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PlugIn & Play: Helping children to learn, thrive and survive

In a world seemingly beset by insurmountable problems and depressing realities, one fact seems to remain constant; wherever you find children and water in the same vicinity fun will be had. The combination of water and fun seems unlikely in the context of either rural African communities living in some of the world's harshest environments or in the provision of special educational needs support closer to home. But SSP Waterplay, based in Surrey, has found that their PlugIn & Play system is playing a role in addressing both of these issues.

When Angela Wright MBE, Crealy Great Adventure Parks' Managing Director, approached SSP to help put together water features aimed at raising awareness and funds for the 'PlayPumps International' project in Africa (www.roundaboutplaypumps.org/), SSP was delighted to sponsor the project. PlayPumps are an ingenious way of pumping water to the surface and storing it for use in remote rural communities. By installing a simple roundabout linked to a pump, all the energy expended by the local children whizzing round is harnessed and used to make fresh drinking water accessible to 2500 people per roundabout.

The Crealy features are the first of these 'Roundabout PlayPumps' to be installed outside of Africa and are used to pump water into an SSP PlugIn & Play system. The whole feature includes information displays and collection points which have so far paid for the purchase and installation of two PlayPumps in South Africa.

PlugIn & Play is also playing its part in helping with special needs educational provision. The interconnected tanks and gullies allow children over three of all abilities to manipulate and channel water, developing an understanding of abstract concepts such as cause and effect. It also facilitates group activity, allowing the development of social skills as pupils communicate and cooperate during play. The equipment complies with DDA requirements as well as meeting NCCA guidelines for special educational needs.

For PlugIn & Play information please contact Greg Seale, MD of SSP Waterplay at www.sunsafe.co.uk. To find out more about PlayPumps see www.roundaboutplaypumps.org

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