

The Congolese Swing

Playgrounds are a rare occurrence. There is no such thing as a public park here. That is something that is sorely missed - a nice open green field for kids to run around and get out their energy. And the few playgrounds that are available charge per person anywhere from \$5-\$10 for use, which is not something your average Congolese can afford on their daily salary. It does make sense culturally. If no one is using the playground, who is to prevent someone from "borrowing" a piece from the equipment (which could render it unusable or unsafe). This is why the few playgrounds available are behind large gates with people working there to guard the equipment and prevent people from misusing it. The fees go to pay for the guardians and upkeep.

The exceptions are schools. All schools are built behind large gates and people work there all the time, keeping the precious equipment guarded at all times. Each school that I have visited has some sort of playground fashioned out of anything available - old metal trash cans, old tires, metal poles, etc. It is really quite brilliant how resourceful people can be!

These photos were taken at Adah's school playground, but she was unable to model the usage due to her collar bone.



But my favorite thing of all is the swing! It is perfect for little ones who must sit back in order to use it and it prevents kids from jumping out of it at enormous heights. It is an old tire turned inside-out. Impressive!