

Erika Makalli, Tanzania

Twelve year old Erika lives in Mbalawala Village in Tanzania.

Girls are usually responsible for the collection of water. Where there is no clean water source, they have to collect water from contaminated sources such as muddy pools with harmful bacteria.

Mbalawala village has had clean water for just over one year now. WaterAid started work in this village two years ago, motivating the people and laying the groundwork for the tapstand project.

Now it is complete and everyone knows about good hygiene, the village is clean. There is a café in the village as people have more time and money to be enjoying these simple pleasures.

Here, Erika talks about how the safe water supply has changed her life. >>



↑ A tapstand has changed life in the village.



↑ Before the pump many women and children spent two hours a day collecting water.

Q&A

Hello Erika. What was your life like before the village had a tapstand?

“Before we got clean water in the village my life was so very different. I was constantly sick and had horrible, itchy skin because I could never wash properly. I was always suffering with stomach cramps and diarrhoea.”

Where did you get your supply of water?

“I had to get up at 4am and walk a long distance to find water. It took two hours and I could only collect a small amount of water to take home. That meant that Mum had to spend most of the day finding water so that we'd have enough to drink and cook with. I used to try and rush to get to school and wouldn't be able to wash or have any breakfast beforehand. Most of the time I missed school altogether because I was sick or just exhausted. There were so many diseases in this village.”

What difference has having a steady supply of clean water in your village made to your life?

“I go to get water from the tapstand now. It takes me 15 minutes to go and bring back one 20 litre bucket of water. I usually do this about three times a day. I meet my friends at the tapstand so we get to have a chat. Then I wash and prepare breakfast with the clean water. We always wash our hands

now before eating which keeps everything clean and healthy. After breakfast, at about 6am, I leave for school which is a 15 minute walk. I don't have to take water to school with me as the school has a tapstand.”

You said your school also has a tapstand now – how has this changed the school day?

“As I am Prefect, I now check the toilets are clean and that the garden is watered. I start lessons at 7am. Lunchtime is at noon. We get 1¹/₂ hours off so I walk home. When I get home Mum is usually doing the washing so I prepare lunch. By 1.30pm I leave for school again. Lessons finish at 3.30pm. We all stay on after school to water the garden and to clean the grounds and toilet block. It's great to have a lovely clean school with flower beds and clean pathways.”

So having a tap in the village now means you have time to go to school?

“If I still had dirty water I wouldn't be going to school anymore. I probably wouldn't have had any real education at all. Also, most of my friends would probably also have died from the diseases we used to get. Life would be miserable. I feel I can at last look forward to a brighter future. Perhaps I will be a health and hygiene teacher when I leave school.”



Tanzania

Population: 36.9m
Infant mortality: 165/1000
Life expectancy: 45.9 years
Water supply coverage: 62%*
Sanitation coverage: 47%
Below poverty line: 35.7%
Adult literacy: 69%

*The Tanzanian Government says that 58% of the rural population and 15% of the urban population do not have access to a safe water supply.