

# ETHIOPIA

## WASH CASE STUDIES SERIES



The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is an international sector organisation that has worked since 1990 to achieve sustainable water supply and sanitation for all people, by enhancing collaboration among sector agencies and professionals.

As part of its Networking and Knowledge Management and Advocacy programmes, WSSCC encourages the development of national Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Coalitions. The role of the WASH Coalitions ranges from participating in information sharing to advocating specific policy changes and everything in between. Despite the variety of activities in which they participate, the WASH Coalitions have in common a commitment to addressing the need for improved systematic communication, collaboration, and joint action among sector stakeholders in their countries of operation. Most national WASH Coalitions have developed and launched WASH Campaigns as a vehicle for advocacy and awareness-raising.

WSSCC is presenting the work of the WASH Coalitions in a series of WASH Coalition country case studies. These case studies showcase the evolution, activities and impact of national WASH Coalitions. In this edition, the focus is on Ethiopia, where a strong WASH Movement has dominated the awareness raising agenda in recent years.

### THE ETHIOPIA WASH MOVEMENT: FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Ethiopia is one of the most underprivileged countries in the world, ranking 105 out of 108 on the human poverty index<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 50 to 70 percent of the population lives under the absolute poverty line, and the under five mortality rate is 123 per 1000. About 85 percent of the population live in rural areas. Sanitation and hygiene related diseases are among the most common deadly diseases in Ethiopia. In urban slums and rural areas alike, the majority of the population does not have access to sufficient and safe sanitation. In response to these challenges, in November 2004 the Ethiopia WASH Movement was launched.

The goal of the Movement is to contribute to the reduction of morbidity and mortality caused by lack of safe and adequate water, poor sanitation and hygienic practices. The objectives are to promote improved water, sanitation and hygiene practices and gain the political and social commitment and endorsement required to make a real difference in the country's water, sanitation and hygiene situation.



While in essence a multi-stakeholder coalition, the group chose to call itself the Ethiopia WASH Movement to emphasize the extent of the social mobilization effort needed to lift WASH to the level of priority it needs. The Movement has been exceptionally successful in spreading the WASH message and in facilitating change. Among others the WASH Movement contributed to a Memorandum of Understanding signed among the three sector ministries, and the development of a National Hygiene and Sanitation Strategy and Protocol. In a survey conducted in 2007, 55 percent of people surveyed had access to a latrine. Of these, 82.7 percent were aware of the message of the WASH Movement: water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

A combination of factors led to the success of the WASH Movement in Ethiopia. **This case study focuses on three major elements: advocacy and social mobilisation, monitoring, and coalition building.**

## Advocacy, Social Mobilisation and the Media

Each year the WASH Movement in Ethiopia is launched under a new, simple and catchy slogan, which determines the Movement's focus for the year. This allows the Movement, political leaders and community members to focus on specific issues in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. To date, the slogans have been "Your Health is in Your Hands" (2004-2005), "Let us Use Latrine for our Health and Dignity" (2005-2006), and "Keep Water Safe" (2006-2007). Each year an array of mobilisation, media and advocacy activities are carried out under the Movement's slogan.

### Your Health is in Your Hands: 2004-2005

The WASH Ethiopia Movement launched its first slogan "Your Health is in Your Hands" on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2004 at Meskel Square, Addis Ababa. This slogan, together with a special logo, provided a clear visual for people to understand the importance of the simple activity of hand-washing with soap, ash or sand at critical times (such as before eating and preparing food, after using the toilet, and after cleaning babies' bottoms). Roughly 100,000 bars of soap donated by the private sector were distributed throughout the country inside WASH kits. Communication packages with key WASH facts and messages, and translated into five local languages, were widely distributed at the grassroots level. WASH messages were also communicated via Ethiopian television and radio, and through specially produced WASH music.

Over the course of the 2004-2005 Movement, WASH Ethiopia saw a great deal of progress in several target areas. Observers noted an increase in the practice of hand-washing after defecation, mothers and children began dialogues on hand-washing at critical times, and Ministers of Health and Water Resources got involved in the WASH

Movement, which meant a greater possibility of influencing policy formation. The motto and logo were so well adopted, that they are now used for all WASH Movement communications in Ethiopia.

### Use Latrine for your Health and Dignity: 2005-2006

WASH Ethiopia launched its second year slogan "Let us Use Latrine for our Health and Dignity" on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2006 in Awassa, Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. This phase of the Movement emphasized the importance of constructing and using latrines. Key focus areas were to build awareness among communities, and to gain commitments and endorsements from government officials, in order to obtain funding and approval to build latrines in schools without proper sanitation facilities. In addition to direct advocacy with decision makers, this involved the organisation of a WASH Ethiopia Movement familiarisation workshop for regional government officials, and a journalist workshop to increase the media's grasp on, and coverage of key concepts, goals, issues and objectives of the WASH Movement. In addition, 40,000 WASH packs were distributed, containing information about proper sanitation, including latrine construction and use.

### Keep Water Safe: 2006-2007

WASH Ethiopia launched the Movement's third year under the motto 'Keep Water Safe' on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007, focusing on water quality. The launch was held at the Sashmene Stadium in the densely-populated Oromia region, and featured a high profile launching ceremony, with Ministers, city administrators, social and religious leaders, media professionals, and teachers and students in attendance. Launch activities included the distribution of messages on safe water handling, collection, transportation, storage and treatment. Stage dramas, circus, role play, street shows and processions encouraged community sensitization about hygiene and water quality. The ceremony was broadcast through local, private and national media outlets.

Other activities during 2007 included the organisation of a private sector briefing workshop to increase the private sector involvement in WASH concerns, and a regional familiarization workshop for representatives from regional health, water and education bureaus of all regions to discuss the specific objectives and messages of the water quality campaign. This last workshop resulted in the development of a regional WASH activity plan, which will help to reach wider community audiences, among others by cascading the national launches to the regions.

2007 also saw an increased interest in disseminating WASH messages to political leaders and the general public by media members of the WASH Movement. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, WASH Ethiopia arranged a field visit for journalists and government officials to witness firsthand the effects of WASH efforts. Two sites, one with improved water,

sanitation and hygiene situations, and one without, were selected. Comparing the two sites allowed participants to view the effects of improved WASH conditions on people's health, productivity, lifestyle and confidence. A round table discussion between journalists, experts and officials followed the visits.



## Success

There has been much success since the 2004 launch of the WASH Ethiopia Movement. The Movement has contributed to the integration and coordination of sanitation and hygiene with water supply, and also contributed to the development of the National Hygiene and Sanitation Strategy and Protocol. The Movement has drawn the attention of social leaders, who have assisted in the allocation of funds in order to construct toilet facilities in schools. Awareness about proper hand-washing, sanitation and water quality has increased. The WASH logo has become prevalent, replacing the previous WATSAN logo. Private sector involvement has increased, and has made a strong contribution to the Movement. Lastly, the Movement plays a great role in media mobilization and sector engagement.

85 percent had begun hand-washing with soap. This first evaluation provided valuable direction for future Movement activities, as well as future monitoring exercises. In 2007, new baseline surveys were carried out on water quality, in order to evaluate the impact of the "Keep Water Safe" campaign later in 2008. The WASH Movement also decided to develop a Regional Monitoring System.

## Coalition Building: Ethiopia's success and lessons learned

The Ethiopian WASH Movement is a strong example of successful coalition building. Several reasons have been identified as contributing to this success. For one, prior to the creation of the Ethiopia WASH Movement there was no concerted, sector-wide coordination in the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors. By forming the WASH Movement, the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors were able to command attention from the government, as well as other agencies. Secondly, the Movement could count on strong commitment from member organisations and individuals; as demonstrated by the array of activities and inputs in which members took part, including the provision of funds, attending weekly meetings, providing time, expertise, materials, meeting spaces, etc. Thirdly, the Movement decided to decentralise early on, establishing Regional Chapters with regional committees, in order to facilitate activities across the country. In addition, the Movement is guided by strong general principles. The composition of the Movement, which includes donors, governmental organisations, non governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, UN agencies, private sector organisations, media, and individuals, provides a strong base. The Movement holds regular meetings in which participants are actively involved, and which include special learning and sharing sessions to facilitate discussion of several sector issues. The WASH coordinator and members have a strong follow-up on all WASH activities. Additional activities, such as WASH Ethiopia's monitoring process, have contributed to the success as it allowed the WASH Movement to immediately determine the positive changes that result from Movement activities. This allowed the Movement to focus its energies on 'quick wins', which positively reinforced the Movement's activities and generated momentum for future activities.

## Monitoring the Movement's impact

The Ethiopia WASH Movement has been particularly careful to monitor its progress. Since the inception of WASH Ethiopia, baseline surveys have been carried out to compare project-end statistics with statistics prior to project launch. Surveys gather statistics on hand-washing, sanitation and water quality. Pre-project statistics are gathered at the beginning of each project year or prior to launching individual projects, to gather data on relevant metrics in order to judge whether the project(s) in question result in real changes. An evaluation study, which gathers the same data as the pre-project statistics, is conducted at the end of each Movement project or year. In addition, activity reports and regular WASH stakeholder meetings follow up and monitor Movement progress. Coalition members share the joint responsibility of monitoring the Movement.

The monitoring exercises are crucial because they illustrate the contribution of the Movement in terms of behavior change and policy influence. The data provided from the monitoring system provides a solid base for determining follow-up activities by the WASH Coalition. Additionally, the results illuminate the 'quick wins' (small, successful projects) of the Movement, and highlight particularly influential Movement activities. For example, from the 30 woredas studied in 2006, 16 percent of the respondents said that they had become aware of the WASH campaign, of those 16 percent, 87 percent learned that hand-washing with soap prevents disease; and

## Revitalisation

Despite the WASH Movement's successes, coalitions, especially when they are as large as the Ethiopia WASH Movement, are prone to lose momentum and experience a decrease in commitment and activity. The WASH Movement recognized this, and in September 2007 organised a WASH Revitalisation Workshop, to review its status, update stakeholders on recent achievements, and discuss and devise future means of strengthening the Movement. Not only did this workshop result in a renewed sense of motivation and momentum, it also led to the revision of some of the Movement's procedures. For instance, instead of the usual weekly lunch meetings, attended mainly by core group members and focusing mostly on management and administrative issues, the Movement now holds monthly meetings, which deal with different sector themes or topics, and spend only a limited time on management or administrative topics. As a result, meeting attendance has increased dramatically.

### Lessons from the Ethiopia WASH Movement:

- ▶ Coalition building is challenging work that takes effort, commitment and follow-up.
- ▶ It is important to have clear guidelines/ principles that define membership criteria, roles, responsibilities and obligations, and the benefits gained from membership.
- ▶ There ought to be at least one full-time focal person tasked with following up on the aims of the coalition and facilitating communication and coordination among coalition members.
- ▶ Decision makers in member organisations should maintain active participation in the coalition. Each member organisation should appoint a liaison to be the delegate to the coalition, and it should be clear what mandate for decision making this delegate has within his or her organisation.

- ▶ The coalition needs financial partners that provide regular funding, as experience has taught that financial contributions from members may not be sufficiently consistent to ensure availability of a constant budget to run the coalition.
- ▶ All contributions by members, be they monetary or not, should be duly recognised.
- ▶ To maintain strength and commitment, the coalition should re-evaluate its aims, scope and means, through revitalization workshops or other similar processes at regular intervals.

## In Summary

The Ethiopian WASH Movement, spreading the message of safe and proper water supply, sanitation and hygiene for all, has been a particularly successful WASH Coalition for a number of reasons. The Movement maintains a solid base of support from its members at all levels. Additionally, the objectives set by the Movement have been achievable, and have therefore built confidence in the coalition. For example, the decision to focus on one specific issue each year led to a step-by-step approach and manageable activities. The WASH Movement became very adept at combining social mobilisation and advocacy activities, and strategically used the media as a partner, rather than just as receivers and conduits of information. The focus on regular monitoring allowed the Movement to identify success and shortcomings in a timely manner, thus acting as a compass for the Movement, identifying the methods, programmes and actions that provided the most positive change. Lastly, the WASH Movement's willingness and ability to reflect and re-evaluate have given it extra strength and durability for years to come.

<sup>1</sup> Human Development Report 2007-2008

## WASH Ethiopia Movement Member Organizations

GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS	Federal and Regional Health, Water Resources and Education Offices, National Media Agencies, Regional Administrative Councils
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (DONORS)	WSSCC, World Bank-WSP, UNICEF, USAID, WHO
CIVIL SOCIETY	Care International, Hope 2020, Intermón Oxfam, Millennium Water Partnership (MWP), Merlin Ethiopia, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR), Oxfam GB, Plan International, Population Service International (PSI), Society for Urban Development in East Africa (SUDEA), Water Action, WaterAid Ethiopia (WAE), Zemaself, Concern Ethiopia, ENDA, Cheshire Foundation Ethiopia, EMCVA, German Agro Action, SNV, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Orbis International, Oxfam America, RIPPPE, PAWs, World Vision Ethiopia
PRIVATE SECTOR	Coca Cola Factory, Endo - Ethiopia P.L. Soap Company, Health Concern Consulting PLC, Helena Healthcare PLC, Image Enterprise, Unilever PLC and Universal Plastic Factory, AquaSan PLC, Roto PLC
FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS	Catholic Relief Services(CRS), Ethiopia Orthodox Church, Ethiopia Kale Hiwot Church, Islamic Relief Services, Norwegian Church Aid

For an up to date account of Ethiopia WASH activities, please visit the Ethiopia Country Page on the WSSCC website: [www.wsscc.org](http://www.wsscc.org)

For more information on the Ethiopia WASH Movement or to get involved with the activities, please contact the Ethiopia National WASH Movement Coordinator:

Mr Michael Negash

Tel: +251 114 661 680 or +251 911 474 397 | Email: [michaeln@wateraidet.org](mailto:michaeln@wateraidet.org) or [info@wateraidet.org](mailto:info@wateraidet.org)