



Water in Ethiopia

Water in Urban Ethiopia

Commentary

The Ethiopian city of Bahir Dar has a buzzing street life and a good supply of clean piped water. But that doesn't mean every household has hot and cold running water on tap. Some do but most ordinary oven dwellers can't afford it, there more likely to have a perfectly serviceable but less luxurious water supply.

Mulugojam

I live on the outskirts of Bahir Dar, with my husband and our four children. I work as a secretary in the water service department of the city. All of my children go to school. I have my own water tap right inside our compound. Our water comes from the town water supply service. It's piped in from two springs outside the city. Other people might get water from wells, rivers, or the lake. But ours is piped. We get our drinking water from the tap, we just wash out a bottle and put it in the fridge. So it's there whenever we want it. In our compound we have bedrooms for the children, one for us, one for my brother, a storeroom, and a sitting room. There's a room for a shower but it's not finished yet. We have a kitchen and bathroom outside.

Benti

When we have a shower, we just turn on this tap and the water comes out
And this is the toilet we all use.

Mulugojam

A lot of people comment on the kitchen and shower room; they say it isn't up to the same standard as the rest of the house. We have plans to build something more modern and substantial later on, but we can't afford it right now. I use about 12 cubic metres of water a month. When you work out the cost, it comes to about 20 – 22 birr. A man comes around to check the meter every month and takes a reading. We get a bill from the water services office and we have to go there to pay it. With the price of everything going up, and being responsible for the family finances, if I could save water and bring down our bill by just a few birr, I'd be very happy about that. When we rebuild, we won't use big bowls for washing, we'll have a purpose-built concrete basin with a tap. We'll have an inside shower, and a tap in the kitchen. So once we finish building that, it will be much better. There'll be no more dragging those big metal washing bowls around. We can do everything inside.