

## Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region

It has now been a year since we started publishing the RiPPLE newsletter, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your ideas and suggestions which have helped us to improve it. We are happy to have many regular readers, and we hope that you will continue reading as well as contributing in our second year and beyond.

This issue covers a variety of topics, both in Ethiopia, as usual, and looking beyond Ethiopia to the wider Nile region. A research team from four countries shares their experience of a collaborative study of technology choice in Ethiopia and Sudan. Other articles include a summary of a case study on a successful sanitation programme in SNNPR, a 'story from the field' from Goro Gutu woreda exploring the roles of water in the lives of farmers, and an introduction to East Hararge zone in which Goro Gutu is located. In addition we feature a short highlight from World Water Day 2008 which was celebrated in March in Ethiopia and around the world. On the RiPPLE staff introduction page we feature Simret Yasabu, Media and Communications Officer, giving us her profile. We have an article introducing the WASH Ethiopia Movement. Finally the regular photo gallery focuses on access to water and livelihoods in East Hararge zone, Oromia, and several villages in Sudan.

As always your support and comments are highly appreciated! Please direct them to [info@rippleethiopia.org](mailto:info@rippleethiopia.org) or contact Simret Yasabu on +251 114160075.

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Washing hands after visiting a latrine



Latrine from local materials, SNNPR

## Stories from the field

*In this section we bring you community stories about water and sanitation issues, to give an impression of both the struggles and the opportunities communities face. These stories are based on interviews with community members.*

By Abraham Tegene



A clear vision, a bit of help, and a lot of hard work: that's Wondu's formula for success as a market gardener.

Wondu speaks gently, but quickly and with passion. A true man of the soil, he ploughs his plot in a village near Goro-Gutu town. Wondu is serious about his work. Produce from his land helps feed his wife and 2 young children, and his mother who lives with them. He likes to say, "If you work in large quantity, you eat, you buy, and you save for your children's future".

In past years, Wondu used to fetch water in a bucket from a far-off river to water his plot (particularly his chat plants) during the dry season. He could not dig a hand dug well, nor build a rainwater harvesting facility. "Fetching water from a river in a bucket is a demanding task. The yield was always poor, and it produced little or no money, so I could barely afford to feed my family or send the children to school" Wondu said.

At the same time, the increasing size of his family was demanding additional food and income. Wondu knew what he wanted to do: "I understood early that farm products are increasingly in high demand in urban areas. I wanted to maximise the benefit I can get from this situation", he said. Today he no longer depends on seasonal rain to nourish his small plot, but works all year round using the micro-irrigation scheme built across his farm as part of a development project by the NGO HCS (Hararge Catholic Secretariat). Most of his land is used for cultivating staple crops, with a small portion left for producing vegetables and chat.

After joining a development project operating in the area, and due to other related interventions, Wondu and his fellow farmers started to practise more effective farming using a micro-irrigation scheme constructed

Name:	Wondu Worku
Age:	33
Marital Status:	Married
Children:	2 (boy and girl-age 2-6)
Other Dependents:	His mother
Land:	2½ hectares
Housing:	New with iron sheet roof

nearby. The annual productivity of land increased: "During the dry season, I produce onions, potato, tomato, cabbages and chat. All of the products showed high market return. Now I can harvest twice (or sometimes thrice) each year". More production means more income and better nutrition for Wondu and his family.

Lying relaxed on the carpet, Wondu shows a confidence that other small farmers like him will come out of the current food price hike which is particularly affecting subsistence farmers. For the beautiful landscape



Farmers benefited a lot from the micro-irrigation scheme

of Goro-Gutu hides the recent harsh realities of life in this 'all-farming-community'. Various reports show that this year many children in the area are clinically underweight and some of them are severely malnourished, greatly increasing their chances of falling ill, and according to HCS staff this situation is due to the inflated food prices which are affecting poor people across the nation.



## Meet RiPPLE Staff...

It has now been almost one year and ten months since I started working for RiPPLE. Being a pioneer staff member in RiPPLE, I feel happy to see all the changes and progress our programme has made. Do you want to know how I got this job? I hope you will enjoy the story - I am always happy to tell it!



It was very hard for me to find my photo since I usually take pictures of others! I found this picture which was taken while I was visiting the Awash fall inside Awash Park

One Monday, I was at home checking my e-mails when I saw an e-mail from one of my teachers, Terje Skjerdal, of the then School of Journalism and Communications. The subject of the email was Job opportunity. I opened the attachment and read that WaterAid Ethiopia was looking for a media and communications officer for its RiPPLE programme. The e-mail reminded me that **the deadline for application was that Monday - the same day I opened my e-mails**. I convinced myself that I should go in person to apply for the job, whether they accepted me or not. I went out and photocopied all my credentials, wrote an application letter and went down to the WaterAid former office, which is in a similar location to the new one. I asked the receptionist if they could accept my application, and she replied yes. After a week I received a phone call from WaterAid Ethiopia inviting me to come for an interview and written exam. Now I started to see some glimmers of hope. I remember there were two Ethiopians sitting on the panel, and two foreigners Livia and Alan. Alan welcomed me to the panel and asked me to tell my life history. It took about 45 minutes for the interview, which was followed by the written test. After I got home I received a call from W/o Mamitu, of WaterAid, saying that they needed me to come for another round of performance evaluation. I collected the questions to prepare for a presentation for the next day,

## Simret Yasabu, Media and Communications Officer

and tried to prepare as much as I could. I hope you can guess what happened then? Yes, I was offered the job as a Media Officer and later as Media and Communications Officer!

Before I joined RiPPLE I worked as an assistant producer at Radio Fana, where I was mainly responsible for producing programs dealing with women, agriculture and education. After working for a year and three months, I returned to Addis Ababa University to do my Masters in Journalism and Communications. I had received my Bachelor degree from the same university in Political Science and International Relations.

I was born in Dejen, a town located at the tip of Blue Nile gorge leading towards Gojjam. I have an older sister and a younger brother, so I am the middle child. I would like to forward my appreciation and love for my mother Wudalat Gedamu and my father Yasabu Yared who taught me how important it is to be strong and tolerant in life. Currently, I am living with my husband, Hailemariam Mesfin. We got married in May 2008. We met while we were working at Radio Fana and have known each other for more than four years. We share many commonalities as journalists. I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am happy that you are part of my life.

In RiPPLE, I am responsible for coordinating media and communications-related activities. I work with the communications team (Livia, Ewen and Abraham) to make sure that RiPPLE information is well communicated to our audiences. I am also responsible for organising and facilitating training for our staff and partners that help them to improve their communication skills, both in terms of written and oral communication. I also represent RiPPLE in workshops and conferences and present our programme whenever needed. I am in charge of writing and publishing our newsletter and other materials. I also share the task of administering and contributing to our programme's intranet and website. I found RiPPLE unique in its approach and the focus it gives to communication. As much as possible we try to strengthen information exchange and communication both within RiPPLE and in the WASH sector in general. To this end, we collaborate with WASH sector actors to work more on communication. We are now developing collaboration with Haramaya University to deliver training for journalists, and also assist students to work on WASH reporting during their internships. Together with WaterAid Ethiopia and the WASH Ethiopia Movement we are now on the eve of starting a one year radio program with Radio Fana. We work in harmony with our partners from the national to the woreda levels, and I contribute my best efforts to support this interesting collaboration.

## From the RiPPLE regions: East Hararge zone, Oromia

By Anteneh Mengiste

In this issue we introduce you to one of RiPPLE's three operational areas: East Hararge Zone. East Hararge is one of the 17 zones of Oromia regional state, with an area of just under 25,000 km<sup>2</sup> and an ethnically diverse population of over 2 million people. With a population of 26.6 million, 36% of the country's total, Oromia is one of the largest regions in Ethiopia. The majority of people in Oromia (87%) live in rural areas, both arable and pastoral (2006 estimates). The region covers an area of 368,400 km<sup>2</sup>, about 33% of the total land in Ethiopia.



Map of Ethiopia , highlighting East Hararge zone

Oromia is environmentally diverse, with significant agricultural and pastoral areas supporting the livelihoods of the majority of the population. It is a major producer of coffee. Though it has notable natural resources, parts of the region have been designated 'drought-prone' and 'food-insecure', with water availability being a key determinant of agricultural success and failure. A large number of NGOs are active in the region. Because of Oromia's huge size, RiPPLE's activities are currently focused in East Hararge Zone in the eastern part of the region.

The zone came into being following the restructuring of the previous Hararge Administration Area after the current regime took power. The zonal capital, Harar, is one of the historic towns of the country and is located some 510 km away from Addis Ababa. Harar is a town which UNESCO calls "a city of peace, tolerance and solidarity in everyday life".

East Hararge includes areas of temperate (dega) and semi-temperate (woina dega) climates, but over 60% of its area is semi-arid (kola). The landscape ranges from plateaus, mountains and gorges to open plains,

and supports mixed, pastoral and agropastoralist farming systems. In recent years, market-oriented farming has been practised widely in the highlands and semi-highlands, although the staples maize and sorghum remain the major crops.



The streets of Harar

### Water supply situation

East Hararge zone is characterised by a shortage of potable water. There are few springs in the lowlands, which makes the availability of water a primary concern of communities there. More springs are found in the mid- and highlands, but many of these dry up from time to time. Increasing deforestation has aggravated the depletion of groundwater, contributing to water shortages.

In response to this situation a number of urban and rural water supply schemes have been constructed by



Many people travel long distances to find a market place to sell their goods

government and NGOs in the zone, mostly hand pumps and protected springs. Coverage of improved water supply stands at 43% (2006 estimates): 41% in rural areas and 76% in towns.

### RiPPLE's working woredas: Goro-Gutu and Babile

#### Livelihoods in Goro-Gutu woreda

Agriculture (both crop production and livestock) remains the main source of income and employment in Goro-Gutu, and because the average land holding is as low as 0.37 ha, mixed farming is practised widely to diversify the sector. The woreda has a total livestock population of almost 200,000, and the main staple crops are cereals like sorghum, maize and wheat. Although the woreda has an estimated 436 ha of irrigable land, less than half (156ha) is currently irrigated for cash crop production. The majority of irrigated land is used to grow chat, a widespread crop in East Hararge.

A variety of governmental, non-governmental and international institutions work on development projects in the woreda. Among these, the World Bank and two NGOs (HCS and CISP) have implemented project 'packages' incorporating water supply and sanitation, agriculture, natural resource management, and capacity building among others. Together these organisations have constructed around 50 water schemes, of which 85% are still in service.

#### Introduction to Babile woreda

Babile woreda is located in the southern tip of East Hararge and it lies on the main road to Jijiga (the capital of Somali National Regional State). The altitude of the woreda ranges from 950-2000 metres above sea level and 90% of its area is woina dega (mid-highland), with 10% kola (semi-arid). A population of approximately 150,000 (CSA estimates) have an average landholding per household of 0.75ha. Mixed farming is widely practised in the woreda; the common cereals produced are sorghum, maize and peanut and the total livestock population is over 110,000. Food insecurity is a significant challenge in the woreda, with over 36% of the population registered with the government's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). Accordingly, a variety of NGOs have implemented emergency and rehabilitation programmes (including CISP and CARE). Currently Menschen fur Menschen is the only NGO implementing integrated development programmes in the woreda.

## WASH Ethiopia Movement

The WASH Ethiopia Movement, part of the global WASH campaign, is a coalition of representatives from governmental, non-governmental and faith-based organisations, UN agencies, the media and the private sector established in 2004. Its aim is to promote behavioural and social change on water, sanitation and hygiene and gain the political and social commitment required to make a real difference to access to WASH. The movement runs its activities through its working groups: advocacy, message, media and communication, regional chapter, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Movement focuses on a single theme each year. In 2004/05 and 2005/06, it focused on proper hand washing at critical times under the motto 'your health is in your hands' and appropriate disposal of human waste under the motto 'let's use a latrine for our health and dignity'. Actions undertaken included media workshops, familiarization workshops for regional WASH focal persons, messages broadcast through the media, national and regional launches, and dissemination of educational materials among the general public.

In 2006/07, it focused on water quality under the motto 'keep water safe'. The aim was to raise the awareness of communities about safe water collection, transportation, storage and treatment. This aimed to contribute to the effort to reduce life-threatening water-related diseases.

In 2008, the Movement is focusing on Sanitation, especially on the Ethiopian Millennium Hygiene and Sanitation Movement which aims to accelerate the implementation of hygiene and sanitation packages to achieve the UAP and contribute to PASDEP through community behaviour change.

### RiPPLE latest Resources : RiPPLE Blog

The screenshot shows the RiPPLE website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, About RiPPLE, How We Work, Links to Action, RiPPLE Research, RiPPLE Outputs, RiPPLE Library, and RiPPLE Blog. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the navigation, there is a featured article titled "Moving from practice to policy: In advance of the MUS Symposium" with a sub-headline "RiPPLE Research" and a date "July 10th, 2008". The article text begins with "The Executive, the MUS Group co-hosts a follow-up symposium...". To the right of the article, there is a "Categories" section listing "Ethiopia Water Sector Progress", "General", "Learning and Practice Alliances", "Mapping for reality", "Supporting life-region learning", "Sustainable sanitation delivery", and "Understanding water and growth". Below the categories is a "Recent Posts" section.

Available at  
[www.rippleethiopia.org/blog](http://www.rippleethiopia.org/blog)



## Sanitation & Hygiene in SNNPR: Conclusions of the RiPPLE case study

By Peter Newborne

The Sanitation and Hygiene (S&H) policy of the government of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) since 2003 was brought to international attention as a success story. RiPPLE, in collaboration with the SNNPR Bureau of Health (BoH) and researchers from three Ethiopian universities, decided to study this policy to look at how success was achieved, and how far.

Overall, the study found that a combination of political promotion and institutional mobilisation achieved great success in launching and rolling out the S&H policy, which resulted in a substantial rise in latrine construction.

The study surveyed latrine construction and use, hand-washing and water storage/handling by rural households in six kebeles in two woredas, Mirab Abaya and Alaba, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. In just a few years, latrine coverage increased from 16% to 94% in Mirab Abaya and 10% to 69% in Alaba. Although some latrine owners dropped back off the 'sanitation ladder' (2% in Mirab Abaya; 10% in Alaba), there is evidence that the BoH approach had high impact in the study areas.

The study also looked at how the S&H policy was promoted, and identified some key aspects of success:

- S&H was made part of a basic community health package and was: "broad based", "household-centered", and "low cost" (with use of local materials and no hardware subsidy) for "high impact".
- A strategy was developed that was expressed in general terms, aligned with existing policies, politically attractive to the regional cabinet, and financially and administratively feasible.
- 'Ignition' documents were written which motivated local politicians and civil servants.
- Implementation tools piloted by donors were opportunistically applied by the BoH, and donor funds were leveraged for software aspects.
- Health extension workers and community health promoters were intensively involved.

Five years later the BoH maintains the same policy, and its ingredients are being adapted at federal level too. However, questions do arise about the sustainability of this wave of latrine construction (e.g. the need for technical improvements) and observation in the field suggests that handwashing and water storage/handling practices are still poor. Full studies are available on the RiPPLE website at: [www.rippleethiopia.org/page/sanitation](http://www.rippleethiopia.org/page/sanitation)

## Technology choices in water supply: Working and learning together in Ethiopia and Sudan

By Jojob Faal

Fieldwork was recently completed for a cross-country action research study comparing factors affecting technological choice in community water supply in Ethiopia and Sudan. The concept was developed by RiPPLE's network partner Practical Action, and the study was an experiment in using collaborative research to promote sharing and learning between Nile countries, as part of the regionalisation of RiPPLE.

The team was made up of individuals from a variety of disciplines from organisations in Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and the UK. The team worked jointly to develop a methodology and carry out the study, using a variety of methods to understand each study site within the greater context of water technology implementation in each country.

### Site selection

Sites were selected according to the type of water supply technology, the success/failure of the water scheme, the type of water source, the role of the community in scheme selection development and management, and accessibility criteria. The following diverse sites were selected:

#### Ethiopia (East Hararge zone):

- Kenchera: Affordable drip irrigation technology being tested by farmers
- Goro Beyo: Capped spring, providing domestic water and irrigation
- Ifa-Jallela & Kufanziq: Tension-filled, inter-kebele motorised pump borehole
- Woltha Bilisuma: Well-managed motorised pump borehole
- Millennium Village: Rehabilitated capped spring providing multiple-use water supply

#### Sudan:

- Al-Fasher: Private hand-dug well selling water
- Golo Dam & Shugra Boreholes: Combination complex water system supplying Al Fasher town
- Fashar Hafir: Rainwater twin ponds, supplying Fashar locality and livestock
- Azagarfa Dam: Partially-functioning rainwater harvesting dam for irrigation

At each site, the team was given some background and a description of the technology by a representative of the implementing organisation. Following this, community focus group discussions were conducted focusing on the community's role in all stages of the project cycle. Interspersed with site visits, the team conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from

relevant government departments and implementing organisations. The aim was to understand the roles of various stakeholders and how their input varied across sites and countries.

During this intensive study the team had frequent discussions, allowing for a depth of shared learning and



exchange of ideas. Comparing cross-country experiences allowed the team to understand which issues were country-specific and which were universally important, as well as to offer critical insights for improving existing systems.

### Preliminary findings

The study highlights that long-term sustainability is often not considered adequately when water supply schemes are planned. Initial findings suggest that sustainability may be improved through tailor-made community management systems and integrated natural resource management programmes, although the capacity, resources and finances to put these recommendations into practice is often limited.

The research findings will soon be available from the RiPPLE website ([www.rippleethiopia.org](http://www.rippleethiopia.org)).

## World Water Day 2008

World Water Day is marked around the world every year on 22nd March. This year the day was celebrated under the theme “Sanitation matters”. World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, and sanitation was chosen as a theme because 2008 has been declared International Year of Sanitation by the UN. Poor sanitation, combined with lack of access to water supply and inadequate hygiene, is recognised as one of the major challenges facing the world today, and causes a huge global death toll each year.

The cooperation and coordination of different stakeholders will be critical to meet the challenges of expanding access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH). Accordingly, World Water Day focused on the need to mobilise a wide range of actors to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and promote action at all levels. The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) led the celebrations in Ethiopia, and mobilised a variety of

interested organisations and programmes to colourfully mark the day. Other members of the organising committee include WaterAid Ethiopia, Ethiopia Country Water Partnership, Intermon Oxfam, the Ethiopia Nile Basin Discourse Forum, UNICEF and RiPPLE.

Celebrations and awareness raising activities started on the eve of World Water Day with a media workshop organised to bring together the media and WaSH sector representatives. The aim was to discuss the gap that exists in terms of WaSH sector coverage in the media. The workshop was officially opened by Ato Adugna Jebessa, State Minister of the MoWR. The workshop helped participants to share ideas and concerns about the important role of the media in spreading awareness and information about WaSH, and discussed how the sector could work more closely with journalists in the future.

World Water Day itself was marked with a variety of programmes and activities. In the morning keynote



Participants of the media workshop

speeches were given by key actors from the WaSH sector including representatives from the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, UNICEF, World Bank, private sector organisations, NGOs, and civil society groups. A choir of school children singing about the importance of sanitation and water added a festive flavour to the day. Many exhibitions were also displayed, enabling WaSH organisations and projects to raise awareness about their programmes and experiences.

In the afternoon, a workshop was organised for presentations and discussions among a range of stakeholders. The MoWR gave an overview of the water sector in the country and the efforts being made to address challenges in the sector. A representative from the Ministry of Health introduced the “Millennium Sanitation Movement” which will help to address the enormous gaps in access to adequate sanitation, and RiPPLE presented its findings from a case study on the sanitation and hygiene policies of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) (see P.6 for a summary of this study).

World Water Day was first celebrated in 1992 at the global level, and was celebrated for the 15th time this year in Ethiopia.

## Comparing stories from the field: snapshots from Sudan and Ethiopia

“A multi-disciplinary research team recently conducted a cross-country study looking at technological choice in water in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya. The study explored a range of social issues relating to how technologies are chosen, and the impacts on communities. Comparing experiences across the three countries led to some interesting insights about how communities utilise and govern their water supplies, and how to ensure the sustainability of schemes.

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1. Private water-sellers in urban areas can supplement their households' incomes through the sale of water, but start-up is capital-intensive. (Al-Fasher, Sudan)

2. Active promotion and marketing of Millennium (an NGO-funded integrated development programme) has attracted funding for a range of integrated programmes in water supply, health and agriculture. (Millennium village, Ethiopia)
3. A hafir (pond) provides for multiple uses of water including domestic use, watering livestock and mud brick construction (Azagarfa, Sudan)
4. Villagers are forced to return to unprotected sources due to disagreements over water rights between two kebeles sharing one water source (Ifa-Jallela and Kufanziq, Ethiopia)
5. Research is being carried out with farmers to test simple and appropriate drip irrigation technology for more efficient use of water. (Kenchera, Ethiopia)