



CASE STUDY BRIEF

Strategies to Improve WASH Implementation in South Gondar

BACKGROUND

CARE Ethiopia's South Gondar Office was established in 2000 with a focus on health promotion, economic development, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Projects that support community-based WASH are currently underway in eight districts (woredas), (Farta, West and East Estie, Libokemkem, Ebinat, Tach Gayint, Lay Gayint, and Simada) funded by the Hilton Foundation, USAID, Johnson and Johnson, the European Union and AusAID.

This brief discusses a number of innovative strategies used to strengthen collaboration and joint engagement among community, local government and partner organizations involved in the CARE-led community level WASH program. It shares some of the impressive approaches in place and also suggests improvements for future programming.

MULTI-LEVEL PLANNING

Surprisingly few programs are designed to provide district-wide coverage. Planning for district-wide coverage is the beginning of a simple, yet important, process of reaching scale and integrating NGO-led programs into government planning. CARE South Gondar's WASH programming is now shifting to an even higher zonal approach, with three levels

of intervention, as a pathway towards full coverage of the South Gondar Zone.

COORDINATION THROUGH JOINT STRUCTURES

One of the distinguishing characteristics of CARE's WASH program is its strong linkage with district government bodies and processes. This close day-to-day collaboration is further supported by strategic coordination at higher zonal and regional levels. CARE also works closely with other key stakeholders including its local partners, the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development of Amhara and the development unit of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as well as other development partners, including the private sector.

WATER POINT MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

Systematically and regularly identifying and mapping the status of all the water points in target districts promotes more equitable planning, targeting and implementation. This step also enables greater transparency and efficiency in resource allocation by impartially showing where there is the greatest need.

In South Gondar, staff and partners regularly collect data about all water points in the target districts. This mapping

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and analysis activity also helps to encourage staff, as it provides evidence of real impact. Additionally, the data have shown some significant differences between the coverage as stated by government figures and the situation on the ground based on a physical inventory which then becomes the data source in planning. It is crucial to ensure that these maps continue to be updated regularly, integrated into planning processes and used to prioritize scarce resources.

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT APPROACH

CARE has adopted an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) framework which takes into account environmental and climatic factors such as: monitoring water quality; monitoring water quantity where possible; ensuring an effective drainage management system; assessing up-stream and down-stream rights prior to interventions; and protecting water sources. The program also aims to maximize the multiple or secondary use of the water service through cattle troughs and washing basins and support to small-scale vegetable and fruit tree cultivation.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OWNERSHIP

Community participation and ownership is very strong due to the processes in place. After widespread information dissemination in an area, which includes sharing information on how to apply for WASH support, interested communities request assistance. All the requests for assistance are then evaluated and prioritized by government and CARE together. Community WASH committees are formed for each WASH system, a multi-stakeholder team conducts a feasibility study and follow-up appraisal to identify costs and select appropriate technical options. If the community is selected for support, a formal Memorandum of Understanding is signed between all parties clarifying roles and responsibilities. Community contribution in labor and cash resources has increased from 5% in 2007 to 30-40% at present and the overall sense of ownership of the schemes has likewise been transformed.

A GENDERED APPROACH

CARE has made efforts to strengthen gender-sensitivity and women's empowerment in the program through conducting

different types of research, establishing women's savings groups and prioritizing women in employment and training opportunities. Research has examined the extent to which women's empowerment and gender equality are impacted; psycho-social stress linked to poor WASH services; and menstrual management issues. The results have influenced the way CARE implements WASH programs.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building with stakeholders at all levels is a key program component. CARE supported the emergence of community artisans by training two people in each project community. Artisans were trained on well digging, pump instillation and latrine construction. In addition to providing income generating opportunities for these artisans, many of them have become invaluable by providing local, cost-effective, committed and accountable services. CARE is currently piloting a new approach to organize artisans into groups that can bid for larger contracts. Capacity building for community officials is also particularly important where it strengthens two-way information flow from the community up to the district level and back again.

FUNCTIONALITY AND GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

The program conducted a functionality and governance assessment of 100 water schemes in two target districts. The study identified correlations between good governance and functionality. Community participation and inclusiveness factors scored relatively well, however issues regarding WASH committee transparency and accountability still require greater attention.

CONCLUSION

CARE South Gondar is currently in its 12th year of programming. Rather than continuing to implement WASH programs in the same way, CARE has questioned and evaluated its approaches to strengthen program quality and impact. There is still work to be done, particularly to strengthen sustained hygiene and sanitation coverage, to promote multiple uses of water and to protect the water source in an environmentally sound way. However, the main lesson is the importance of thinking strategically to achieve scale and ensure greater impact in the long-term.

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