



Water in Ethiopia

Three Ways of Getting water: Rural water supply from a river.

Commentary

The highlands of Ethiopia, the end of rainy season. There's a good flow of water in rivers of stream and the levels are high. This is the main source of water for rural people in surrounding areas. They come from miles around knowing there's plentiful supply. Over 600 households thousands of people rely on this stretch of river for almost everything they do.

Mantegbosh

We use the water at home for everything. Mixing flour to make bread, cooking stew, for making coffee and homemade beer. And now we've started using it to grow vegetables

Boy Vox Pop

I come here to fetch water and have a bath

Adenach

for making beer, washing pots and cooking, making bread, making coffee. We live off this water.

Michael

About 75% of the entire population in the rural setting do not have potable water, so that people should have to access their potable water from unprotected springs, unprotected rivers, river water where both animals and human beings just using from the same spot. This is the potential sources of water-borne disease.

Commentary

The danger of contamination isn't just from animals. People using this water don't know what's happening upstream – human waste, pesticides, fertilisers or other pollutants could all be getting into the river.

But people here don't have a choice, besides river water is plentiful - and free.

Michael

Availability is very crucial for people, people don't mind for the quality as long as they get water.

Adenach

We haven't had any problems that we know came from the water. So we just use it and don't worry about it.

Mantegbosh

If we get ill, we have no way of knowing if it's from the water, the weather or from the food we're eating. So we just accept it as it is, because we can't get water from anywhere else.

Commentary

Water quality from "unprotected" sources varies through the seasons. For example, when it rains heavily, it gets churned up and muddy.

Boy Vox Pop

The river sometimes floods, and sometimes it gets low, but it's never dried up yet.

Commentary

Women and children from villages all around walk miles to fetch water here.

But this much-used river is only 13 kilometres from the city of Bahir Dar, which has a clean, piped water supply.

Mantegbosh

I've never thought about having anything like that here. I don't think there's any plan for us to have a water supply like that.

Adenach

Yes we know they have clean piped water in Bahir Dar, but not here. We're still using water from the river, while theirs is piped.

Voice over

And do you wish you could have the same?

Adenach

Yes I do. If we could get it.

Michael

People in most cases don't know about their rights, so that they don't claim it.

I mean getting water is a right, it's not somebody's gesture just going to be thrown down to people, it is a right to get, because they pay tax, because they really, they really contribute something to this country, so that they should also be considered as - as equal citizens like others.