in the fields. At school, there are no facilities/bathrooms for girls.

How have the solar lantern aided in studying and what future career goals do children have? Have they been helpful? Students are able study at night more than they were before as the solar lanterns help them have light at night. The solar lanterns have also aided them by providing a cheap source of electricity. They are able to write and finish their homework. Students have varying views regarding their future careers; some said they wanted to be police officers, soldiers, teachers, etc.

What challenges do you face? The following are some of the challenges that Mwachilele school faces:

- No running water
- All teachers houses and the school have no flushing toilets. They use pit latrines. Pit latrines are sometimes dangerous for the school students as well.
- There is only a single Bole-Hole, (hand pump for water), at the school.
- The school is not connected to electricity or solar grid for internet usage.
- Inadequate school textbooks
- Inadequate textbooks for each child in class, especially for upper grades
- Absenteeism due to long distances from school
- Many students do not complete their school work due to lack of support

What other needs do you have? The students need crayons, exercise books, (notebooks), pens, textbooks, school bags, shoes, educational financial support. Carol Mweene could use a bicycle the most because she lives far from the school, (5 miles).