

CASE STUDY OF THE ELE SPRING IN GENTA BONKE KEBELE, ARBAMINCH ZURIA WOREDA, GAMOGOFA ZONE, SNNP REGION OF ETHIOPIA

Background

Ele Spring in Genta Bonke kebele of Arbaminch Zuria Woreda, Gamogofa Zone, SNNP Region is feeding a small gravity scheme constructed in 2013 by COWASH. The Spring, benefiting more than 820 (330 female) rural population, has a water reservoir of about 600 liters and 4 stand posts, which are about 1 km far apart from each other. Ele Spring is located some 20 km away from Arba Minch town and is located at the top of a mountain. The environment around the Ele Spring is very well conserved and the hills are very populous. The people of the Genta Bonke kebele, which is one of 29 rural kebeles of the Arbaminch Zuria woreda, speak Gamogna language, which is one of the major languages in Gamogofa zone and most of the inhabitants are Christians. There are 3 disabled people in the Ele gravity scheme beneficiary community, who cannot walk and collect water. They are served by their family members. There are also 3 very poor households, which were exempted from the up-front cash contribution and labor and materials contribution for the construction of the water supply. They are also exempted from the monthly Operation & Maintenance tariff payment. The water reservoir is overflowing during the rainy season and the overflow is being used for household gardening of the farmer who provided the land for the construction of the reservoir.



Ele gravity scheme collection tank and first water point.

The Ele gravity water scheme construction followed the Community Managed Project approach where the community applied to the Woreda WaSH Team for the scheme. The application was attached with a document from the local OMO Micro-Finance Institution

proving the saved up-front cash contribution of 1,500 Birr and supporting letter from the Kebele administration. 78 households, except 3 poor households exempted by the community, contributed to the up-front cash contribution.

All households build toilets for each household to prove their seriousness of the hygiene and sanitation. After the project field appraisal was made by the Woreda experts an agreement with the Woreda WaSH Team and the community was signed for the financing of the scheme. The total costs of the scheme was Birr 85,850 from which the community contributed Birr 24,995 in terms of labor and provision of local available construction materials and the Government of Ethiopia grant contribution was Birr 60,855, which amount was transferred to Community account opened in the local OMO Micro-Finance Institution. During the construction, the community employed an artisan to provide technical help in construction and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASHCO) elected by the community was responsible for the daily construction management, procurement, financial management and reporting.



Traditional non-improved latrine of the WASHCO Secretary

Observations and interviews

A team from COWASH federal office visited the scheme on May 28, 2014 and made the following observations:

- All the 4 water points are nicely fenced by the community and all are functional and in good shape.
- Landowners willingly provided land for the construction of the water points.
- All recordings made by the community during the construction were observed to be well stored by the WASHCO chairperson.
- The WASHCO organized for the water scheme is constituted of 5 members of whom 3 are female. The women members are having the positions of secretary, cashier and store woman.



Interview ongoing by Abebaw Getachew. Other in the photo are the Secretary Zenebech Ezaga on the left and Chairman Dorga Dori on the right. In the middle Ato Fantahun, CMP Focal Person from Arbaminch Zuria Water Office

- The secretary, W/ro Zenebech Ezaga, is 6th grade complete with three children. The Chairman (Dorga Dori) is illiterate but well managing the scheme and well coordinating the work of WASHCO members and all WASHCO documents are stored in his house.
- Each water point has 2 faucets. There are no guards and the water points are open any time of the day.

The WASHCO Chairperson, Ato Dorga Dori described *"WASHCO signed contract agreement with an artisan and the community contributed labor and locally available materials for the construction of the water points and all information on the contributions and activities during the construction have been recorded by the WASHCO members."* Ato Dorga further described *"All procurements were made by the WASHCO members with the market information provided from Arbaminch Zuria Woreda Water Office."*



Boys collecting water from Ele gravity scheme water point.

Ato Dorga told: *"The Community agreed that each beneficiary household is contributing 1 Birr per month for the operation and maintenance of the water supply."* When asked about the repairs made, Ato Dorga replied: *"Some of the water point faucets have been changed 2-3 times in 2 years life-time of the scheme."* Ato Dorga himself has been changing the faucets as per the practical orientation given by the Woreda Water Office experts. It was observed that there was no formal Operation and Maintenance training

organized for the WASHCO members.

W/ro Zenebech described: *"During the dry season (2 months per year, especially January and February) the amount of water is decreasing and the community regulates the amount of water to be fetched by each beneficiary household."*

Ato Dorga and W/ro Zenebech further told: *"Before the construction of the water supply the beneficiary community had been using the same spring eye and a pond nearby as their water source. It took some 1-2 hours (round trip) for some of the households to collect the water from traditional sources. The quality of the water in the pond and also in the non-protected spring was not good and the queuing time was 1-2 hours. They added: "That time the community members had been highly affected by waterborne diseases. Due to the queuing, some kids could not attend the school and some women could not carry out their farming activities because of the time they had to spend in queuing and difficulty of fetching water in the difficult topography (hilly area)."*

Ato Dorga described: *"The community meets once in every 28th day of the month and discusses the water scheme related issues. Same time their monthly contribution of 1 Birr/ month / household for operation and maintenance is collected from each household."*



One plastic bag full of WASHCO documents from the construction period reviewed.

W/ro Zenebech expresses her happiness and told: *"As a result of the construction of the water scheme, the households (especially women) manage now to engage in farming activities, kids can attend the school and burden of waterborne diseases is reduced."*

Strong ownership feeling was observed from the community and especially from the WASHCO members. The secretary proudly announced: *"This water supply belongs to the people of the community as all members have contributed in cash and in-kind and fully managed the construction, operation and maintenance of the water supply. Such kind of*

construction approach creates strong sense of ownership and sustainability compared to other construction approaches."

When asked about the challenges the Chairperson and Secretary of WASHCO reported: *"Some 25 households around the spring eye, who were not part of the beneficiary list of the water scheme, are fetching water from any of the water supply tap stands and are resisting to pay tariff (1 Birr/month) for the water they fetch.*

We have repeatedly (orally and in written form) asked them to contribute but in vain. Finally, the we took the case to the attention of the Kebele administration and a general discussion is expected to be held soon to solve the problem."

W/ro Zenebech added: *"Their argument for not paying for the use of the water is that water is the Gift from God, which anybody can use freely."*



Ato Dorga the Chair and W/ro Zenebech the Secretary of Ele Gravity Scheme WASHCO

W/ro Zenebech and Ato Dorga told about their future plans: *"We plan to extend the water supply scheme to downstream community members by using the contributions from the whole community in the area around the scheme."*

The WASHCO could not indicate for how long they are going to serve as WASHCO members.

The field assessment team conclusions:

- a) Ownership is very high
- b) Scheme is functioning and maintained well
- c) Community is well aware of the scheme status and problems
- d) Community is ready to pay the tariff of 1 Birr/month/household
- e) Community is ready to contribute in the form of cash, labor and local materials to the expansion of the scheme
- f) It was evidenced that daily labor and local material contributions from communities and daily construction activities were all well recorded by the WASHCO
- g) The minutes of meetings and delegations to procurement are observed in the WASHCO files at the WASHCO level
- h) Intercropping is common in the area and the environment with very fertile soil is well conserved
- i) The community which was left out from the beneficiaries of the water points could have been handled during the field appraisal and the present water dispute could have been avoided.

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