



Water in Ethiopia

Three Ways of Getting Water: Rural Pump

Commentary

Rural northern Ethiopia, the village of Abchikili. Here the people used to walk miles to fetch water from the nearest river. But now they have a well. The new water supply transformed the community. They pitched in together to dig down 60 metres to fresh ground water. But the pumpers changed more than the water supply for the villages.

Now they take responsibility for community hygiene, manage maintain the pump and share the decision making process.

The pumpers changed both health and dynamic of the village.

Binegrish

Oh gosh, since we've had the pump I can't imagine how we lived without it. In the past we spent so much time and trouble getting down to the river, and queuing up to fetch water. It was like being a prisoner. What we have now is absolute bliss, it's like we died and went to heaven.

Now I have time to spin cotton for weaving, I have plenty of time to cook and get the house clean. And I look after my grandchildren.

Worku

Before the pump was built, the community suffered a lot from waterborne diseases, especially the children, they got diarrhoea all the time. But since we've had the pump, and it gets disinfected regularly, our water is as good as the city folks have.

Now we're used to having this water supply, everyone understands that if they drink river water, it will probably make them sick.

Michael

For a person just has been just, you know, exposed for many years for unprotected water source, for untreated water source, that are getting improved water system, it's really luxury. And if they get this improved water system, means you will see just, you know, the life - the health condition of these people just really dramatically going to be improved. Not only the health, but the productivity of the people as well.

Commentary

But with this valuable resource comes responsibilities.

Committee Member

At this meeting today we need to work out how we can raise more money to add to what we already have in the bank.

The money we have now isn't enough. We need to get the community to donate more.

Commentary

The pump is used by about 350 people from nearby villages. Every household contributes 2 Birr - around 15 pence - each month.

Commentary

The village formed a water committee to manage and maintain the pump, and to protect the water supply by improving hygiene. For example by finding an alternative to using the fields as a toilet.

Committee Member

Everyone should dig their own latrine so we can stop contamination getting from the fields into the houses on flies and chickens.

Committee Member

We need to show the kids how to use these latrines, so they stop going all over the place.

Committee Member

It also helps if everyone washes their water pots before filling them. And we should make sure not to let the water get contaminated inside the house.

Committee Member

We need to tell the children to wash their hands before they put them in a water pot, so clean water from the pump doesn't get dirty at home.

Commentary

Women have sole responsibility for the use of water in the home. So they need to be central to any strategy for improving water provision.

Michael

Any intervention related to water should have to give greater attention that woman should be put at the front line.

They are the one who will be victimized from the problem, they are the one who benefitting actually, first.

Woman

We should make sure the pump opens on time so we get the best out of it

Commentary

Having control over their water supply, and therefore their well-being, has pulled the community together. They're in a stronger position to look after their own interests.

Committee Member

There are more people using the pump now, so we should see if we can get another one, and have it closer to people's houses.