



## Mufumya Partnership **Primary School Update**

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for Elastic Path Services, Inc.

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# Solar-powered light fixture is key to brighter future for students in Food for the Hungry's Burundi program

Gerard is a sixth-grader in Mufumya, a small town in Burundi. Sundown comes before 6:30 pm on any day of the year in Burundi, which didn't leave Gerard much daylight for studying. So he did his homework under the dim, flickering shadows of a kerosene lamp. When his family couldn't afford kerosene, he studied by the light of the kitchen fire.

"It was so hard," Gerard said. "I was getting tired quickly, and then had to wake up very early in the morning to review my notes."

This past February, through a generous partnership with Elastic Path Services, solar panels to power overhead lights were installed in Mufumya's primary school allowing Gerard and more than 40 elementary and secondary school students from the community to study at night in a well-lit classroom.

By the end of March, Gerard reported his GPA had improved by 10 percentage points, and he had moved from 23rd to 15th in his class of 72 students. "I expect to improve performance as I continue to use the solar panel light," Gerard said.

Fellow student Renovat (pictured right) is in 10th grade, and praying fervently that he'll be promoted to 11th grade. But before the solar panels were installed, he was failing math, geography, biology and physics. Like Gerard, he studied at home with a kerosene lamp or a candle. After just a few weeks of studying at Mufumya Primary School, with the solar lighting, he's now passing biology and physics, and moving up to 11th grade looks possible.



And the solar panel has another benefit – household savings. "With the solar panel, the money that my parents were using to buy petrol [for the lamp] is used to meet other family needs," said Renovat.

The solar panel is also generating revenue for the school. Principal Evariste Havyarimana reported that community members are charging their cell phones at the school, for a small fee. "The school was able to earn 4,000 Burundian francs [about \$US 3] in three days, which means that on average, the school will be earning \$90 monthly," he said.



Solar panel in action



Cell phone charging station



Principal Evariste Havyarimana