Ethiopia

A US$ 66 million WASH program supported by the AfDB and RWSSI ran from 2006 to 2014 in contrasting regions of Ethiopia, ranging from tropical forests south of Addis Ababa to the hot and desertic regions along the border with Somalia. Droughts and hence food insecurity still beset many regions. The Government of Ethiopia’s program aimed at providing sustainable and resilient infrastructure, supporting skills development and job creation especially for women and youth, strengthening sector governance and capacity, contributing to enhanced water and food security, and prioritizing the basic needs of under-served social groups.

On completion of the program in 2015, the AfDB sent a mission comprising a water and sanitation engineer, a socio-economist and a financial analyst to visit two regions where the program had operated, namely Somali and Oromia. The mission met with a number of government officers both in Addis Ababa and in the regions. They also met with local stakeholders and reported on how communities, representing the 2.4 million rural people benefitting from improved water supply services, are managing the services from a mix of sources (hand dug wells, protected springs, boreholes and rural piped schemes). The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative supports a «lessons learnt» approach and is entering a new program in Ethiopia which will run until 2018 with a strong focus on governance and capacity-building.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative

2015: Results and renewed commitments
The Kebshashe community is located in the Saden Sodo Woreda (administrative district) of Oromia regional state of Ethiopia. Before the water scheme, women had to travel to collect water from one of two rivers. The more accessible Borche River serves only for the rainy season, while Acheber River is available throughout the year, but located 4 hours walk away. During the dry season, women had to leave early in the morning before the flow was disturbed by cattle. They had to ration domestic use of water due to the difficulties (30 litres per household per day on average), thereby compromising personal hygiene. Those households with the means used to hire laborers to do the water transportation and most tried to maintain a donkey for this purpose. One of the rivers is leech infested and people were in constant worry about the health hazard both to people and cattle.

As far back as two decades ago, the Kebshashe community decided to set up a committee to present their case for water facility funding. That organization laid the foundations for today’s WASHCO which has been instrumental in processing the community request for a water point and mobilizing the necessary community contribution. Due to the critical nature of the need and community’s awareness, they were able to meet the criteria of the project very quickly. Each of the 200 households contributed 115 ETB (5 euros) for processing the request and opening the required Bank Account. The community also provided labor during the construction of the scheme.

Today the Kebshashe community has a gravity-based water system with 7 communal distribution points and 1 cattle trough. Over half of the 300 households served, (the scheme now accommodates 100 extra households from neighboring Kebele across the regional boundary) have already managed to get their own yard connection, with a meter. Communal water enclosures have a locked gate and villagers pay a fee to the WASHCO site manager to collect water during opening hours. WaSHCO members have received two rounds of training in water scheme management and have also undertaken soil and water conservation activities around the spring to manage the flood problem in the area. They dispose of basic maintenance tools and purchase spare parts from town based on specifications provided by the woreda water bureau. Water rates are calculated in order to cover daily operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, including minor repairs. They have been set by the Saden Sodo WASHCO at 3 ETB (0.13 euros) per household/month for communal water points and 3 ETB/1000 liters for a yard connection. Since there is no upper limit to the daily amount of water that can be collected, water consumption has significantly increased.
From a 4-hour round trip to the river, to a tap in her yard.

During the dry season, Mrs. Tiknesh Tulu used to trek to the leech-infested Acheber river to collect water for her family. She would go as early in the morning as possible before cows started to wade in it. Depending on the availability of the donkey, she would take it to transport the water back home. On market days, she was forced to carry it on her back. She had little time to care for her two young sons and her husband, a farmer. Water collection during her pregnancy and after childbirth was particularly challenging.

In 2009 when her children were aged 2 and 5, the spring pipe scheme built as part of the RWSSI program brought water to a mere 5 minutes walk from her compound. In 2013, she and her husband decided to apply for their own household connection. They paid around ETB 1,500 (65 euros) for the installation. She now appreciates the comfort and ease of having one’s own tap ‘to get water whenever you want using whatever container you have’ as she puts it. Water is no longer a problem. She says that she now has more time to take care of her family, socialize and go to the market. Above all, she is relieved of the physical burden of water collection and consequently enjoys better health.

The AfDB mission notes the benefits for the community of Saden Sodo:

- Children’s school attendance has improved as they no longer need to accompany their mothers to the river or engage in domestic work in their absence.
- Among the income-generating activities mentioned by women located close to the highway, was the brewing and sale of local drinks.
- According to the community, the year-round and adequate access of water has limited livestock loss during the unusually long dry season of 2015.
- Households no longer need a donkey for water collection purposes.
- Lower risk of the harmful traditional practice of abducting girls on the way to the distant water points. One community reported 3 cases of abduction before the arrival of the water points as a means to, or resulting in forced marriage.
The Garbo Hadley community live in the Awbare woreda of the Ethiopian Somali Region. Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, there are around 26,000 pastoralists living in the Awbare woreda. The vast majority grow crops and also raise livestock. Due to the lack of surface water during the dry season, lasting four to six months each year, members of agro-pastoralist households were forced to leave home for long periods with the cattle in search of water. Because groundwater is 200-300 metres below the surface, those who remained in Awbare used to have to take their camels 25 km away to a deep well to collect water, a nine-hour round trip. Consequently, the burden of water collection was heavy, both in terms of physical effort and economic strain from loss of productivity or opportunities to trade.

Water is now collected from a deep borehole well, protected from animals by a covering of thorny branches. The scheme uses a diesel generator and a tanker which is run by a trained operator. Water is pumped up to the tank and released on-demand. There is a communal water point and three cattle troughs segregated for smaller and larger animals. Distances have now been reduced to between 15 minutes and one-hour maximum to the borehole.

Now that the water scheme is completed, the need for seasonal movement with livestock has also been eliminated. During the 5 month dry season, the new water point is the only source of water used by communities and demand is high. In some communities, the water scheme has reportedly improved drought response in the region during the exceptionally long dry season of 2015 by, for example limiting the loss of livestock. The communally agreed tariff is 0.50 ETB (less than 0.05 euros) per 20 liter jerry can, 0.10 ETB per visit for each sheep/goat and 0.50 ETB for each cow and camel.
Ms. Ubah Mohammed is a mother of five children and a member of the Garbo Hadley WaSHCO in Awbare woreda of the Ethiopian Somali Region. She was elected cashier of the water services at a general community meeting, which she thinks is due to her reputation of being trustworthy, and also because of her education to 4th grade. Ubah collects fees from the people who come to collect water and water their cattle. An operator and a guard also work at the water point. She describes the job as tough, particularly during the dry season when demand is high, but it is also during this season that she gets paid by the WaSHCO. The 200 ETB/day (9 euros) she earns during the dry season has helped her augment her family income. Just like the Operator and the Guard, she serves as a volunteer during the rest of the year. Before the water point arrived, her husband used to collect water every 2-3 days with his camels. She collects 6-8 jerrycans per day for her own family needs. As long as she can pay, there is no restriction on the number of jerrycans she can collect. The school attendance of her children, especially her three girls, is more regular now.

The AfDB mission notes the benefits for the communities of Awbare:

- The seasonal sedentising of agro-pastoralists and, therefore, more continuous access to education and health for them.
- Better health and more time for women to spend on other things. Those living along the border with Somaliland mentioned trading and handicrafts for household use.
- Improved school attendance as children no longer have to dedicate hours to collecting water or traveling with livestock. The literacy rate of 10-14-year olds in rural areas of the Somali region is 13% according to the 2007 census.
- Less fear of the economic consequences of drought, especially the sacrifice of livestock.
- More water for household use and therefore ease of doing washing and cleaning chores.
Lessons learnt for sustainability

The mission noted that there is strong ownership of the communities to operate and maintain their respective water supply facilities. WaSHCO members stress the need for the WaSHCOs to be involved from the outset of construction works in order to control the quality, the design and especially the choice of location of the communal water points. At operational level, more training for selected WaSHCO members with a technical background in maintaining the infrastructure would ease the community’s dependence on woreda water bureau for maintenance works. Regional and woreda staff have received training and continuous hygiene sensitization activities are conducted by health extension workers (HEW) though woredas’ own budget.

The program fell short of targets in terms of quality of the rural piped schemes, mainly due to insufficient supervision during the construction phase, when some pipes were laid too close to the surface. There is a need to incentivize the participation of the private sector in the provision of the spare parts and establish a mechanism for spare parts distribution to communities.

The number of women involved in WaSHCOs was below target. Experience has shown the importance of facilitating the active involvement of women members in the WaSHCO starting from the selection criteria and process. WaSHCOs may need to take into account the domestic workload of women and incentivize their effective participation.

Resource allocation for sub-sectors and different activities were largely led by the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity at federal level and bureaus of water at regional level. This program design was detrimental to works in sanitation and hygiene which are under the Ministry of Health and bureaus of health. At regional level, water bureaus had preferred to allocate budget to water resources only.

In all woredas that the mission visited, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure supported by the Bank’s financing was limited to the construction of 2 or 3 school latrines.
The bigger picture of challenges in Ethiopia

Improving access to water is a key element to address wider development issues in Ethiopia. Many members of the population fail to see the relevance of education in sanitation and recognize that health issues are related to hygiene when they live in dread of drought and famine. As such, attempts to end open-air defecation and reduce illness related to poor hygiene will only be well received when the population is food and water secure. Delayed seasonal rains in 2015 caused livestock loss and food shortage in some parts of Ethiopia and resulted in the European Commission classing the Oromia region as «in crisis» between July and September 2015 and the Somali region as «in emergency», the 3rd and 4th phases respectively, before “Famine/ Catastrophe”, which is the fifth and worst stage of food insecurity. The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) reported in July 2015 that food insecurity was «widespread and rates of acute malnutrition are growing now above the international thresholds. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, (OCHA), credited the severe drought in the north, central and eastern highlands to El Niño, which typically impacts regions for periods of 12 to 18 months.

2015-2019 Rural water and sanitation program in Ethiopia

In line with the demonstrated Government of Ethiopia’s commitment to poverty eradication and economic growth, the AfDB is providing support to Ethiopia’s «One Water, Sanitation and Hygiene National Program» (2013), a Government-led sector program prepared following a country-wide consultative and prioritization process amongst the various stakeholders. As stated in the new National WaSH Implementation Framework (WIF), the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity (MoWIE) is now supporting the scaling-up of a community-managed project approach in the country. The federal ministries responsible for WASH will benefit from facilitation and capacity building for them to be able to:

- Construct and rehabilitate water supply facilities across the country;
- Promote hygiene and sanitation improvement at household and community level through activities such as Community Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene (CLTSH) and sanitation marketing. The target is to encourage households to build their own sanitation facilities.
- Solve water conservation problems
- Reduce contamination and, therefore, waterborne diseases
- Optimize the use of water meters and fee collection.

2015-2019 RWSSI Trust Fund grant

RWSSI-TF will support sector governance and capacity development through:

- Procurement of equipment for M&E;
- Sector Coordination:
- Set up and operational support of 20 post-construction support units and 11 women and youth-led micro enterprises for provision of WASH products and services;
- Development of a climate change risk resilience toolkit.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development partners’ consolidated support to the One Water, Sanitation and Hygiene National Program</th>
<th>2015-2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADF loan</td>
<td>USD 90m</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>RWSSI Trust Fund grant</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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