

Secure water for children and adolescents in rural schools in the Chiapas Highlands



Handwashing station at Betania School

Children and adolescents in 2 rural schools operate clean drinking water and handwashing systems

In the rural schools in the communities of Betania and Yashtinin, the principals, teachers, parents, and students have organized Healthy School Environment Committees.

Together, they built and are using rainwater catchment systems with 1,320-gallon cisterns at both schools. They also built 2 sheds for disinfecting and distributing secure drinking water. They put purified water in large jugs that are distributed by the children to each classroom where students can fill up their personal water bottles.

Also, they **renovated and put to use 12 bathrooms for girls, 9 for boys, and 6 for adults, which include sanitation systems, plus 4 handwashing stations** in the school courtyards.

Before the Project began, the schools could not provide safe drinking water to the children, the bathrooms had no running water, and there were no sewer sanitation systems.

"To have clean water at school is a big change! Before, the children suffered intestinal sickness all the time and they missed their classes. Now the bathrooms have running water and we have clean water in all the classrooms. We are learning to change our hygiene habits and to manage the water purification system. I am the guide in my family and in my classroom!"

*Fabiola Georgina Aguilar,
teacher at the school in
Yashtinin community*

You made this possible:

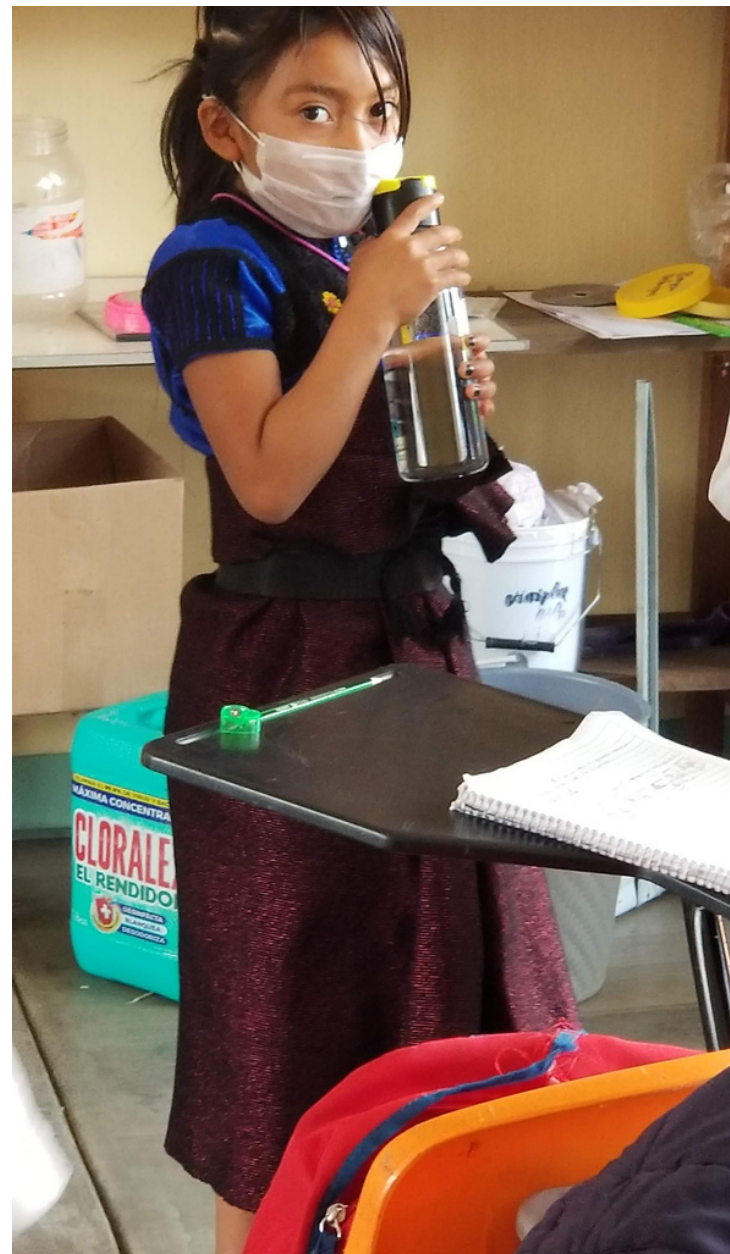
Children and adolescents drink more water and wash their hands more

650 children and adolescents from rural schools in Betania and Yashtinin now drink safe water, rather than sugary sodas and unsafe, contaminated water. They are learning to practice good personal hygiene at school and at home, including washing their hands several times a day.

Before the Project began, these schools had no way for students to wash their hands with soap and water, practice good hygiene, or have access to clean drinking water.

In Yashtinin, the homes still have no clean water for drinking, and in both communities, children and their families do not practice good hygiene.

This Project is helping to decrease the number of children getting sick and missing class.



"My son spends most of the day at school. With this project we have been working with the teachers and the students to improve the water at school and to learn about hygiene. Before, we didn't know very much and for this reason I think we got intestinal sicknesses a lot. I have learned how to wash my hands, disinfect and handle food, and the important of drinking water throughout the day. I'm interested in learning new things to do at home to take care of my family's health."

Leticia Esperanza Flores, Betania community.