

# Water & Sanitation Improvements

*Nebaj, Guatemala*

## Project Cost

~\$12,000

## Chapter

Jacksonville  
Professionals

## Background

The Municipality of Nebaj is located in West Central Guatemala. Guatemala faces many of the social problems seen in the developing world and is among the 10 poorest countries in Latin America. The country is filled with rugged terrain and struggles with many natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions, and hurricanes. Guatemala has two distinct seasons, the rainy and the dry season. During the dry season many people do not have the facilities to store and even treat their water. Their low-income and lack of education prevent the proper construction of such facilities.



## The Need

In the small village outside Nebaj, Guatemala, many residents do not have access to running water. Many families must fetch any water they need from a public washing station. The public water supply, which is neither filtered nor disinfected, runs dry by the early afternoon. More than 300 children that attend two neighboring schools in the community have an unreliable water supply and no septic system. These basic human needs — clean water and sanitation — go unmet for many Guatemalan children.

## The EWB-USA Response Assessment

In the summer of 2009 EWB's Jacksonville Professionals Chapter (EWB-JAX) received a request from the Global Water – Healthy Schools Program to help them and Agua Para La Salud (a local NGO), improve the water and sanitation condition of two schools in region of Nebaj, Guatemala.

The 25 professional members of EWB-JAX selected the Nebaj region of Guatemala for the chapter's first project. The project team works with the community, local non-governmental organizations, and the Peace Corps to design and implement sustainable engineering solutions for community-identified needs. EWB-JAX sent two members to the Nebaj region on an Assessment Trip in September 2009. On this trip, they gathered important information about the community's needs as well as survey data and soil information for their implementa-

tion trip in April 2010.

## What will be done:

In April 2010, a team of young professionals from EWB-JAX will travel to Guatemala to install a new hand washing station and septic system at the two schools. Large water storage tanks will be installed to ensure the children do not run out of water. A newly constructed 5 cabinet latrine will connect to a septic system to properly treat the wastewater. The team will also make improvements to the children's existing facilities ensuring everything is properly and safely working.

## Following up

EWB-JAX has made a 5-year commitment with the Nebaj community. The project team plans to make annual visits to the constructed sites as well as adopting new projects in the area on future assessment trips.

## Moving Forward

This simple engineering project — installation of a hand washing station, water storage tanks, and septic system — will drastically improve the health and quality of life for the children of these two schools. With their new facilities, these kids will be free to focus on their education and future.



Engineers Without Borders™-USA (EWB-USA) supports community-driven development programs worldwide through the design and implementation of sustainable engineering projects while fostering responsible leadership.

For more information, contact [administrator@ewb-usa.org](mailto:administrator@ewb-usa.org) or call 303-772-2723