

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



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You are receiving the fifth newsletter of the RiPPLE programme, which comes on the eve of the European New Year. On behalf of the RiPPLE team, I would like to offer my warm wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year 2009 and Merry Christmas.

Just as the New Year is being celebrated on January 1<sup>st</sup> throughout the Western world, the RiPPLE programme is now marking the beginning of a new phase of life. RiPPLE has now moved from its first phase – focusing on case studies – to a second phase where Long-term Action Research Studies (LARS) are the main activity. After a series of consultations with RiPPLE Partners and LPA members at different levels, two broad and inclusive LARS have been identified: [Access and Growth](#). In this newsletter we will be introducing one of these – the Growth LARS – in depth.

Also in this issue you will find articles on the Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation (FLoWS), the WASH Media Forum and a regional sanitation conference recently held in Kenya, as well as the director's cut, a photo gallery, and details of some upcoming events which might interest you.

As always, we welcome your feedback and stories! Please send them to [info@rippleethiopia.org](mailto:info@rippleethiopia.org) or pick up your phone and call Simret Yasabu, RiPPLE Media and Communications Officer on +251 114160075.

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Global Hand-washing Day Celebration,  
Addis Ababa, 15 Oct. 2008

## Why have a Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation (FLoWS)?

By Tamene Chaka

There is a huge wealth of learning being generated by both researchers and practitioners in Ethiopia's water supply and sanitation (WSS) sector. A host of institutions across the country are now deeply involved in providing teaching, research and practical inputs to learning processes in the sector.



FLoWS launch event

In addition, a number of active networks and fora are improving sector coordination and enhancing overall understanding of the challenges facing implementation of sustainable water and sanitation services. All these networks and fora provide critical inputs into the sector.

The purpose of the Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation, FLoWS, is to enhance and support these contributions by providing an umbrella under which learning can be shared and, also specifically to follow up sector undertakings agreed each year at the Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF). This will strengthen the capacity for Ethiopia's WSS sector to link learning and research to key policy processes across the year, and support delivery of the MSF undertakings.

In order to achieve this, FLoWS will:

- Provide a series of national learning events across the year, bridging the MSFs, and bringing to the sector undertakings enhanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in their implementation;
- Document learning from these events in a series of reports and briefing notes that allows the fullest possible sharing of knowledge and information across the sector;
- Consult widely during this process on future learning priorities in the sector and help to consolidate national priorities in sector learning into a document presented each year at the MSF.

FLoWS is led by the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) in close collaboration with WaterAid Ethiopia (WAE), the WASH Ethiopia Movement, Water and Sanitation Forum (WSF) of CRDA, and the Millennium Water Alliance (MWA), with technical and logistical support provided by RiPPLE.

The forum was launched in May 2008 with participation from government and non-government organisations, universities, research institutes and the private sector. During the launching event, the participants expressed their belief that the forum would play a very important role in the sector.

So far three meetings have been held including the launching event. The meetings have featured different presentations from organisations including MoWR, Plan Ethiopia, UNICEF, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS), with debate and sharing of ideas among participants. The most recent meeting focused on 'Financing WASH' and included contributions from the Ministry of Finance and several donors.

The first and second meeting reports have been circulated to participants and is also available for free download on the MoWR ([www.mowr.gov.et](http://www.mowr.gov.et)) and RiPPLE ([www.rippleethiopia.org](http://www.rippleethiopia.org)) websites.

In the future, in order to better link FLoWS events with the MSF, the presentations and major lessons from FLoWS will be published as an annual set of proceedings to be presented and distributed at the MSF.



Participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> FLoWS meeting

It is very encouraging that the number of organisations taking part in FLoWS has increased within the short period of time since the forum was launched. In the future, since this is a learning forum for the sector, all actors working in the sector (including universities and research institutes) are strongly encouraged to share their experiences and findings with FLoWS.

## Meet RiPPLE Staff...

*“Good morning ladies and gentlemen, welcome on board. This is the RiPPLE vehicle going from Addis Ababa to your destination. On behalf of the captain, Mesfin Abebe, we would like to wish you a safe and pleasant journey”. I hope you have guessed who we are going to introduce to you today. Yes, Mesfin Abebe will be taking you through his life journey and hopefully you will enjoy the biography just as many of you have enjoyed driving with him.*



During the staff retreat, Gondor, October 2008

My name is Mesfin Abebe, born in Eastern Shewa, in the area called Bulga which is well known for its teff, wheat, lentils and chickpeas. For those of you who do not know teff, it is the cereal which injera is made of. Injera is like bread, and is eaten widely in Ethiopia. I am married and have two children, a boy and a girl.

I received my diploma in auto mechanics from Entoto Technical and Vocational school, Addis Ababa. I have also attended training courses in first-aid; mechanics; e-mail, report and story writing; photography and video-making.

I have worked for several organisations and have accumulated a wide work experience. I served for over 5 years in government-run mechanised farming as a mechanic. In Dinish Transport I worked for a year and a half as a mechanic/driver. I was also a public transport driver for over a year and Head of Transport Services at Radio Fana for 9 years. Just before I joined RiPPLE I worked for MSF Holland for 2½ years as a driver mechanic. Since February 2007, I have worked for RiPPLE as driver and expeditor.

In my work as a driver I have been fortunate enough not to have faced major accidents. But as a passenger, I once had a bad experience which has affected on my whole life. In September 1996 (Ethiopian calendar), I was traveling with public transport from Shashemene to Addis Ababa. Just before we reached Langano, after 200km, the

## Mesfin Abebe RiPPLE Driver/Expeditor

minibus had a serious accident and turned over, killing four people including the driver. Others including myself were badly injured. This experience left me with physical and physiological scars. I was terrified that I might not be able to work for a living again, but happily here I am working hard with my colleagues to help RiPPLE achieve its objectives.

When I applied for the job with RiPPLE, I was in Debrezeit applying for nine or ten different jobs, and waiting with hope to see which organisation would be my next destination in life. One day I had travelled to Bale Robe for an interview with another organisation, and was eating my lunch when Ato Seid from RiPPLE called me for an interview for the driver /expeditor post. Since I received the call while eating my lunch I convinced myself that this must be the organisation I would be joining. So I travelled to Addis the next day for the RiPPLE examination, leaving others behind.

After written and oral examinations as well as a practical driving test I was shortlisted for the job. It was 13/6/1999 (E.C) when I received another call from Ato Seid congratulating me for passing all the tests and inviting me to join RiPPLE. I was shocked and happy at the same time. Do you know why? It was because it was the same day of the month that I had survived the minibus accident three years before!

I work as driver and expeditor for RiPPLE. When I joined the programme, it had just acquired a brand new Toyota Land Cruiser which had travelled only 3,000km. I take care of the car and keep it in good condition as much as I can – the car has now travelled over 95,000km but still can compete with the new one. To make it comfortable for my passengers, I equipped the interior with curtains, air fresheners and seat covers. You don't have also to worry if you get sick while driving with me as the car has a first aid kit! I am based in Addis but I often travel to our three regions.

I am responsible for minor maintenance for the car, guest pick-ups from the airport, delivery of letters to different organisations, visiting telecommunications offices, banks and travel agencies, and purchasing and delivering materials for RiPPLE offices at national, regional and woreda levels. In addition, I support the office administration and finance activities, for example arranging accommodation for staff coming from the different regions and from overseas.

My dreams are to see RiPPLE's research benefiting our people and bringing change in their lives, and to see the RiPPLE programme grow up into a recognised international organisation. What about my personal dreams? Well I hope I will have my own house one day.

Thank you for letting me tell you my story.

## Long Term Action Research Studies (LARS): Growth

By Zemed Abebe

In the second phase of RiPPLE, major Long Term Action Research Studies (LARS) are now beginning. These build on findings and recommendations from the case studies undertaken in the first phase, and are focusing on two broad thematic areas: [Growth](#) and [Access](#).

The central purpose of the LARS is to actively inform ongoing processes of programme implementation within the water supply sub-sector. The LARS will respond to the needs and priorities of local partners, but at the same time aim to generate research findings which are of relevance beyond the immediate study site and contribute to wider debates on sector policy and practice.



Market place at the heart of Harar

### Growth LARS

The growth LARS focuses on the question: how can investments in water services contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor growth, what are the barriers and how can we address them, and what linkages to other sectors are necessary?

The research is action-based and the analysis will be undertaken in collaboration with implementing agencies, both government and non-government. The aim is to support these agencies in improving their ways of working to make best use of water resources, identify ways of addressing barriers encountered, and find opportunities for replicating positive institutional and implementation arrangements beyond the study areas.

As part of the process of designing the LARS, proposals were presented and discussed among LPA members in the three regions (Oromia, SNNPR and BG).

One outcome of these discussions was a prioritisation of the research outputs and related research questions for each region. In Oromia the Growth LARS is initially

focusing on climate change impact on livelihoods, adaptation strategies and income diversification, while in SNNPR it focuses on pastoral aspects and equitable access to water (and other natural resources) for productive uses. In BG the LARS will pick up on the equity and climate change components at a later date.

### Component 1: Water for income generation and pro-poor growth

The first activity under this component addresses equity issues in relation to access to water for income generation. RiPPLE case studies in East Hararghe have demonstrated the key role of water in food security and provided strong evidence of the benefits of productive uses of water to increase household incomes, but questions remain about the distribution of these benefits and their associated costs. The LARS will work with implementers to improve understanding of inequities in access to income-generating uses of water, and support them to adopt strategies which increase equity e.g. through new management institutions, targeting approaches or by-laws.

The second activity is to contribute to improved understanding of constraints to market access for rural households. Rural Ethiopia is characterized by a number of market constraints – including lack of market information, finance and transport infrastructure and services, which may prevent households gaining the full benefit of increased income from irrigation or multiple user services. We will support LPA members in identifying these barriers and work together to develop strategies to overcome them. This could be by better harnessing project resources to address bottlenecks, for example by providing credits to households to start productive businesses or using labour for the construction of infrastructure.

### Component 2: Increasing resilience to drought and climate-related risks

The first activity under this component will address responses to drought and water-related conflict in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Large areas of Ethiopia are affected by recurrent droughts, but agro-pastoral and pastoral areas are suffering worst. We will undertake a baseline survey of (agro) pastoralist livelihood and coping strategies and assess how emergency responses (e.g. providing water for livestock) relate to these. One of the coping strategies of pastoral groups is to migrate in search for water and fodder for their livestock. In increasingly densely populated areas and where property

rights to natural resources (land, grass, water, etc.) are disputed, this often leads to conflicts among different user groups. A second strand of activities therefore focuses on conflict management and conflict reduction strategies.



Many areas in Ethiopia already experience considerable water stress

The second activity under this component will focus on climate change, assessing the state of knowledge and developing strategies for adaptation. Many areas in Ethiopia already experience considerable water stress due to insufficient and unreliable rainfall, changing rainfall patterns or flooding. The impacts of climate change—including predicted increases in extremes—are likely to add to this stress.

### Collaborative approach

The Growth LARS is also collaborating with the Livelihoods Integration Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct a Household Water Economy Analysis (HWEA). HWEA assesses how different types of household obtain the food and income they need to survive and protect their livelihoods, and how these depend on water, in order to analyse the impact of shocks such as changes in water availability.

In addition links will be made with water security mapping being carried out by RiPPLE partners. The findings of these different subcomponents of the LARS will be brought together, to identify actions at different levels which can increase the contribution of water investments to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods and growth. The Growth LARS team looks forward to working with LPA members to discuss and pilot these actions in the near future!

## WASH Media Forum established in Ethiopia

Members of the WASH sector and the media met in Addis Ababa in September 2008 and agreed to set up a WASH Media Forum to help bring together journalists and WASH sector actors to discuss and debate issues of interest. A WASH Media Forum has been proposed several times to enhance the partnership between the sector and the media and help achieve the country's commitments to increase water and sanitation access under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Universal Access Plan (UAP).



During the launching event

The media are powerful in promoting change, and the forum is seen as having a very crucial role in supporting WASH sector undertakings.

### Objectives of the WASH Media Forum

- To create space for effective debate and discussion
- To enhance the capacities of its members through training, exposure visits and exchange programmes
- To promote coordination between WASH sector actors and the media
- To enhance quality information dissemination for advocacy and behavioural changes
- To identify key issues and messages which the media can take forward

Participants agreed that the forum would meet every three months, and established an organising committee composed of the WASH Ethiopia movement, Radio Fana, Ethiopian Television, the Ministries of Water Resources, Health and Education, Addis Ababa Water and Sewerage Authority, Addis Admass and the capital newspapers, WaterAid Ethiopia, RiPPLE and the Ethiopian Environmental Journalists Association. Eligibility for membership is limited to Ethiopian journalists working in the three mass media (Television, radio and print) and WASH sector actors.

For more info about the Forum, please contact Michael Negash (0114661680) or Simret Yasabu (0114160075).

## Sanitation in Eastern Africa: Too many commitments, too little progress?

### The East African Civil Society Sanitation Conference in Nairobi

By Bethel Terefe

The decade has seen a number of commitments by the international community to improve the status of sanitation and hygiene. Sanitation was elevated to an unprecedented level of political priority when it was included to the water targets of MDGs, in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The year 2008 was declared the international year of sanitation to boost efforts to improve sanitation, when the world community saw that progress on sanitation remained slow and uneven, while water is on track to meet MDG goals.

In Africa, the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW), in its second African Sanitation and Hygiene conference held in Durban in February 2008, committed to the 14 point E-thekwini declaration, recognising the slow progress made and aiming to put sanitation on track to meet the MDGs. The declaration among other things committed to dedicating a separate budget line for sanitation and hygiene and allocating at least 0.5% of countries' GDP to sanitation and hygiene.

In July, the African Union heads of state summit in Egypt made water and sanitation the theme of their meeting and declared the Sharm el-Sheikh commitments, which promised to increase efforts to meet past declarations on sanitation, significantly increase domestic financial resources allocated to implement water and sanitation activities, request AMCOW to provide annual progress reports and call the G8 to step-up their engagement in the sanitation sector.

However, there is a long road to travel between words and action as the East African Sanitation meeting, held in Nairobi on November 4-5, showed. The conference was organised by ANEW (the African Civil Society Network on Water) and its partners, and attended by participants from seven countries in eastern Africa. It aimed to reflect on progress made towards sanitation commitments by bringing CSOs' perspectives on their country situations, and also to reflect on the role of CSOs in contributing to the efforts of governments. Presentations in the conference showed that sanitation is the worst off-track MDG target in Eastern Africa. According to reports by the Joint Monitoring Programme, at the current rate of progress sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to achieve the sanitation MDG in the next century. Six of the nine East African countries are ranked among the 25 most off-track countries in the world. Only about a quarter of the population in Eastern Africa has access to improved sanitation facilities. While all countries in East Africa are off-track, three out of them in the Nile region are in an

even worse position - if they maintain the current rate of progress they will not achieve the sanitation MDG before the next two centuries. Ethiopia is one of those three worst off-track countries.



Sanitation is the worst off-track MDG target in Eastern Africa.

The key challenges facing sanitation in Eastern Africa surround the difficulty of putting in place an enabling environment, effectively promoting sanitation, problems in adopting sustainable sanitation technology options and in financing. Enabling environments are often weak with an absence of policies or strategies, or, where these exist, a failure to implement them. Policies may not be implemented because of failure of governments to prioritise sanitation in their planning, because of gaps in capacity or because of lack of ownership where policies are drawn up by external consultants.

The financing challenge is the huge gap between what is required to meet MDG goals and what is planned for investment. But getting money for sanitation is only half of the problem, as the next hurdle is deciding where to spend the money for maximum impact. Questions to be grappled with here include determining what government's role in sanitation and hygiene should be and whether sanitation should be subsidised, and how. If subsidy is going to be allocated, should it go to households or to higher level services such as urban sanitation networks or to institutional sanitation?

The Nairobi conference concluded with a civil society declaration including the following key messages:

- The CSO community welcomes the commitment made by governments in Durban and Egypt to meet sanitation MDG targets, and calls for their urgent implementation.
- CSOs in the region are committed to produce

progress reports on implementation and supply these to AMCOW, starting at the AMCOW Technical Advisory Council meeting in November 2008.

- CSOs are also committed to actively popularise the Durban declaration in their respective countries and call all actors to implement the E-thekwini commitment.

The conference also had messages for CSOs. CSOs were called on to be fully involved in the development of national action plans for sanitation in their respective countries, to engage development partners and government, to facilitate coordination platforms and to work with the media to promote better communication of sanitation and hygiene issues.

RiPPLE contributed to the organisation of the East African Sanitation conference and, building on its Learning and Practice Alliance approach, proposed to initiate a regional learning platform. Regional learning can contribute to accelerating access to sanitation and meeting MDGs by enhancing links between research, practice and policy and thus identifying and supporting effective approaches for scaling up. There was substantial interest in the idea of regional learning, so this will be followed up by RiPPLE.



## Director's Cut

Dr. Alan Nicol

RiPPLE is moving. Again! This time from Phase 1 to Phase 2 where we concentrate on developing and sustaining our LARS. We have now identified two key areas, Growth and Access, led by excellent researchers — Zemed Abebe from HCS (leading on Growth) and Getnet Alemu from CDS (AAU), who takes on the Access LARS. They are currently forming and training research teams and preparing to embark on field research.

But is this really Action Research some of you cry? Or is it Participatory Action Research? Or 'Collaborative Research'. The answer is it is probably a combination. But the really important question is whether or not it will contribute – in the long term – to our core goal, namely 'the production and uptake of technologies and policies that will contribute to poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs'.

Maintaining a focus on this goal will ensure that the methods we need to adopt remain pretty obvious: at their core they must ensure that we work more and more closely with implementers and policy makers—in fact the 'we' needs to include the implementers and policy makers so that traditional boundaries between researchers and practitioners become obsolete. And together, we need to keep asking ourselves, are we really addressing the most critical issues in support of water and

sanitation development in Ethiopia and the Nile region?

Many questions to keep asking ourselves in 2009. But that's good practice, so let's continue to do it!

## Upcoming WASH Events

- **WorldWater Day:** The U.N. has designated March 22<sup>nd</sup> as World Water Day. The goal is to raise awareness of the world water crisis and their goal of reducing by half the percentage of people who lack access to safe (clean) drinking water and basic sanitation. This year World Water Day will highlight Transboundary Waters. For further contact and information please visit: [www.worldwaterday.org/](http://www.worldwaterday.org/)
- **World Water Forum:** The 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 16-22 March 2009. The World Water Forum is the main water-related global event, aimed at putting water firmly on the international agenda. Acting as a stepping stone towards global collaboration on water problems, the Forum offers the water community and policy-and-decision- makers from all over the world, the unique opportunity to come together to create links, debate and attempt to find solutions towards achieving water security. [www.worldwaterforum5.org](http://www.worldwaterforum5.org)
- **World Health Day:** World Health Day is the anniversary of the foundation of the World Health Organization celebrated every year on April 7<sup>th</sup>. [www.who.int/world-health-day](http://www.who.int/world-health-day)
- **34th WEDC International Conference:** The Conference will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa from 18-22 May 2009, by invitation of the Ministry of Water Resources, Ethiopia and WEDC, UK. The Conference title is Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Sustainable Development and Multisectoral Approaches. For further information please visit the website: [www.wedcconference.co.uk](http://www.wedcconference.co.uk)



For all latest publications, upcoming events and RiPPLE updates, check out our website: [www.rippleethiopia.org](http://www.rippleethiopia.org)

## Hawassa Lake: A Lake For Multiple Uses

Hawassa Lake is located in Hawassa town, the capital city of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region. The lake is one of the many beautiful natural assets of this region. With a surface area of 129km<sup>2</sup>, the lake also serves many different purposes and plays a role in the lives of many local people. Under RiPPLE's capacity development programme, training was recently held on photography, story writing and film-making for LPA members, partner organisations and members of RiPPLE staff. Our field visits took the team to Hawassa Lake, where we took this opportunity to photograph different activities taking place on and around the lake.

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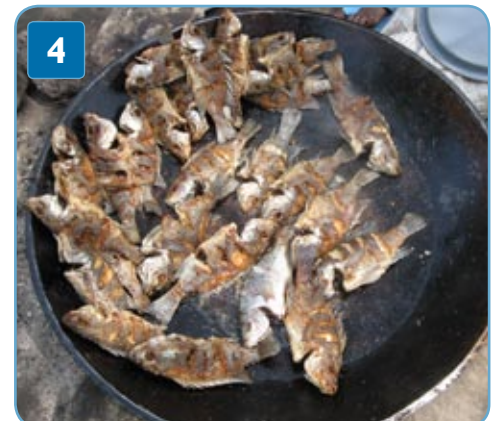
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1. Many young people earn a living from fishing and untying the fishing ropes.
2. Boating on the lake is one of the relaxing activities on offer at the lake. Many people enjoy taking boat trips, generating valuable income for local people.
3. The area surrounding the lake is occupied by pit traders selling a wide variety of useful materials for people to buy.
4. The fish grill is absolutely delicious! You won't have to worry about getting hungry around the lake thanks to the fish grill and soup available.
5. Other people are engaged in preparing the fish and making it ready for different buyers.