

Antsokia woreda Rural Pipe System (RPS) best practice in disability inclusion

Antsokia Gemza woreda has 12 kebeles, out of which 11 are rural kebeles. It is located in North Shewa zone in Amhara region. Antsokia woreda Water Office with assistance from COWASH Project has implemented a new and effective way of inclusion of persons with disabilities in WASH and ensuring equitable access to water for all. This example can be replicated in similar conditions in other regions and woredas and serves as an excellent example of good practice and initiative from the woreda. The COWASH Federal Technical Assistance Team (FTAT) visited sites in the woreda in June 2018 where the practice above is observed in order to document and assess this new experience and take as a piloting scheme. In its current form, the scheme in Antsokia can serve as a stepping stone for other regions but it also requires further strengthening and institutionalization.

A general discussion is made with woreda water office, Education staff and DPOs chairperson on their 2010 EFY information is obtained about the woreda. Overall, there are about 64,000 people in the woreda (and as of end of 2009 E.C there is 75% access water coverage). The below table provides a brief summary.

2010		Planned	Accomplished
	Hand dug well	4	0
	Spring development	13	10
	School	1	0
	Health	1	0
	Latrine	1	50% done
	Rehabilitations	4	2

2010EFY general performance of the woreda

- Review of annual plan performance was not conducted.
- In terms of disability training: 44 school directors and 12 PTAs trained; the aim is to increase leadership role of PWDs in school, foster community mobilization and to advocate community development to include PWDs in WASH
- 63 (2 people with PWDs) trained in school WASH club establishment
- 46 people trained in gender
- Hygiene and MHM training also conducted
- The preparatory school provided space for MHM and started providing MHM
- Training in O & M conducted.
- Woreda disability awareness carried out for 76 participants
- It was understood that 631 PWDs exist in the town (330 female) according to the DPOs chairperson
- 147 Special need students are registered in the school (92 with visual impairment).

During the field visit, it is understood that the woreda has started a new initiative of making the water supply accessible also to persons with disabilities on the constructed two rural piped systems (RPS) from gravity springs called Gumal Baynesgie (in 2008EFY) and Lemon Sorrow (constructed in 2005EFY), serving 500 and 501

households respectively. The team visited only Gumal Baynesgie RPS. This scheme has two collection chambers with the capacity of 50 and 85 cubic meters respectively. It is managed by committee of 13 members of individuals comprised from the 20 WASHCOs which will soon be upgraded to become a water board. From this scheme there are six tap stands, each managed by WASHCOs. Overall, there are over 20 WASHCOs in the area managing tap stands.

The initiative to provide water directly to the households with persons with disabilities was started and pushed forward by the Woreda Water Office Head and CMP supervisor who wanted to ensure equitable access to water for all community members, mainly due to personal conviction that the issue is important and needs to be addressed. This was started before the COWASH disability inclusion training was cascaded down to the woreda level in the area. Although this is a commendable bold initiative, it requires going beyond the individual will for sustainability and for greater reach.

There are several households in the catchment area of the RPS who have family members with disabilities. Some of them came to the woreda office asking for assistance with their difficult family situation and some were identified during field visits. In total 10 households with members with different types of disabilities have been provided with a piped/yard connection directly in their house compound. The cost of extending the pipe system to these 10 households was minimal as the pipes used for the extensions were taken from the woreda office store.

The FTAT team visited three of these beneficiary households in June 2018. One was a visually impaired man, the second was a man with physical impairment and the third was a family of elderly parents with four grandchildren out of whom two (male) had psychosocial/mental impairments. For all the three households the supply of safe drinking water to their backyard had made a huge difference to their quality of life as now they are able to access water at home whenever they need. For the parents caring for their children having easy access to water had a significant reduction in their daily workload as the water point was located far from their house and adds another burden in the past. The already elderly parents (above 75 years old) to carry water for the family is a cumbersome responsibility which was eased by intervention of COWASH programme.

Profile of the households visited by FTAT team.

- 1) Visually impaired man (impaired about 7 years ago), Seid Yesuf
 - Lack of accessible sanitation in house compound
 - Average household in terms of economic background



Ato Seid Yesuf, visually impaired who have water access at his house/June 2018/Melaku Tekola/COWASH Ethiopia.

- 2) Physically impaired man, Dawid Mohammed
 - Wealthier than the average household in the area, paid for the household connection himself
 - He has 6 children
 - Improved latrine with concrete slab
 - Constructed also shower and handwashing area with gravel ground to prevent the ground from becoming muddy.



3) Elderly grandparents with two children (out of 4) with psychosocial/ mental impairments

- Children (now already young adults) are kept at home tied to their beds as the parents are not able to handle them otherwise
- Having water on the compound significantly eases the workload of the already elderly parents and also enables the children to at least have better access to drinking water.
- Poor quality traditional pit latrine available in the compound



Visit to Mekoy #1 Primary School

The school is from kindergarten up to eight grade students. The main purpose of the visit was to see how students with disabilities specifically visually impaired students' access service in school as it was suggested by Dr. Abebe, main resource person for the disability inclusion training for COWASH. Accordingly, the team met with five blind students who were in an informally computer training class situated within the school staff office. The students would like to continue their computer class during the rainy season if they are provided assistance for transportation and their computer trainer.

These blind students are the top performing students in their class with non disable students.

It is observed during the visit that the school with 25 students with disabilities do not have accessible toilets for the students with disabilities. Thus, the water office experts were convinced to construct one block latrine for the students in 2011.

Another request from the school staff is assistance for the construction of a dedicated room for a computer class for the students with disabilities.

The Key lessons to take away from Antsokia

- Identifying persons with disability within beneficiaries of the community should be the first step and a priority to emphasis from Antsokia experience. Antsokia woreda Water office has made this task its priority and help them to easily consult and address the needs of persons with disabilities in construction and after construction phase.
- The RPS system, the technology itself, is a great way to reach wider members of the community in different locations. As this is gravity based water scheme, it can be cheaply distributed to disadvantaged community members including elderly people and families with persons with disabilities.
- Technically and financially ensuring access to water for households with members with disabilities is not difficult in such a large RPS.
- The inclusion of persons with disabilities should always be considered in a systematic way when constructing such a scheme, if possible at application and appraisal stages. Persons with disabilities (or their family members) should also be included in the planning, construction, management and O&M of the scheme.
- Existing RPS schemes can also be rehabilitated/ modified post-construction to ensure access to persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring access to water at home significantly improves the quality of life for the whole household and ensures independent and free access to water for all members.
- More emphasis should also be given to accessible sanitation and hygiene in these households. Accessible low-cost solutions for toilets and the construction of washing/ shower areas should also be promoted.
- In terms of management of the RPS, it is an imperative to see coordinated committee of individuals comprised from WASCHO members of each tap stand. This creates ownership of the RPs and the individual tap stands that found in different locations. identification of person with disabilities shall be made by the WASHCOS once they are trained
- In terms of priority for the elderly persons and to persons with disabilities for house connections, it is good to note that there are criteria for identification vulnerability of the household and based on that it will be prioritised. There is also some payment involved for house to house connections. So far, only one person paid, the rest was paid by the Woreda budget.
- It is also good to note that they are developing rural water scheme beneficiaries database
- Beneficiaries from the tap stand pay 10 birr per month for ownership
- There is also strict rules and regulation to run the RPS. Some of the punishable offenses include late payment 10 birr, Tap tampering 1000 birr, Water waste 500 birr, failure to attend meeting 50 birr
- Although the RPS was constructed before the inclusion training, the training has had a key role in opening the eyes of the woreda stakeholders to serve persons with disabilities in their area
- God synergy between the Woreda Water office and Disability organization: The woreda closely works with the local Disability Association. The association helps the woreda in identification of persons with disabilities.

Challenges

- According to Adem Indris, Head of Water Office in Antsokia Gemza, there is a challenge to reconcile water need of the population versus the existing natural resources.
- Less awareness on rights of people with disabilities for water and other right entitlements
- Associated stigma on persons with disabilities.

Future actions

- Identifying the number of people with disabilities with the Kebeles and woreda as a whole is a key factor in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities residing in the woreda.
- Capacity building of WASCHO's needs to be planned in the future; even if there is an existing capacity in terms of managing the RPS, there should be series of capacity building plans in the future.
- There should be regular platform to improve the existing services and to strengthen services to unreached places
- To strengthen information sharing between town and regional office of COWASH and the Ministry
- To document the best practice of the town to other towns and regions in general
- Although there is no visible problem noticed, there should be plan to maintain the existing scheme



Mekoy Number 1cycle primary school, water scheme built by COWASH/Melaku Tekola/COWASH Ethiopia.



Mekoy Number 1cycle primary school, water point built by COWASH/Melaku Tekola/COWASH Ethiopia.



Mekoya Number 1cycle primary school, special needs students /Melaku Tekola/COWASH Ethiopia



Mekoy Number 1cycle primary school, school children benefiting from the water scheme/June 2018/Melaku Tekola/COWASH Ethiopia.