



## Upendo Kids School, Mirira, Kenya

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Upendo Kids, located in the Mirira community of Kenya, is both a school and orphanage for 400 children. Unfortunately, the center didn't have a single reliable water source. Each week, the staff bought water for cooking and drinking from vendors who sold water at exorbitant prices. This was a huge expense for Upendo Kids School, one that many teachers paid for from their own pockets. When they ran out of money, they also ran out of water. So, the older students walked to a river five kilometers away to gather water, hauling heavy containers back to Upendo Kids. The trek was both physically and emotionally taxing. The students could see visible debris in their water but had no other alternative.

There were also unseen threats: the water was full of harmful bacteria, parasites, and other contagions. The Upendo School community suffered from diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, and other water-related illnesses. Time spent recovering from these illnesses meant time away from lessons, increase the community's dropout rates and further entrenching the community-at-large in a cycle of poverty.

Josephine is a 38-year-old teacher at Upendo Kids. She shared one story of how the water crisis impacted her students: "Two years ago, we had an unfortunate incident in the orphanage. We had a child who was epileptic. She did not have a way to bathe and decided to go to the river with her friend who was only 6 years old. When they tried to gather water, she fell down and could not move. Her friend was frightened and started screaming, but she could not find her way back to the orphanage. They stayed at the river for three hours before they could get help. This is what triggered the orphanage to look for a permanent solution to the water crisis."



When money is tight, the children have to use surface sources like this to gather water.



The school water system is powered by solar energy, meaning the children will have abundant water regardless of access to electricity.

Water Kenya staff was glad to respond to his request by scheduling a visit to the campus. They arrived at the school and surveyed the situation. They affirmed that, though the situation was dire, the community was willing to mobilize around a safe water solution. Living Water Kenya therefore agreed to construct a piped water system that feeds water throughout the campus.

Now, with safe and accessible water running throughout the school, the children have bright futures ahead! The gift of safe water will have ripple effects for generations to come. The school and broader community are now a safer and healthier place where families and students can holistically thrive—mind, body, and spirit.

Josephine shared the immense change that the safe water system has brought to the Upendo Kids School: “We no longer have to buy water for drinking! The money we save will be used to improve the lives of children who come to the orphanage. We will also use the water to irrigate crops in our greenhouse. We expect to grow all the vegetables we consume in the orphanage. This will reduce the cost of buying food.”

Safe water has transformed the lives of every child at Upendo Kids School!



Some of the children at the school excitedly test out the new tap stand!