

CUBA

**Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH)
Thematic Report
SC 149903**



@UNICEFCubaCastilloGonzález-2018

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1. About the Strategic Context 2018

The current UNICEF Cuba country programme spans through the 2014-2018 period¹. It includes both central and local interventions throughout the entire territory with an equity-based approach, focusing on prioritized geographic regions and population groups, with special attention to: children with disabilities; children living in rural and remote areas, or disaster-prone areas; children with socio-economic vulnerability; children without parental care; pregnant adolescents and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The country programme is divided into three main components: 1) Health and nutrition (under which the CO's WASH programme falls); 2) Education; and 3) Culture of rights, protection and participation. Key cross-cutting strategies are knowledge management and communication for development (C4D), with the aim of providing data and information to promote evidence-based advocacy and behaviour change in all components.

UNICEF's objective is to support the Government's efforts to sustain past achievements in social sectors and achieve internationally agreed goals, while improving service quality, with a view to protecting children's rights and ensuring equal development opportunities. The main expected results are:

- Improved healthcare quality
- Reduction of nutritional problems
- Dissemination of safe hygiene practices (**WASH programme**)
- Improved quality and inclusiveness of education services
- More comprehensive protection of children and adolescents
- Dissemination of a culture of rights and participation
- Prevention of violence and other risky behaviours

WASH sector background

94.2% of the Cuban population uses improved drinking water sources (MICS 2014). Nevertheless, there is a low risk perception regarding the importance of safe drinking water and frequent and systematic hand washing, which can result in diarrhea outbreaks that jeopardize people's health and lives. Even though people have some knowledge, they do not always adopt appropriate hygiene practices, such as: they do boiling water, using sodium hypochlorite, frequent handwashing, and vegetables and fruits washing prior to consumption.

Against this background, UNICEF promotes safe water and hygiene practices, with an emphasis on children and pregnant women, to prevent and reduce morbidity related to digestive, respiratory, dermatological infections or conjunctivitis, among others, which are most frequent during childhood and early adolescence.

In the specific case of WASH, the main partner is the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP *in Spanish*) and its decentralized entities, both at the national and subnational levels, such as the National Unit for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Prosalud). The Ministry of Education (MINED) plays also a key role in facilitating the roll-out of activities at the school level.

¹ A one-year extension until 2019 was requested by the Government agreed by the Board in 2017.

Partner institutions in the event of emergencies and WASH-related interventions are the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources, the United Nations (UN) agencies which are part the UN's WASH Cluster (UN-Habitat, UNDP and WHO)

2. Results in the Outcome Area (Health & Nutrition)

The Health and Nutrition component aims at supporting the Government's efforts to sustain achievements in the areas of maternal, child and adolescent health. The overall objective is to improve the quality of maternal and child care, and to promote healthy nutrition and hygiene practices.

Specific objectives are threefold, the first two focusing on health and WASH, while the third one relates to nutrition:

- Improve capacities of basic health services to provide quality care;
- Strengthen knowledge on healthy hygiene practices (*WASH programme*);
- Responsible sexuality, HIV and unintentional injuries prevention;
- Promote healthy nutrition of children under two and pregnant women.

In 2018, thematic funding contributed to support UNICEF Cuba's WASH programme² promoting safe water usage and consumption practices, with an emphasis on children and pregnant women, to prevent and reduce morbidity related to digestive, respiratory, dermatological infections or conjunctivitis, among others, which are most frequent during childhood and early adolescence.

OUTPUT 2: By 2018, families of the most vulnerable areas have knowledge and capacities on hygiene practices, responsible sexuality, HIV and unintentional injuries prevention.

UNICEF's most significant WASH achievements in 2018 include:

UNICEF Cuba continued to work closely with the Provincial Health Department in the Santiago province to implement the social communication strategy, "Always safe water", to promote safe water consumption and hygiene practices. Families, adolescents, girls and boys of the drought-affected "Chicharrones" community were empowered and became agents of change to promote hygiene and safe drinking water practices. This experience has become sustainable and has been scaled up to two other communities in the provinces of Santiago and Havana.

Over 50 people including primary and secondary school students, health and education authorities and community leaders participated in a final workshop where two community experiences were articulated and consolidated: "Always Safe Water" and "Strengthening the Resilience of Families and Vulnerable Groups Affected by the Drought", implemented as a Joint Programme between UNICEF Cuba, UNDP, WFP and the government and financed by the SDG Fund.

During 2018, UNICEF extended this experience to the community of La Timba, Havana province. 1,885 children and adolescents, their families, community cultural promoters and teachers participated in workshops, "safe water" students interest groups and recreational health festivals.

² The WASH programme falls under output 2 of UNICEF's country programme Health and Nutrition (H&N) Outcome.

3. [Financial Analysis](#)

The funds received were mostly implemented during 2017 and fully completed in 2018. The flexibility of these funds allowed them to be used for training activities and strengthening of safe water and hygiene habits in 2018. (For further information, please refer to ***UNICEF Cuba WASH Thematic Report 2017***).

Donors	Grant Number	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Global Thematic Funds	SC149903	26,705.63	25,000
Government of Russia	SC149903	500,000	467,290
Total (US\$)		526,705.63	492,290

4. [Expression of Thanks](#)

UNICEF Cuba would like to thank and express appreciation to the donors who are supporting its water, hygiene and sanitation programme worldwide which allowed for the scaling and the acceleration of WASH results in 2018.