

# New Health Clinic Provides Vital Care to Children at Bumala School

*One Child's Village*  
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***How the addition of a small, stocked clinic, and one hired nurse, has changed the face of healthcare in a small Kenyan village.***

Janet's voice is slow and calm amidst the background noise of children, and the sound of a rooster crowing. It is easy to imagine her moving carefully through the busy clinic at the Mercy Children Centre in Kenya—a school for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. She relays what life is like for the students in the village.

"Pneumonia always affects them," Janet says. "Because most of them don't have cardigans. When they come in the morning, I see them just walking like this [arms over their chests], shivering." Janet particularly appreciates the hoodies that One Child's Village has provided to the students. A hoodie to a western teenager might be a fashion statement; to a student at Mercy Children Centre, it is a barrier against diseases that can easily kill them amidst poverty.

A year ago, no clinic existed at the school; but when an eight-year-old student named Michelle was hospitalised after receiving a routine injection for a fever, it became clear that on-site medical intervention was needed at the school. Things quickly spiralled out of control for Michelle. The site around the injection became badly infected, and she lost most of the surrounding skin. In the village, the proper treatment was not available to treat Michelle's wounds, and she risked losing her leg.

Through the help of a volunteer who had spent time in Bumala, One Child's Village rallied to support Michelle. Three times the amount of money needed was raised. Michelle received a skin graft and recovered, and the donors were happy to see the extra money go toward longer-term care for the Bumala orphans: the clinic. Until the school can consistently generate its own income and purchase supplies, they continue to rely on funds from donors for the children's health needs.



Nurse Janet, at the new clinic, explains the health needs of the school children to One Child's Village.

*(Photo courtesy of Todd Lorentz)*

At least ten of the students at the school are HIV-positive. Treating illness immediately is particularly crucial to these students. The drugs that Janet is able to administer to the children who contract malaria—anywhere from 45-60 students each month—markedly reduce fever and speed up recovery. Having supplies and medications on hand at the clinic also allows Janet to treat minor problems like lice, ringworm, fungal infections, and nasty burrowing parasites called "jiggers" before they spread and become major outbreaks.

Having a nurse on site at the school is especially important to the female students, many of whom are surprised by their first menstrual cycle and may not have an adult in their life who can teach them about it. The students receive instruction in anatomy and physiology in Class 8—but for many girls, the experience comes before the lesson.

When Janet is not able to treat a particular illness, she can consult with a doctor at the Health Centre in a nearby town. In the future, Janet hopes to have a doctor on hand at the clinic, which would allow her to open the facility to 'outsiders' and generate income for the school.

One short year ago, that goal would have been nothing but a dream.