



children first.

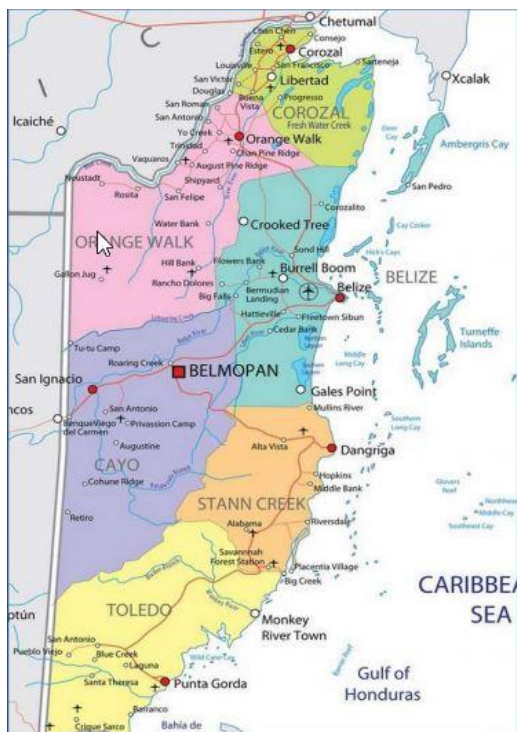


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BELIZE: IMPROVING WASH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

June 2019

Overview



Poor sanitation, water scarcity, inferior water quality and inappropriate hygiene behavior are detrimental to the health of school-aged children who spend long hours in the classroom. In Belize, especially in regions prone to hurricanes and flooding, families are often forced to live in close quarters with compromised sanitation conditions. Because of the inadequate home conditions, the physical environment and cleanliness of school facilities are even more important in promoting children's health and well-being.

A significant hinderance for school attendance, particularly for girls, is the availability of quality water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities at schools. As part of the Quality Child-Friendly School Initiative (QCFSI), UNICEF stresses the importance of access to safe water and sanitation as critical to creating an effective learning environment.

Primary school completion rates have remained stagnant in Belize at around 75 percent for the past five years. Violence in and around schools remains an issue, while grade repetition and dropout rates have also increased, with boys disproportionately affected. Between 2013 and 2014, nearly 20 percent of students needed two additional years to complete primary school.

WASH affects more than just the ability of children to attend school. Many children suffer physical and cognitive damage from water- and sanitation-related diseases that impact their performance at school and their overall educational attainment. WASH in Schools programs improve health, foster learning and enable children to lead as agents of change for their siblings, parents and the community at large.

Research demonstrates that having a reliable and safe sanitation system in schools can lead to the following results:

- A healthier student body;
- Better school performance;
- Children positively influencing hygiene practices in their homes, among family members and throughout the community; and
- Understanding of menstrual hygiene and related sanitation practices.

UNICEF in Action

In Belize, UNICEF works with government partners, such as the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture (MOEYSC), to improve school systems and promote the QCFSI model. The WASH component of the QCFSI focuses on improving and maintaining bathroom facilities by remodeling or extending existing facilities to include an appropriate number of working toilets, hand washing basins, showers and urinals for the student body of each school and by placing floor and wall tiles in restrooms. These actions help increase access to facilities (i.e., make them wheelchair accessible) and make restrooms more efficient, functional, esthetically pleasing, and safe.

Safe and child-friendly water, sanitation and hygiene in schools improve health, boost educational achievement, promote gender equity and have a positive impact on communities. The minimum requirements for UNICEF's WASH facilities for schools are listed below:

- **For girls:** 1 toilet for up to 20 girls; 2 toilets for 21 – 50 girls (add 1 toilet for every 50 additional girls)
- **For boys:** 1 toilet for up to 20 boys; 1 toilet and 1 urinal for 21 – 50 boys (add 1 toilet and 1 urinal for every 100 additional boys)

The Impact of Your Investment – Thank You!

With the generous support of Mr. David Kim, four primary schools have undergone WASH improvements: Corozal Church of Christ, Chunox Roman Catholic, Chunox S.D.A., and San Pedro. With Mr. Kim’s support, the restrooms at these four schools have been renovated, directly impacting the health and education of 656 primary school students in some of Belize’s most underserved areas.

Name of school	# of teachers	# of students		Total # of students
		Male	Female	
Corozal Church of Christ	9	125	119	244
Chunox Roman Catholic	11	98	107	205
Chunox S.D.A.	6	59	48	107
San Pedro	6	52	48	100
Total	32	334	322	656

- **Corozal Church of Christ Primary School**

Prior to this project, the Corozal Church of Christ school had only one urinal and two toilets for its 125 boys and only two toilets for its 119 girls. Now the school has three toilets in each of the male and female bathrooms with at least one wheelchair accessible cubicle in each.



Figure 1. Picture of Corozal Church of Christ entrance.



Figure 1. New construction.



Figure 3. Renovation.

- **San Pedro Government Primary School**

The San Pedro Government school originally had only two toilets for their 59 boys and two toilets for their 51 girls, with no additional toilets for preschoolers or staff. The latrines were not wheelchair accessible, there were not enough hand washing basins, and no urinals existed. By June 30th, the prior bathroom block will be entirely refurbished to create three different sections: one for male students, female students, and staff. Each section will have two toilets and a hand washing basin, the male section will have urinals, and both the male and female sections will also have a shower.



Figure 4. Team inspecting construction site.



Figure 5. Before work began.

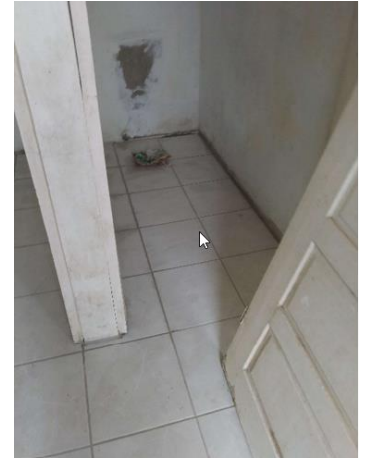


Figure 2. New tile work in male bathroom.

- **Chunox Roman Catholic and Chunox SDA Primary School**

Prior to this project, both schools lacked bathrooms suitable for students with special needs, even though there was a special education center on site serving four students. Each school had only one toilet serving the 205 students at Chunox Roman Catholic and the 107 students at Chunox SDA, as well as two additional toilets for the approximately 20 preschoolers on site. By June 30th, the male and female bathrooms will each have two toilets, a shower, and a hand washing basin and the entire WASH infrastructure (all the plumbing and electrical fixtures) for both bathrooms will be replaced with new American Standard fixtures. An accessibility ramp will also be installed so that the bathrooms are wheelchair accessible.



Figure 7. Team inspection of construction site.



Figure 8. New exterior and fascia.



Figure 9. Old fixtures removed.



Figure 3. Children at Chunox SDA Primary School.

A Message of Thanks

UNICEF is grateful for Mr. David Kim's long-standing support of the WASH in Schools program in Belize. Because of his ongoing support, UNICEF has been able to leverage additional funds for WASH in Schools programs in Belize, including from other U.S.-based private donors and the European Union. In addition, Mr. Kim's funds were used to leverage UNICEF Country Office Education funds to ensure the full scope of work on each project school could be completed.

Thank you, Mr. Kim, for your commitment to improving the WASH infrastructure and learning environment for children in Belize so that they can stay healthy and complete their studies.

On behalf of the children of Belize, thank you!