

School WASH

How PCI's USDA McGovern-Dole projects improve students' access to clean water and increase the use of proper health and hygiene practices



Students demonstrating proper handwashing at a station constructed under EDUCAMOS in Guatemala.

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A student washing her hands after using the latrine constructed at Kampenga Primary School in Tanzania.



A "child monitor" explaining steps for proper handwashing at Salomón de la Selva School in Nicaragua.

OVERVIEW

Since 2001, Project Concern International (PCI), a Global Communities Partner, has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement 16 McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) and 3 Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement programs. Combined, they have reached over **1 million students** with nutritious school meals, improved literacy education, as well as important water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) improvements. PCI currently implements 3 McGovern-Dole projects:

- FFE III benefits over **190,000 students** from **231 schools** in the Mara Region, Tanzania.
- EDUCAMOS benefits **38,287 students** from **294 schools** in the department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala.
- MESA II benefits **77,500 students** from **1,115 schools** in the departments of Jinotega and the Southern Caribbean Autonomous Region, Nicaragua.

Access to WASH remains a global challenge. Almost **half of schools worldwide have no handwashing facilities** and around a **third of schools do not have safe water supplies or adequate sanitation**, leading to negative impacts on students' health and school attendance, especially for adolescent girls (WHO/UNICEF 2020). Lack of access to safe water and sanitation as well as limited knowledge about good hygiene practices is prevalent among the populations targeted by PCI's McGovern-Dole projects. Without access to clean water at schools, student health is at risk and they lose valuable learning time by having to walk long distances to fetch water, often from unprotected and potentially contaminated sources.

"I work with preschool and first grade. Previously, we did not have a handwashing station, but we knew that it is a very important practice. Now, we have one and the children wash their hands properly. Today, it is more important according to the suggestions of the Ministry of Health."

— Alfredo Martín Francisco Joaquín, teacher at Gelna Primary School, Guatemala

BY THE NUMBERS



1,078

Schools using an improved water source



238

Wells or water stations/ systems built or rehabilitated



242,690

Students benefiting from wells or water stations/ systems

*Progress to date across PCI's current projects

SCHOOL WASH IN PCI'S MCGOVERN-DOLE PROJECTS

PCI's integrated school feeding approach recognizes the importance of linking WASH to improved student health, improved nutrition through school meals and improved learning by reducing time spent fetching water, a task that largely falls on women and girls. PCI's WASH interventions are especially important in promoting COVID-19 prevention practices and supporting local governments and schools' readiness to safely reopen schools in alignment with safety protocols.

WASH activities in PCI's McGovern-Dole projects aim to:

- **Improve knowledge and increase use of health and hygiene practices** through promotion of key messages and conducting trainings on good hygiene practices, such as proper hand-washing, water quality testing and water disinfection methods.
- **Increase access to clean water and sanitation services** through building and/or rehabilitating WASH infrastructure, including latrines, wells, rainwater harvest tanks, boreholes, hand-washing stations and other water systems/stations.
- **Sustain WASH service deliveries** through innovative, community-led designs of WASH infrastructure and strengthening capacity of WASH committees and community members to locally own, manage and sustain access to and benefits of WASH services.

TANZANIA

- **Built or rehabilitated 53 water systems**, including rainwater harvesting tanks and drilled boreholes with handpumps or solar systems. Some systems were constructed through public-private partnerships to share costs with communities and district councils.
- **Benefited 90,651 students (44,925 girls, 45,726 boys)** with improved access to clean water and sanitation services provided by project-constructed water systems.
- **Promoted income-generating activities** through the sale of water as a form of revenue, improving school welfare and ensuring sustainable school WASH interventions.
- **Strengthened capacity of school water committees** to increase WASH operations and maintenance of the constructed water systems.
- **Constructed 8 innovative potable water systems** in 8 primary schools, benefiting 4,286 students and their surrounding communities. USDA awarded PCI additional funds to implement potable water technologies and develop robust, community-owned water systems and approaches to sustainably increase access, availability and quality of water.

"I am delighted that my wife and kids do not have to walk long distances to the lake for water anymore. My children had been missing afternoon school lessons as they were required to support their mother to fetch water for our domestic use. Now, they do not need to walk long distances for water. Thanks to PCI for their water systems project."

– Robert Manyama, father from FFE III supported school in Busambara Village, Mara Region



Students from Bumangi Primary School fetch water from their rainwater harvesting tank constructed under FFE III.

GUATEMALA

- **Built or rehabilitated 185 water systems**, including 86 rainwater harvesting infrastructure for schools' kitchens, toilets and sinks, which are a sustainable and cost-effective way to provide enough water for the 10-month schoolyear. To date, all 294 EDUCAMOS schools are using an improved water source.
- **Benefited 14,509 students (7,400 girls, 7,109 boys)** with improved access to clean water and sanitation services provided by project-constructed water systems.
- **Trained 4,333 students and 1,741 parents in COVID-19 preventative measures** (i.e., use of masks, social distancing, hand-washing) using audiovisual materials and shared messages via telephone and WhatsApp.
- **Leveraged parent-teacher associations to spread COVID-19 awareness messages** and lead health campaigns in their communities.

"I am in third grade. Before, we had nowhere to wash our hands; now, thanks to PCI and the parents, we have a hand-washing station."

– Third grade student at Gelná School, Municipality of Soloma



Students washing their hands before a school meal at EORM Gelná, Soloma in Guatemala.

NICARAGUA

- **Trained 5,249 parents and teachers from 63 schools on key health practices** during take-home ration deliveries.
- **Supported the installation of 2,174 low-cost Tippy Taps** at schools and homes to promote the critical times to wash hands. Models were adapted to the needs and materials available, and hand-washing demonstrations at the school level were done by "child monitors" for their peers.
- **Leveraged Women Empowered (WE) groups to promote hygienic practices.** For example, Yuneidi Hernández, a WE group member, volunteers at the community reading club. She assists approximately 10 children twice a week and promotes hand-washing as an important practice for disease prevention.
- **Delivered water filters and monitored water quality at 350 schools**, measuring chlorine and bacteria levels to ensure the use of uncontaminated water for consumption and for the preparation of school meals. These Pathoscreen tests also sensitized the community on the importance of consuming safe water. Educational materials were developed and distributed on different water disinfection methods to complement educational activities at schools.

"If we have water, we have health. Water is useful for everything we do in our homes. If we don't have water, we are in trouble."

– Andrea Blandón, WE group member in the community of Las Lomas, Municipality of Jinotega



Educational flyer developed under MESA II in Nicaragua on different water disinfection methods to raise awareness on safe water.