

## Second CMP Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Candidate; Dr Fekadu Megersa, Oromia Regional Support Unit team member and a leader in the Making:

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Community Managed Project (CMP) is our approach in Community Led Accelerated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (COWASH) project. Capacity Development is the pillar and cornerstone of our Project. This is no different when it comes to building the capacity of individual staff, partners or people in the academia in the wider Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector. A good example to note is the case story of the former Academician and the current Water Development Commission, Commissioner, Dr. Beshah Mogesse, who was a pioneer CMP assisted Doctor of Philosophy, (PhD).

Dr Fekadu Megersa is a valuable member of the COWASH Regional Support Unit team in Oromia and a second graduate in Doctor of Philosophy within COWASH. He works as Capacity Building Specialist. He is very talented and enthusiastic and hardworking COWASH RSU staff. Some years back he got a chance to study in School of Economics, Huazhong University



of Science and Technology, China for his PhD. At the time, he had not enough money for his studies, so he had to study and work simultaneously. However, he got strong support from his employee, Oromia Water Bureau, from his colleagues, friends and family. He feels everybody contributed to him and for his studies for which Dr Fekadu is humbly grateful and thankful. It took him 3 and half years, sleeping only few hours during night, and several short and expensive trips to China and finally he was able to present his dissertation on *“Project Implementation Management Modalities, Households Tariff Contribution and Sustainability Outcomes of Rural Water Supply Services: Insights from Rural Areas in Ethiopia”*. He got AAB score for his research from three professors. This is remarkable achievement in such circumstances.

Dr. Fekadu further succeeded to make his publication in one of the top ranked Journal list of SSCI (Social Science Citation Index). He did his study and research work outstandingly and was therefore awarded academic excellence award, not usual for foreign students. Due to his excellent performance, he was offered a post-doctorate job with good pay. Guess what? He declined this offer and decided to come back to his home country to work with COWASH in the Oromia Water Bureau. Unusual decision as in most cases these kinds of offers are hard to reject. But this young man decided to return back home and work for CMP, for his people with lots of new research and development ideas in his mind. How lucky COWASH is to get him back again.

As Fekadu’s dissertations focused on CMP, we have now a scientific research that proved CMP’s position on sustainability and ownership was correct from the beginning. According to the finding, it is scientifically proved that ***“The sustainability of water supply services can be maximized by using the Community Managed Project implementation modality in rural water supply implementation.*”**

Dr Fekadu's study examined the impact of project implementation management approaches on the sustainability outcomes of rural water services in Ethiopia. He compared the sustainability between community managed projects, local government managed projects, and charity and non-governmental organizations managed projects. The result showed the existence of a significant difference in most of the sustainability variables among project implementation management modalities under the study. As to the findings, ***the community-managed project approach generated a relatively higher and statistically significant sustainability outcome as compared to the others.*** Overall, the key findings suggest that, in addition to demand-driven interventions, if the communities are empowered with the management and decision-making role of constructing their own water points, the benefits of continuous delivery and sustainability of services can be maximized. The main contributing factor for the sustainability was the ownership. Strong ownership comes when the community takes the responsibility for construction, project management, procurement and operation and maintenance from the beginning to the end of the project. Government's role is devolved to facilitation and capacity building only.

In addition to the above, Dr Fekadu has prepared two other interesting articles. One is dealing about the factors affecting the willingness to pay and the other about financial sustainability. Stay tuned to know more about these later on.

He also shared his publication and dissertation review experience for international PHD and Masters Students of the school which is featured on the university website. You can also read more about his experience sharing by visiting this web site:

<http://eco.hust.edu.cn/info/1059/9444.htm?from=singlemessage&isappinstalled=0>



*Story written by Arto Suominen, Chief Technical Advisor, (CTA) of COWASH*

*Photo credit COWASH Communications Team and Fekadu Megersa*