



Water in Ethiopia

Water in rural Ethiopia

Commentary

In rural Ethiopia just surviving is a full-time job. Farmers here struggle to grow enough and feed their families. Finding water from day to day is a punishing task and the only source is the distance river or a spring. Responsibility for this job falls almost entirely on women and children.

Yeshlembet

Everyday I fetch water from the spring. My daughter used to help me, but now she goes to school.

I live in this house with my five children and my husband, so there are seven of us altogether. The house has a room for sitting and eating in, and a there's also bedroom. So we have two rooms.

For the toilet, we just go out in the fields. But there's an old woman nearby who uses this latrine.

In the morning after I wash myself and clean the house, I start the cooking.

I make sure there's food ready for the children when they come back, from school or from looking after the cattle.

On top of all this I have to fetch water – 6 to 7 jerry-cans a day. Even that's not enough, I need water for washing the dishes and for bathing the children.

It takes two jerrycans of water to wash the four younger children.

I bring water here to do it because the spring is too far away

We get our washing water and our drinking water all from this same distant spring.

So far all the children are well, no one has got sick from the spring water. But the distance, the distance! It's about one kilometre.

I carry this heavy can on my back, enough for five kids and the animals
some days I go more than 7 times.

I don't see how we'll ever get a better water supply, where would that come from? There's no chance of getting water right here, and improving our lives, we just have to keep on fetching it.

If I ever had piped water at my house, I'd use it for all the cleaning, and when I was done I'd spin some cotton for weaving, do the cooking and also have time to rest.