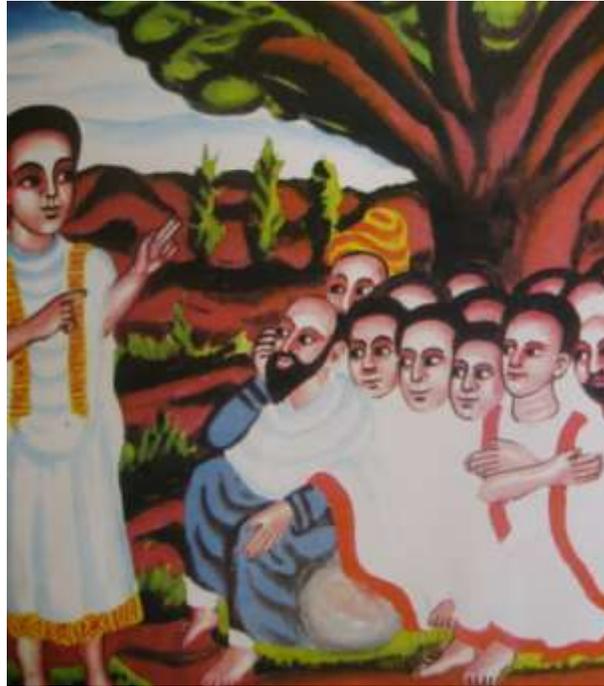




**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**  
**Ministry of Water and Energy**  
**Community-Led Accelerated WASH Project (COWASH)**  
**Phase IV**



(Illustration by Merkebu Shiferaw)

**Women Empowerment in COWASH**  
**May 2022**

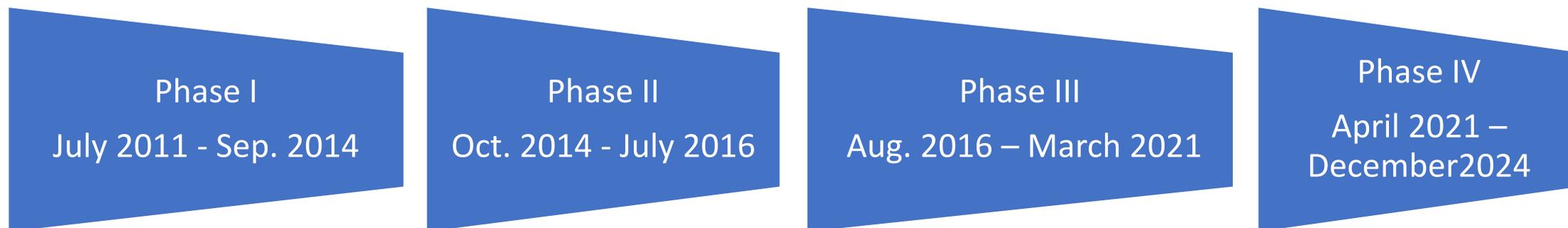




**COWASH Interventions**

## OVERVIEW OF COWASH

Community-led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) is a bilateral project funded by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Government of Finland (GoF) with four phases to date. COWASH directly contributes to ensure universal access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. COWASH is also designed to contribute to the 10-year development plan of the country.



Currently, the project operates in 104 Woredas of 7 Regions (Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Sidama, South West, SNNPR, and Tigray).

COWASH also works with non governmental organizations and the wider WASH sector stakeholders.

# COMMUNITY MANAGED PROJECT (CMP) APPROACH

Implementation strategy of COWASH is based on Community Managed Project Approach and it has the following unique features

Transfers funds & project management responsibilities including purchasing of materials & contracting the services to communities, represented by Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASHCO)

Simplified implementation arrangements: clear policy and guidelines are in place with intensive capacity building component

Sustainability of schemes is higher because of high levels of ownership and communities involvement at all levels

## Disability Inclusive Community water supply



**Hand dug well fitted with hand pump**



**Public tap from spring or borehole**

# Rationale to Focus on Women and Girls in WASH

Women and girls bear the main burden for collecting water where water is collected from some distance

The water collected may not be safe and adequate

The time and energy devoted to perform this task could be applied to productive and personal development activities.

They are vulnerable to health hazards due to carrying heavy weights and travelling long distance

Girls are most likely to miss classes if they are menstruating

Women also suffer during menstruation and pregnancy time.

They eat and drink less to avoid the need for day time toilet use

Inadequate or lack of access to sanitation affects women and girls in many ways

They have to wait until dark to go to toilet and this leaves them vulnerable to attacks



**Challenges of Ethiopian women in fetching water**

# COWASH INTERVENTIONS STRIVE TO BENEFIT WOMEN AND MEN BOTH AT PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC LEVELS

①

WASH interventions closer to home meet **practical needs** of women and girls related to

## Improve Condition

- ✓ Menstrual hygiene management, reproductive and maternal health.
- ✓ Ease undertaking of tasks arising from their traditional role in care economy
- ✓ Reduce their risk of vulnerability to violence that could happen when collecting water from distance and practice open defecation.

**Gender strategic needs** concern the position of women and men in relation to each other in a given society that relate to

## Improve Position

- ✓ Gender division of labor
- ✓ Access to and control over resources; and
- ✓ Decision making power at household and community level.

②

*Focusing on **gender transformative WASH programming**, COWASH strives to improve the social position of women, girls and people with disabilities beyond improving their condition through*

- ✓ *Empowering\* marginalized women, girls and persons with disabilities to come into WASH services management*
- ✓ *Share their perspectives,*
- ✓ *Take on leadership roles, and*
- ✓ *Be effective in discharging their responsibilities of managerial positions*
- ✓ *Address issues related to intra-household inequalities.*

\*"Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes." World Bank

# Four Elements of Women Empowerment

## Physical Empowerment



- Access to clean water
- Access to sanitation
- Menstrual Hygiene Management

- Reduced domestic violence
- Reduced sexual harassment
- Reduced water borne diseases

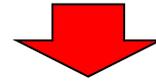
## Socio-Cultural Empowerment



- Women's right to speak
- Women's ability to speak
- Women voice heard by public

- Increased participation in decision-making
- Increased access to information
- Increased knowledge to make informed decisions
- Increased access to market, health care and education

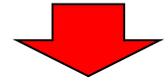
## Political Empowerment



- Women's voice for voiceless
- Right to elect and to be elected

- Increased participation in elections for government positions
- Exercising freedom of speech

## Economic Empowerment



- Income generation
- Access to and control over resources and opportunities

- Increased access to credits
- Improved skills to compete on markets
- Reduced medical expenses

**Strategic Undertakings**

**COWASH Entry Points for Women and Girls Empowerment**

Equity and inclusion in decision making of WASH implementation and WASH services management

Assign full time gender specialist and/or a gender focal point in the regional support unit office of COWASH

Capacity strengthening: Prepare & disseminate training guidelines

Use gender and disability status disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation & reporting

Award grass root level gender champions / best performing WASHCOs to inspire other WASHCOs

Econtrol over WASH services among equal access to and user communities

**Physical Empowerment**

Capacitate Woreda WASH experts and kebele WASH team members to expedite implementation

Target both men and women on hygiene education to invest on and use improved sanitation facilities

Sensitize user communities to consider economically poor households to benefit from improved WASH service

Strengthen WASH clubs and girls' clubs at school to ensure proper utilization of school WASH facilities

Target girls and women in the school and out of school system for MHM interventions

**Socio cultural Empowerment**

Capacity development in gender mainstreaming targeting WASH sector staffs, and user communities

Stimulate demand on gender empowerment among communities to ensure inclusion of marginalized groups

Encompass relevant formal and informal institutions and strengthen partnership, networking and advocacy for gender programming in WASH sector

Conduct WASH focused gender and disability inclusive researches and disseminate research findings

**Political Empowerment**

Encourage women to take up the chairperson position, beyond the quota system for the membership of women in WASHCO

Cascade women in leadership training up to WASHCO level to bring women members into managerial positions

Ensure convenient venue and time for women and people with disabilities while organizing community meetings on WASH

Both women and men participate in equitable manner and incorporate women's and men's knowledge in the process of availing WASH services

**Economic Empowerment**

Create conducive environment for women to be engaged in male-dominated productive activities such as artisanship, involve in women-led enterprises



# RESULT AND INDICATORS

## **Outcome: Sustainability and inclusivity of achieved WASH outcomes enhanced**

*Output:* Women empowerment and disability inclusion in WASH management enhanced

### ***Performance Monitoring Indicators:***

- % of women who have the attitude and confidence to accept WASHCO leadership positions (Chair, Treasury, Secretary) in COWASH IV Woredas
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs having at least 50% women members
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCO leadership positions filled with women
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs having women in all three main management positions
- No. of members of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs with some kind of disabilities (disaggregated by sex)
- No. of school girls (age 12+) attending school with safe water supply and having access to COWASH IV MHM facilities (disaggregated by disability)
- No. of school girls (age 12+) attending school in the FULL WASH SERVICES Package schools having access to the COWASH IV MHM facilities (disaggregated by disability)
- % of women-led profitable COWASH IV supported MSEs in COWASH IV woredas
- No. of people received different CMP management and related trainings (as per the standard) with the support of COWASH IV (disaggregated by sex & disability)



**COWASH capacity building trainings for regional stakeholders**

## CALL TO ACTION

We recommend all WASH sector stakeholders at different tiers to join hands to promote women, girls and people with disabilities empowerment in WASH to transform the lives of rural women and girls. Potential areas to take up by WASH sector stakeholders include but not limited to:

- Leveraging human, financial, and material resources to advocate and implement women and girls empowerment.
- Contextualize issues to come up with evidence based women empowerment interventions.
- Sharing knowledge and experiences using various methods and channels to address women and girls empowerment issues.
- Scaling up of innovative strategies and best practices to empower women and girls
- Creating a space for the rural women and girls to voice pertinent issues that will enable them to solve the challenges they face.

**COWASH endorses and call upon all WASH sectors to flag the motto of “Empowering women and girls is empowering the community”.**

**COWASH is grateful for the federal and regional government and appreciates the support of the Embassy of Finland.**



**Disability inclusive improved latrines constructed in schools**



**Community-led Accelerated WASH (COWASH)**

**Ministry of Water and Energy**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Website: [www.cmpethiopia.org](http://www.cmpethiopia.org)**

**Facebook: Community Managed Project**

**Youtube: CMP Ethiopia**

**Telegram: CMP Ethiopia**

**Twitter: CMP Ethiopia**

**Instagram: CMP Ethiopia**