

Information Sheet

Mapping: Spatial Thinking

RiPPLE

Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region (RiPPLE) is a DFID-funded Research Programme Consortium hosted by WaterAid Ethiopia

RiPPLE Information sheets introduce an aspect of RiPPLE, related issues and references to further resources.

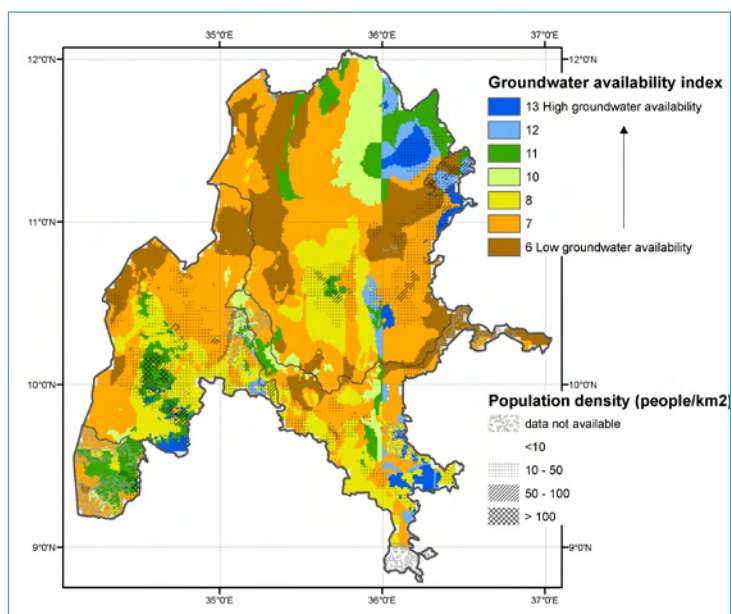
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What is mapping?

Mapping is another way of saying spatial thinking. Mapping within RiPPLE is not about just making maps, and not about providing technical training. It is about raising capacity in using information for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating WASH – and is therefore a tool that can support the research activities of all the RiPPLE themes.

The mapping team is exploring what kind of information is collected, stored, analysed and used by different WASH actors, and the challenges affecting all of these activities – challenges like poor communication and lack of capacity, structures, incentives and hardware. We are working directly with information users to improve their capacity for using mapping approaches to better plan, implement and manage WSS schemes. We are also working with data collectors to support more effective data analysis and interpretation, so that appropriate information can be made more easily available to those who need it.

The aim is not for the mapping team to produce maps ourselves: that would only be a short term solution to any particular problem. Instead, we are working to promote the development of a group of people using mapping approaches within the RiPPLE Learning and Practice Alliances, who will promote spatial thinking and mapping approaches at regional and woreda level, supported by RiPPLE.



Water security map for Benishangul-Gumuz

Guiding Principle

Our working hypothesis is: “Regular collection, organisation and use of information on water availability, access to WASH, and demand for WASH makes for more effective, sustainable, transparent and accountable activities at all levels. Mapping is an excellent way of organising and using this information for planning, advocacy and implementation.”

What can mapping do for you?

Mapping can help address many issues facing the different RiPPLE themes. The Governance and Planning theme could use maps to reveal and help explain patterns in access, sustainability and management of WASH across woredas and regions – such as the relationship between water scheme coverage and the actual level of year-round water service provision to households. The Finance theme could use maps to show how the degree of budget under-utilisation varies from one woreda to another, and how this relates to the level of WASH coverage and/or new implementation activities in each woreda, or to explore different facets of cost-effectiveness. The Growth team could use a groundwater availability map combined with a population distribution map – such as the one illustrated here for Benishangul Gumuz – to show the relative risk of communities being impacted by seasonal dry or longer drought periods, and therefore to support planning for improved food security.

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