

Visit to Gott 1 water scheme and Keshmando secondary school in Nebar Keshmando Kebele in Bambasi Woreda of Benishangul Gumuz Region



Ato Atsbaha, CMP supervisor on the left and Ato Adigo, Water Bureau Head on the right (Photo 2018/Arto)

managing also project finance and woreda is only a facilitator. He emphasises how this approach brings about the ownership of the community and a high level of sustainability.

Ato Atsbaha quickly delegates the responsibility of further explanation to the Chairperson of the WASHCO. Visitors are excited to hear facts from the WASHCO members themselves. Actually other

community members also join the discussion expressing their gratefulness and happiness for the availability of clean and tasty drinking water. One man from the community describes the quality of the water as "Highland". (All bottled waters in Ethiopia are called "Highland"). The Chairperson introduces the WASHCO: there are 7 WASHCO members, three men and four women. Women have the following positions: cashier, storekeeper, auditor and mechanic. Men carry the responsibilities of chair, secretary and another mechanic. Visitors are impressed when the Chair explains the full CMP project cycle from promotion, application, appraisal, agreement, training and implementation but does not stop here. He continues to explain how they constantly maintain the water point and handpump. He even tells in details that they have changed the washers two times by themselves explaining that washers are small plastic rings in the piston to lift the water up from the well. One washer costs about 180 Birr. Visitors also learn that before they had to beg the water from other water points around as there is no other water source available during the dry season. It was embarrassing and women spent

Visitors enter the water point and observe that a man is pumping water when women around wait their Jerrycans to be filled. Positive feelings and great expectations fill the visitors from Embassy of Finland, Regional WASH sector bureaus, COWASH Federal and Regional teams and Bambasi woreda water office. Ato Atsbaha, Bambasi woreda CMP Supervisor explains that this is a nearly two years old hand dug well, constructed during 2017 (2009 EFY). Atsbaha is very experienced and highly skilled CMP supervisor with full of commitment to serve his community. He has been CMP supervisor in Bambasi all COWASH time, since 2014 when Benishangul Gumuz Region joined COWASH. You can trust any job to him and he executes it no matter what. Atsbaha reiterates that this water scheme was highly demanded and needed by the community and is constructed using the CMP approach. Atsbaha explains the CMP approach principle where the community is the project manager



Keshmando Gott 1 WASHCO members. Chair person with the cap in his hand. (Photo 2018/Arto)

sometimes whole day in water collection. Originally 74 households paid the upfront cash contribution and contributed their labour and local materials for the construction. Later on, 10 more households registered into the regular users and at the moment each of the 84 household pay 25 Birr annual tariff to the cashier. The chairperson tells to visitors that actually much more people use the water point as there are lots of students from the nearby Keshmando secondary school renting rooms in surrounding houses. Also some other needy people use the water point. Community cannot turn their back to the bargain of this basic substance of water what every human needs. The water point use is overloaded and during the dry season they have to limit the water collection for one Jerrycan (25 litres) per household per day, which is not enough.

The visitors understand how much the community appreciates their water point and the value of water. The community express their demand for another water point in order to reduce the pressure on this water point. Bambasi woreda water office head takes note and promises to look into this request together with the Woreda WASH team.

At the end of the visit Atsbaha explains that they have tried to drill shallow boreholes in the area to satisfy the demand of the community, but due to geological conditions of the area all shallow wells have not been successful as the soil is silty and easily collapses during the drilling and fills the borehole in short period of time of its use. We discuss the technical options to solve the water problem of the whole Keshmando village. We come to the conclusion that ultimately the village and the school needs a piped water system. Unfortunately, COWASH does not have these funds available as piped water system for the entire village might costs millions of Birrs. Water Bureau promises to look for the long-term solution for this village. As a quick solution we discuss the possibility of exploring the hand drill wells option as the soil looks promising for hand drilling. Hand drilled wells are cheap, can be constructed quickly by the community and local drillers. One hand drill well can serve 5-10 households and thus bringing the water closer to the households. Water bureau promises to explore this technology as well.



After the water point visit we continued our visit to the Keshmando secondary school where COWASH has constructed three latrine blocks and a water point with hand dug well. Two four-unit blocks for girls and boys and one two-unit block for teachers. In each student block, one unit is reserved for students with disabilities.

Keshmando secondary school students' block. (Photo 2018/Arto)

Ato Atsbaha proudly presents his design for the inclusive toilet seat. Toilets and water point have ramps for wheel chair users and to ease access for others with physical or visual impairments although these ramps are at the moment useless as the toilets are far from the



Disability toilet seat under testing by Ato Atsbaha.(Photo 2018/Aino)



Keshmando school water point (Photo 2018/Arto)

school and there is no clear access path to them. The school director explains that they have a plan to expand the school buildings in the coming years and in future the water point will be in the middle of the school compound.

An interesting thing took place when we visited the girls' urinal area. The discussion started from the design and implementation of the urinal. Some wondered, which direction the girls should urinate as the contractor had constructed the footrest to the wrong direction. The discussion went even more lively when men and women started to demonstrate how girls would and should use the urinals. This was good sign, as maybe the first time men really started to realise the needs of the girls for privacy and for comfort for their natural needs. Good decisions were made to improve the girls' urinals.

Finally, we thanked the school staff and drove to the Bambasi woreda administrator's office to brief him on our observations, findings and proposals. He thanked us for our concerns and contributions and promised to take all our recommendations to the Woreda WASH Team consideration and action.

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