

Ethiopia



WaterAid/Caroline Irby

Ethiopia, the fourth largest and second most populous country in Africa, is a land of great contrasts. It is Africa's oldest independent country and, with the exception of a five-year occupation by Mussolini's Italy, has never been colonised. Despite a rich and unique religious and cultural history it has become better known for its periodic droughts and famines, and for its long civil war and subsequent border conflict with Eritrea.

Though improving, literacy levels in Ethiopia are still low and Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with an economy that is highly dependent on agriculture. Only 22% of the population has access to safe water supplies and only 6% have adequate sanitation, making Ethiopia among the least well served countries in the world. Water-related diseases are rife, child mortality high and health services are limited.

WaterAid in Ethiopia



WaterAid/Caroline Irby

WaterAid started funding projects in Ethiopia in 1983 and began working through established non governmental organisations (NGOs) in 1986. A country office was set up in 1991 and two sub-offices opened in Benishangul Gumuz and Oromia Regions in 2004 and 2005. WaterAid works closely with eight local NGOs, the local private sector and local and regional government departments in water, sanitation and hygiene projects. It also works with a wide range of other organisations in networks to influence water and sanitation policies.

WaterAid's aim is to improve the livelihoods of poor people in Ethiopia through the provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene education using technologies that are appropriate to local conditions, affordable and easy to maintain. However, projects vary from region to region depending on the natural environment which varies greatly.

Most Ethiopians live in densely-populated arable plateau lands of middle-altitude. However, the country includes some of the highest peaks in Africa with scattered rural communities living in the cold highlands at over 2000 metres above sea level. Many lowland pastoral communities live in the sparse arid semi-deserts of the east, while hunter-gatherers and shifting cultivators still live in forested parts of the south and west of the country.

In Oromia Region, water projects tend to

be spring-fed gravity schemes; some of which are very large, providing water for tens of thousands of people. In Southern Nations and Nationality People's Region schemes have included deep boreholes as water is sometimes only found below 200 metres. In Amhara and Tigray the main technologies so far have been hand-dug wells and spot spring development where springs are simply tapped and protected at their source. In Benishangul Gumuz, as well as hand-dug wells, WaterAid is testing simpler and cheaper rope pumps.

In its sanitation and hygiene education work WaterAid and its partners have been involved in supporting the construction and use of latrines for both households and institutions, particularly schools. Latrines vary from simple pit latrines to composting latrines, bio-gas, mobile toilets and ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines.

Hygiene education has increasingly focused on the close links between proper handwashing at critical times, like before eating and after going to the toilet, and improved health, particularly in reducing the numbers of young children that die from diarrhoeal diseases.

In all cases WaterAid works closely with communities from the start, to raise awareness of how water and sanitation impact on disease and poverty. Communities are also actively involved in the planning, building, managing and evaluation of projects. Particular attention is now being paid to engaging women in projects and increasing the ways in which the poorest and most marginalised in society, including the elderly and those suffering with HIV/AIDS, can be supported.

Despite recent progress, communication systems are still poor and road coverage one of the worst in the world. It is therefore not uncommon for partner organisations to facilitate building access roads so that they can transport materials at the beginning of a project. This is not only in remote regions – WaterAid has also encountered this within 250 kilometres of the capital Addis Ababa. The need to ensure an effective supply chain that can deliver spare parts through government or private sector involvement is another challenge facing the sustainability of projects.

Although WaterAid mainly works in rural areas, since 1998 it has been engaged in the slum areas of Addis Ababa, and urban initiatives in other towns are also expanding. Projects include establishing communal water points linked to the city's piped systems, wastewater management, shower and latrine blocks and mobile toilets managed together with small kiosks by ex-homeless young people. Where there are very few public toilets these fill a critical gap in the sanitation services for urban people.

Plans: 2005-2010

A strategy running from 2005 to 2010 sets out the plans and activities for WaterAid in Ethiopia. During this time WaterAid will continue to focus on water, sanitation and hygiene education, working with local partners on community managed projects.

The key aims are to:

- Help 100,000 people gain access to water and 95,000 people gain access to sanitation and hygiene education every year by 2010
- Support local partner organisations to raise their own funds, while keeping a strong advisory role on how these funds are spent to ensure at least a further 8000 people gain access to water, sanitation and hygiene education every year by 2010

To address the huge needs of the country and ensure as many Ethiopians as possible gain access to water and sanitation, greater emphasis will be placed on strengthening partnerships and alliances in order to influence others. This includes WaterAid's close involvement in the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene for all) Ethiopia movement and in the Ethiopia Country Water Partnership (ECWP). Collaboration is vital as Ethiopia faces massive challenges with regards to water and sanitation. Its progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targets agreed by all governments to halve the proportions of people without access to water and sanitation between 1990 and 2015, is currently way off track. Latrine construction needs to increase more than ten-fold to 70,000 a month by 2015 to reach the sanitation MDG.

Financing water and sanitation services is a key problem. While responsibility for water and sanitation has shifted from central to district government, they still lack the capacity to carry out their roles effectively and performance is also hindered by the lack of coordination among donors. Initial pledges and budgets are often not being translated into funds, and even when these funds are made available on time, delays in implementation result in significant under-spending.

While the amount spent on these essential services needs to increase by \$31 million a year, WaterAid is also lobbying for changes in the way in which money is spent.

It is supporting efforts to improve the coordination of spending and is working particularly closely with the regional and wereda (district) governments of Benishangul Gumuz and Oromia Regions with some notable successes. In these two states WaterAid will also map the number and functionality of water points to ensure that future services are provided in an equitable way. Emphasis will also be placed on sustainability and affordability issues. In the future 'citizens action' projects will enable communities to assess the performance of service providers and the Government and to lobby for improvements in their communities' water and sanitation services.

Finally, greater emphasis will be placed on water resource management to ensure that water quality and quantity are maintained in the long run and to promote a more integrated approach to water resource management. This is being promoted through the ECWP but plans are also in place to create guidelines for all partners and to ensure that at least half of the rural projects have a significant water resource management component.

The difference water brings Mehari Abraha, Adiawanawaza, Tigray.



WaterAid / Caroline Irby

"I have seen a very radical change here," explains Mehari Abraha from Adiawanawaza. "Before we only had unprotected sources of water. My family suffered badly. My three year old daughter died from this water. There were parasites which gave us illnesses and stomach problems. So many children used to die, but now this has changed and children don't die from these diseases.

Before we used to have to go to the health clinics all of the time, often every day. I used to spend time walking there and hours just queuing to be seen, but now I can save my time and money. I have bought 20 chickens and one goat from the money I have saved. With the time I can work on my maize and pepper crop."



Ethiopia

Area: 1,128,000 km²

Capital: Addis Ababa

Other main cities: Asela, Dire Dawa, Gondar, Jimma

Population **70 m**

Infant mortality **169/1000**

Life expectancy **47.62 yrs**

Water supply coverage **22%**

Sanitation coverage **6%**

Below poverty line **44.2%**

Human development index **170**

Adult literacy **42%**

Sources: World Development Report 2005 and the Human Development Report 2005.

NB. Official statistics tend to understate the extent of water and sanitation problems, sometimes by a large factor. There are not sufficient resources available for accurate monitoring of either population or coverage. Varying definitions of water and sanitation coverage are used and national figures mask large regional differences in coverage.

Country information

Achievements to date

- Helped over 820,000 people gain access to safe water
- Helped establish the local NGO Water Action and supported the formation of the water unit of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Inter Church Aid Commission
- Influenced the development of water projects managed by community boards and is seen as the main proponent of large sustainable gravity flow water schemes in the country
- Coordinated WASH Ethiopia, a country-wide water, sanitation and hygiene movement linked to the international Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
- Helped set up and now hosts the Ethiopian Country Water Partnership (ECWP), the Ethiopian branch of the Global Water Partnership, an international network focused on promoting integrated water resource management
- Piloted rope pumps and composting latrines

£3.50 pays for a bag of cement for a latrine cover slab

£40 pays for a health worker to provide hygiene education for 850 people in a rural community

£70 pays for the sand needed for one hand-dug well

£150 pays to train two community water technicians to maintain their village water points

£1600 pays for the construction of a hand-dug well, fitted with a handpump, which will provide clean water for approximately 300 people

WaterAid

WaterAid – water for life

The UK's only major charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.

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WaterAid/Kate Eshelby

Life without safe water Zenebech Jemel, Chobare Meno.



WaterAid/Caroline Irby

“The water is not good in this pond,” says Zenebech. “There are worms and so many ugly things in it. All the animals drink from the pond as well as the community. We have no alternative. This pond water is so, so dirty and we cannot do anything about it. Because of the water we get different diseases.”

I have three children. They have respiratory problems, coughs and flu as well as diarrhoea and malaria. Sometimes we will go to the clinic, we either take the children or if they are too ill, we go and bring the medicine back for them. We might visit the clinic two to three times per month. We are hoping and praying for clean water.”

Mobile latrines Eskender Tadesse, Addis Ababa.



WaterAid/Caroline Irby

Eskender Tadesse runs a ‘mobile latrine’ and kiosk set up by WaterAid’s partner GAMA. These public latrines, on the streets of Addis Ababa, help keep the environment clean and also provide ex-homeless people with a salary through their kiosks.

“There is a big difference between the life I was living before and the life I have now,” he explains. “Before I was homeless and I didn’t have an income to support myself. Now, with the toilet, I have an income and am saving money every month.”

Between 70 and 80 people use this toilet every day. Sometimes if people have no money I will let them in for free, so that we can keep the area clean. I also have a special box for children to stand on so that they can use the latrine. They pay if they can afford to – but if they can’t afford it they don’t have to.

My life has been improved very much from before. I would say that the project is very good and is changing the lives of people like me. I would like to see these toilets in other areas of the city too, as they keep the areas clean and also offer opportunities to more people.”