

# Enhanced capacity, renewed energy and greater understanding of COWASH Emergency programme:

## 1. Introduction and background

COWASH is well known in the WASH sector, more as a capacity building project than a simple WASH implementer. In COWASH, capacity building is a cornerstone of our programme implementations modality through community led approach and working closely with the regional support unit and regional COWASH stakeholders.



Arto Suominen, CTA making an opening remark in the COVID resilience building training/Melaku Tekola/August 2020.

It is within this frame that COWASH successfully completed series of training of trainers (TOT) workshops on COVID-19 Preparedness, Response and Resilience Building across five regions to build the capacity of regional support units, COWASH regional stakeholders to kick off the COWASH six-month project. COWASH approach in COVID-19 prevention is community-led, meaning that communities themselves are to take the responsibility on COVID-19 preparedness and response. Thanks to the programme team of COWASH Ethiopia and the Chief Technical Advisor in particular for galvanizing staff and training resources to deliver training workshops within short period of time despite the restrictive state of emergency proclamation which bans public gathering more than four. For COWASH, the temporary bans/slowdown of operations was not a hindrance, rather was an opportunity for planning, organizing and development of the training contents and the overall project management operations and guidelines for the six-month extension programme.

Across the five regions in the past month, we trained an overall of 62 participants (55 males, 7 females, out of which 1 female and 2 male are persons with disabilities). The five trainings were held in the four regional capitals, Bahir Dar for Amhara region, Asosa for Benishangul Gumuz region, Hawassa for SNNPR, Mekele for Tigray and in the nation's capital, Addis Ababa for Oromia RSU team members and the COWASH stakeholders. It is also worth to

mention that we get representatives from Embassy of Finland and Ministry of Education in the Amhara and Oromia trainings respectively.



Arto and Yohannes delivering trainings/Melaku Tekola/July 2020.

Regarding the profile of the participants, relevant RSU programme team members were trained with the COWASH regional stakeholders that included representatives from the bureau of water, energy and mines, finance, women and children affairs, health, education and from micro and small enterprises. The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of COWASH RSU team members in delivering COWASH phase III, COVID-19 extension and emergency project within relatively shorter period of time. COWASH Stakeholders were included in this TOT training to smoothen the project implementations and create better understanding of the emergency project. All the trainings in five regions were primarily opened by the Chief Technical Advisor.



COWASH Trainers, Meaza K and Abebaw G, delivering COVID-19 training/July 2020

## 2. Training Content

In all the five regions, the workshop was conducted for two days. On the first day, participants were provided with deeper knowledge and understanding on the below topics;

- Review of COWASH overall management guideline in COVID-19 situation
- Community water point prioritization criteria for COVID-19 intervention
- Institution identifications and selection for COVID-19 intervention
- Revised CMP guideline for 6 months extension in emergency
- Water point rehabilitation assessment and appraisal
- Institutional latrine assessment and appraisal
- Sanitary inspections of hand-pump wells and springs
- Community water scheme and COVID-19 resilience building
- Health post and health centre COVID-19 resilience building

On the second day participants were given detailed brief on the below topics

- School COVID-19 resilience building in general
- School COVID-19 resilience building and hand washing in schools
- Household COVID-19 guideline
- Assessment of Gender based violence
- Soap production by MSEs
- Monitoring tools and quarterly reporting
- Emergency procurement
- Risk Communications in the era of COVID-19

At the end of the two days training, clear understanding reached on how to implement the COWASH Phase III extension COVID-19 preparedness, response and resilience project and discussions were made to clarify actual implementation issues and agreed on actions points to cascade to the respective Woredas.

In the closure, participants appreciated the COWASH team for developing the various guidelines shared during the training and for preparation of informative training resources in such a short period of time. In one to one discussions with the Communications Advisor, participants revealed their delight and improved capacity to manage the new project extension due to the improved capacity through the training. However, they also mentioned the need for further supportive supervision to be made if participants have not yet fully internalised the context.

Furthermore, all COWASH trainings were permitted by the health authorities and strictly followed the social distancing and physical hygiene protocols in all gatherings.

### **3. Methodology**

Different facilitation methods were used throughout the workshop including:

- Lecture and discussions
- Buzz group discussions, questions and answer sessions,
- Demonstration, presentations
- Fact and Fiction discussions

### **4. Inspiring testimonies from the training**

There are several testimonies from the five regions. The below only summarises the key reflections from some of the training participants from the five regions.

A participant from Oromia said that the training equipped them with necessary skills and knowledge to implement the COWASH Phase III extension project. He appreciated COWASH federal team for developing the training concept and the project implementations modality within short period. He added “he acquired new skills and knowledge on emergency programme implementations”.

A participant from SNNPR, said, the training was very professional and the team articulated the specific project implementations modality, the project outcomes and the processes

clearly. He appreciated the COWASH team for taking risk to start the project on time despite the restrictive nature of the state of the emergency.

A participant from Amhara region, said, the training was timely to his family, to the community and the country at large. He said, the two take away from the trainings were the power of leadership and community contribution. He said, the leadership displayed by the COWASH team drives result and take risk. He appreciated the COWASH Chief Technical Advisor for the commitment displayed and the endurance demonstrated in the two days trainings. He also appreciated the team for the technical efficiency and the materials prepared for the COVID-19 preparedness, response and resilience Project. The second key take away is the community participation which the project always entrusts on.

Two participants from Benishangul gumuz region expressed their appreciation to COWASH federal team and the Chief technical Advisor in particular. One of the participants from COWASH Stakeholders said that the commitment of COWASH is unique. He said while other projects are on hold, extension project is beyond his expectations. He appreciated COWASH for showing the spirit of Yichalal, (which means it is possible to underscore miracles despite challenging situations). He said this should be a standard to other WASH projects. A woman participant also said, she managed to attend the workshop with expectations to gain news insight on COVID-19 project implementations. At the end of the training, she said, “I acquired valuable knowledge and skills that I will apply to myself and the project”.

In Tigray, participants appreciated COWASH team for breaking the new norm and showing the spirit of collaboration, team work, and unity despite the existing divisive political stance between the regional and federal government. One of participants said “COWASH project sparks hope and sets a new milestone by showing possibilities of harmonised project implementations between local and federal government.” Another participant said that “COWASH played an important role as an ambassador for peace and for making what many organizations failed to show”. One of the participants from COWASH Stakeholder bureaus in Tigray said, organizing such training in short period of time travelling thousands of kilometres in COVID-19 time is an exemplary deed by COWASH team. He also appreciated COWASH for breaking the trend other organizations fail to deliver and felt impossible.

Post training feedback from participants pointed out that in all the five regions, awareness on the emergency preparedness, response and resilience building was raised, RSU members were inspired and capitated to undertake the six month extension project which focuses on COVID-19 prevention and resilience.

Social media comments were encouraging and positive. Most comments appreciated the commitment of COWASH team to deliver trainings traveling in five regions and for managing successful trainings. During this period, COWASH social media reports indicated highest reach and engagement.

On the other hand, at a national level, we were appreciated by various government and non-government partners, the water commission, and by the state minister of water, irrigation and energy for doing exemplary work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COWASH also was requested by organizations working in Somalia region, a region where COWASH does not operate, to support them through materials and provision of technical support. COWASH also availed all the training materials online for the public use on [www.cmpethiopia.org](http://www.cmpethiopia.org) for free use. The specific web address for COVID-19 related documents can be accessed on the below link: <https://www.cmpethiopia.org/page/3920>

## 5. Challenges

- In almost all regions, most RSU staff did not have the experience of managing an emergency programme. Therefore, it was a bit challenging to get the new extension programme sink in to the regular programme immediately.
- New concept requires time and in-depth training to internalize the training concept due to shortage of time. Due to shortage of time, the trainers were forced to cut off some sessions and run over important topics.
- Lack of adequate time for discussion to test the understanding level of the participants
- Lack of attendance of some critical partners such as representatives from health bureau from Oromia for example.

## 6. Action points and follow up plans

- Close follow up and intensive supportive supervision required: The team need to go back to the regions and provide onsite support.
- Frequent follow up on emergency procurement to be included in the special procurement arrangement of the regions if there is such arrangement. If this arrangement does not exist, the federal team needs to discuss with regional and federal authorities to put in place a system for expedited procurement.
- Timely budget transfer should be followed up and done.

## Photos in Action



Mr. Arto delivering training in Oromia/Melaku T/July 2020 Melaku T, delivering training in Tigray/Arto. S./August 2020

### Training Participants s Matrix

Regions	RSU		Regional Bureaus		Others	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Amhara	5	0	4	1	1m (EoF)	11
BG	4	1	8			13
Oromia	4		5		1m (MoE)	10
SNNP	7	1	4			11
Tigray	5	2	7	2		16
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>61</b>

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Mr. Arto S and Melaku.T delivering training in Asosa and Mekele respectively/Photos/Melaku T/Arto. S/August 2020