

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contact:** Megan Lehtonen
(909) 218-8112
megan.lehtonen@iwsh.org

Community Plumbing Challenge Aims to Demonstrate Plumbing's Vital Role in Global Health

Cikarang, Bekasi, Indonesia (Nov. 15, 2017) — The 2017 International Community Plumbing Challenge (CPC2017) completed its Construction Week activities on Wednesday, delivering a sustainable upgrade of water supply, wastewater, and hand-washing facilities at an elementary school in Cicau Village, Cikarang, Bekasi (West Java), Indonesia. In addition to the plumbing improvements being delivered at the school, CPC2017 also provided free medical treatment and counseling on the importance of hygiene for public health during the weeklong event.

The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) Community Plumbing Challenge program aims to contribute to improving public health in areas where communities are still threatened by the lack of basic sanitation and safe drinking water systems. Previously the program was presented in India (2015) and South Africa (2016).

During Construction Week, an International Team of plumbing professionals – plus trades including bricklaying, welding and carpentry – from Indonesia, India, Australia, and the United States improved facilities at Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SDN: "Public Elementary School") Cicau 02 and invited the community to participate in educational seminars intended to link sanitation and hygiene to public health.

"CPC2017, our most ambitious and far-reaching program yet, brought together young, talented tradespeople from around the world to Cicau Village in Indonesia to provide clean water and safe, reliable sanitation to an elementary school and to teach the schoolchildren – and the village as a whole – about how important plumbing is to one's health," IWSH Managing Director Megan Lehtonen said.

The Construction Week work plan included renovating existing toilet facilities in one of the buildings at SDN Cicau 02; increasing the number of toilets from two to four; constructing a new hand-washing area outside the renovated toilets; installing two new elevated water tanks for improved water supply; and installing a new wastewater system.

In addition to the work plan, on Nov. 11 a team representing IWSH held social events on the importance of hygiene for public health, in collaboration with Cikarang District Health Clinic. Activities at Cicau Village Hall included free medical treatment and counseling on the importance of proper hand-washing.

PKK Cicau Village Chairman Ibu Juriah said the activity was valuable for teaching children how to wash their hands and about the overall importance of hygiene. Another resident, Mrs. Herlina, said obtaining clean water in the village was difficult. She said that even though there are local, government-owned water utilities called PDAMs, the water is not distributed properly. Residents buy clean water in order to bathe, but if money is short they are often forced to bathe and wash in a pond. Additionally, she said, they only have soap – and no clean water – to wash their hands. A farmer, Mr. Irin, voiced concern that water pipes that had not yet reached his village. He was hopeful the pipes will get to his village soon, as a drought would cause the wells in his house to dry out.

Dr. Aria Sarlito, who volunteered to participate in the Public Health Awareness Showcase presented during CPC2017 Construction Week, taught children about proper hand-washing stages and using soap for hygiene. He reminded them that people's hands touch many objects that may contain germs, and that proper hand-washing removes dirt and kills germs that can cause illness. Hand-washing steps were explained in a very interesting manner and songs were used to make it easy for children to remember.

Students Ardan, Rahmat and Fatur were very enthusiastic about memorizing the proper hand-washing steps, and they were hopeful that the CPC2017 activities would renovate toilets and sanitation in their schools. Sixth-grade students Alia and Flower said that although teachers stress the importance of keeping the toilet facilities clean, they were still very dirty.

In addition to teaching students how to properly wash their hands, Dr. Yuke Rishna Arryani, a general practitioner who often provides free medical treatment in the village, talked about the connection between diarrhea and improper hygiene. She cited several factors, but said the low availability of clean water is a primary one. The Cikarang District Health Clinic provides counseling for sanitation, and patients affected by diarrhea are referred for education. Yuke said fortunately, the number of people affected by diarrhea continues to decline each year. She said the CPC2017 activity indirectly helped their programs raise awareness about the importance of clean water.

###

*The IWSH Foundation is a charitable organization developed by The IAPMO Group.
Learn more about the IWSH Foundation and ongoing projects at www.iwsh.org.*