



Special Edition, Part I

To save time, labor, money and trees, part 1 of our special edition will be short and only sent by mail to those without email on record. Parts 1 & 2 will be on our website and we'll send email links when available. To get on our email list: News@AbleAndWilling.org with subject "subscribe".

Look for the whole edition on our website with more complete news about our progress and plans.

A Word From The Founder

Hello, Friends!

I send my greetings from Congo. Today is October 6, the start of the rainy season in this region below the equator. The first big rain knocked out some power transformers in the region for most of a day. Myrt School normally has one or two outages of an hour or less each week. This is better than most other areas because we built our own substation last year. Ours is not overloaded because of the quality equipment we built.

It seems that every day brings new challenges and rewards. Our current big challenge is several new government regulations for schools, both public and private. I believe the regulations are well intended and implementing them will greatly improve schools in the long run.

The short run, however, poses major problems in timing and managing our resources. The rest of this issue describes the regulations and how we are responding.

Despite the headaches from government regulation, we are making progress. Jim Carpenter tells me that this will be covered separately in another special edition on the website.

I am glad to hear that Maggie Lusweti and her two young boys have returned safely from western Kenya where they visited relatives. Maggie is doing wonderful work there helping schools, carrying on her parents' tradition of contributing to Kenya's educational system. I am proud to have her as a board member of Able & Willing and to help support her work. Please hold her father in the light as he struggles with cancer.

Thank you all for your continued support. You are the life-blood of Able & Willing.



Wa Mbuyu (Puma)

New Regulations Creating Hardships For Schools

In an effort to improve schools, several ministries in the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have issued regulations that are creating hardships for schools. Our schools, Myrt Schools 1 and 2 and WaMbuyu Tech, are scrambling to comply. The new regulations have created cash flow problems that have resulted in a two-day teacher strike at Myrt Schools.

The new regulations cover two areas: revenue collection and building codes.

New Revenue Collection Regulations

The recently appointed Katanga Minister of Education issued a regulation that prohibits schools from charging enrollment fees and collecting monthly tuition in advance. Many schools rely on these sources of revenue before school starts in early September to purchase supplies and to make sure they have enough to pay staff at the end of September. This is also a problem at the end of the school year as some parents withdraw their children before school ends in late June and don't pay until school starts again in September.

Myrt teachers had agreed to accept half pay last June and take the rest when school resumed. The new regulations meant that Myrt couldn't meet the pay agreement and the teachers went on strike on Oct. 3 for two days. The strike ended when Puma paid the teachers with borrowed money.

New Building Code Regulations

Two other government ministries have issued regulations covering school building codes. One requires schools in Lubumbashi to have running

water for drinking and toilets. This year the city limits of Lubumbashi expanded to include Myrt School 1 campus so it must comply. What was once a quiet rural village of mud houses when we started in 1995, largely untouched by government regulations, is now part of a growing city. Our last year's project, building an electrical substation and making and planting utility poles to connect to the hydroelectric grid, is partly responsible for the rapid growth in our area.

We had planned to use funds raised by sixth grade students at Walkersville Middle School, Maryland, to erect a water tower and employ pumps made in school workshops. The new regulation accelerates the planned deadline.

Another regulation mandates building plans drawn by certified architects and approved by the state. Among his many skills, Puma is an excellent draftsman. Jim Carpenter loaded free CAD software from DraftSight onto the three laptops Puma brought this year. That may help to draw the 23 structures, ranging from wells to classrooms and workshops, built on Myrt 1 campus since 1995 and help Puma to negotiate with the government officials.

How To Help Now

Able & Willing is asking our friends to help by making a tax deductible contribution by mail or online.

Our immediate target is to accelerate collection of \$5,000 for three student aid programs that Able & Willing supports each year. This will solve Myrt Schools' cash flow problem so the schools can continue to be self sufficient. The student aid provides full year's tuition to 50 students via three programs: (1) scholarships for orphans, (2) a training program for Scouts over 12 years old and (3) a work program for parents to earn tuition for their children.

Able & Willing will continue to raise money to pay for the infrastructure projects described in Part 2, available soon on the website.

Donate securely online:

<http://AbleAndWilling.org>,

Please use our new payment button that accepts PayPal or credit cards. Transfer faster at low 2.2% merchant transaction fees.

Donate by mail: send check to

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