

**Analysing Impacts of Community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene  
Ownership on Operations, Maintenance, and Sustainability:  
A Comparative Study**

**Final Report**



To **COWASH**  


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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ATLAS.ti</b>	Archive of Technology, Life World and Language, text interpretation
<b>CDC</b>	Communicable Disease Control
<b>CHCs</b>	Community Health Committees
<b>CMP</b>	Community Managed Project
<b>COWASH</b>	Community-led Accelerated WASH
<b>COWASH IV</b>	Community-led Accelerated WASH Phase IV
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FTAT</b>	Federal Technical Assistant Team
<b>HEW</b>	Health Extension Worker
<b>IDIs</b>	In-depth Interviews
<b>JMP</b>	Joint Monitoring Programme
<b>MFIs</b>	Microfinance Institutions
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoWE</b>	Ministry of Water and Energy
<b>PTAs</b>	Parent-Teacher Associations
<b>RSU</b>	Regional Support Unit
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SWEP</b>	South West Ethiopia Peoples
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WASHCOs</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WMP</b>	Woreda Managed Project

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Background:** Access to safe and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services is essential for human health and development. However, billions of people, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, still lack these basic services, contributing to significant global disease and economic loss. Community ownership and participation in WASH projects have been shown to enhance sustainability and effectiveness, with community managed projects often outperforming traditional top-down approaches. Despite this, evidence is scarce on the impact of community ownership on the success and sustainability of WASH projects.

**Objective and scope:** The main objective of this comparative study is to examine the effect of community ownership on the long-term sustainability and success of WASH projects, with the findings intended to shape future Community-led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) Programmes. This study focused on analyzing community ownership models, impacts, and practices with the objective of recommending improved approaches for sustainable water project implementation in the Community-led Accelerated WASH Phase V (COWASH V) project at the federal, regional, woreda and kebele levels, with particular emphasis on eight regions of Ethiopia: Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Central Ethiopia, Oromia, Sidama, South Ethiopia, South West Ethiopia Peoples (SWEP), and Tigray.

**Methodology:** A comparative qualitative study was conducted using In-depth Interviews (IDIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to collect data that help compare two groups: the intervention and non-intervention groups. Data was collected from focal persons in line ministries and bureaus, bureau heads/deputies, team leaders, office heads/deputies, school directors, kebele water technicians, health extension workers, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHCOs), beneficiaries, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and kebele WASH teams. The study covered 13 COWASH IV woredas across eight regions, from which 26 kebeles were selected. Accordingly, 212 IDIs and 26 FGDs were conducted with purposively selected participants. The collected qualitative data and expanded field notes were transcribed verbatim to capture the full essence of the data. The transcripts were imported into the Archive of Technology, Life World and Language, text interpretation (ATLAS.ti, Archive of Technology, Life World and Language, text interpretation, version 9.021) software for coding and thematic analysis. Thematic content analysis was applied to organize the findings from the qualitative study. Finally, the results were narrated to address the research questions.

**Key findings:** The study found that the successful implementation of the COWASH IV project relied on the collaborative efforts of stakeholders at federal, regional, woreda, and kebele levels, each fulfilling specific roles in the management, coordination, and monitoring of the project. At the federal level, the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of

Health (MoH), and the Ministry of Education (MoE) play key roles in fund coordination, project oversight, and technical support provision. Regional bureaus, such as the Bureau of Finance and Bureau of Water, are responsible for distributing funds, monitoring financial management, and ensuring the sustainability of water supplies. At the woreda level, sector offices such as the offices of Water, Education, Health, Finance, and Women and Children Affairs have been actively involved in site selection, budget oversight, community mobilization, and quality assurance and sustainability of WASH facilities. Effective project monitoring approaches, including regular supervision, joint meetings, and data analysis tools such as the Kobo tool and Power BI (Business Intelligence) dashboard, have been used to monitor the progress of the project and identify areas for improvement. Collaborative efforts and joint monitoring by all sectors at different levels have been central to the success of COWASH IV, contributing to sustainability and alignment with local needs.

The study highlighted the significant role of community ownership and active participation in ensuring the success and sustainability of the project. The Community Managed Project (CMP) approach, which focuses on community involvement and empowerment, was identified as a more effective approach than other models, such as the Woreda Managed Project (WMP) approach and the Private Partnership Model. The CMP approach fostered a strong sense of responsibility and ownership among community members. This involvement extended to financial and in-kind contributions, and participation in decision-making, with women notably taking on leadership roles within the WASHCOs.

However, challenges such as budget constraints for monitoring and matching funds, delays in budget request approvals, and issues related to staff turnover were noted in the study findings. These challenges have negatively impacted the timely execution of COWASH IV and the quality of project implementation. The study participants recommended further decentralizing decision-making, enhancing the inclusion of marginalized groups, and integrating national initiatives such as "Clean Ethiopia" into the COWASH framework. Despite these challenges, the CMP approach remains the most preferred model among all participants from the target regions for implementing community water scheme construction.

Regarding institutional WASH, the findings revealed that both school and health facility WASH programmes faced significant challenges in implementation, operation, and management. School PTAs encountered challenges such as a lack of continued capacity building for new members, budget constraints for supervision, poor participation from the start of the project, and insufficient community engagement. Similarly, health facility WASH projects under the WMP approach struggled with budget limitations, delays in fund transfers, and low community involvement, which negatively influenced project sustainability. Furthermore, the assessment found that the WMP approach has been

expensive compared to the CMP approach, exacerbating budget constraints for institutional WASH facilitation. In addition, another key concern is about the quality of constructed institutional WASH points. Contractors, driven by profit motives, often prioritize completing the work quickly over ensuring the longevity and quality of the facilities.

Informants recommend enhancing community ownership, increasing financial support, and strengthening follow-up activities by addressing budget constraints. Additionally, fostering stronger collaboration between institutions and integrating health, education, and women's issues into WASH Programmes can significantly improve outcomes and ensure long-term sustainability.

The findings regarding the flow and management of COWASH IV funds reveal a mixed picture, with both successes and challenges. While some regions reported effective fund disbursement and financial management, others reported delays in fund transfer by the Ethiopian Government are common, often due to bureaucratic processes and late submissions from certain regions. The absence of nepotism and adherence to guidelines contributed to transparent management, though issues like inflation, and security concerns have hindered timely project execution.

Participants highlighted the importance of stronger community involvement, streamlined financial processes, and direct federal engagement with woredas to ensure budget sufficiency and efficient fund allocation. Additionally, recommendations include enhancing training for financial management, improving collaboration between stakeholders, and adopting a multilateral trust fund model to expand coverage and increase the sustainability of WASH initiatives. The involvement of microfinance institutions and banks has also been pivotal in facilitating fund transfers and project success at the community level.

**Conclusions:** The study highlights that while the COWASH Programme has been generally effective, several challenges hinder its full potential, particularly delays in fund disbursement by the Ethiopian Government, limited community engagement, and financial management issues. The sustainability of WASH projects in schools and health facilities depends on continued community ownership, effective institutional oversight, and the timely allocation of resources. To enhance the impact of the programme, it is important to integrate national strategies like "Clean Ethiopia," promote localized efforts to strengthen stakeholder collaboration, and improve technical training for community committees and school PTAs. Additionally, addressing financial constraints, ensuring stable funding, and fostering a culture of cleanliness and gender-sensitive facilities are essential for long-term success. Removing intermediate levels in the funding chain and ensuring transparent budget allocation will improve fund flow while reinforcing financial monitoring mechanisms at all levels, which can enhance accountability and sustainability.

While both the CMP and WMP approaches have their limitations, the CMP approach has been identified as cost-effective, community-engaged, and providing better opportunities for community-level WASH actors, such as WASHCOs, PTAs, and Community Health Committees (CHCs), to engage from the start of project implementation. This involvement helps improve the quality of project implementation through enhanced project progress monitoring and continuous capacity building. Therefore, the findings support the use of the CMP approach for both community and institutional WASH promotion for future WASH projects, as was done in previous COWASH phases I to III.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

The provision of safe and sustainable WASH services is fundamental to human health, well-being, and socio-economic development (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), 2023), yet billions of people have poor access to these basic services (UNICEF & WHO, 2023). Worldwide, over 3.6 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation services, with nearly half a billion practicing open defecation, leading to disease and poverty (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). An estimated 10% of the total global disease burden could be prevented by improvements to WASH (UNICEF, 2021). However, in low- and middle-income countries, over a million people die each year due to inadequate WASH, constituting 89% of total WASH-attributable deaths (WHO, 2023). Inadequate WASH services, facilities, and systems are estimated to contribute to a staggering \$260 billion global loss every year, largely due to lost time and productivity (UNICEF, 2021). Subsequently, the world has committed to achieving universal access to WASH by 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but this will require a six-fold increase in the current rates of progress for safely managed drinking water, a five-fold increase for safely managed sanitation, and a three-fold increase for basic hygiene services (UNICEF & WHO, 2023).

While significant strides have been made in expanding access to WASH facilities globally, challenges remain in ensuring these crucial infrastructure projects' long-term sustainability and effective management. One critical aspect of achieving sustainable WASH outcomes lies in the level of community ownership and participation in project planning, implementation, and maintenance (WHO, 2019). CMPs, where local communities are empowered to take ownership and responsibility, have shown promising results in terms of operational efficiency, maintenance practices, and long-term sustainability compared to traditional top-down, WMP approaches (IRC WASH, 2016; WaterAid, 2019). In line with this, COWASH IV, a bilateral project launched by the Governments of Finland and Ethiopia, is operating within the framework of the One WASH National Programme in eight regions of the country to improve the sustainable provision of safe WASH in 104 rural woredas. This initiative builds upon the successes of the previous three phases of COWASH, focusing on creating a supportive environment and implementing CMP interventions to achieve WASH targets. The COWASH IV project aimed to conduct a comparative study of WASH projects managed by woredas and communities, focusing on the impact of community ownership on operations, maintenance, and sustainability of community-led WASH projects. The findings of this study will help to inform the future COWASH programme design and implementation, particularly in regions where community ownership models are being explored or scaled up.

## **1.2. Objective of the Assignment**

- To compare Community-managed and other project approaches for community water schemes implementation in terms of their impact on community ownership, operational efficiency, maintenance effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of projects or resources.
- To evaluate the WMP approach in institutional WASH implementation in COWASH IV in terms of its impact on the ownership of the institutions, operational efficiency, maintenance effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of projects or resources.

## **1.3. Scope of the Assignment**

The assignment was intended to compare projects managed by woredas and communities and provide valuable insights into the impact of community ownership on operations, maintenance, and sustainability of community-led WASH projects. The specific tasks of this assignment were to:

1. Examine various community ownership models, including CMPs, through Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia/Woreda Office of Finance, and WMPs involving PTAs or CHCs, and WMP approaches for comparable water projects, to understand their impact on operations, maintenance, and sustainability.
2. Investigate how community ownership affects the efficiency of operations, maintenance practices, and the sustainability of community-owned projects and see the potential to reintroduce the PTAs and CHCs into the CMP process
3. Conduct a comparative analysis of community ownership among COWASH and non-COWASH beneficiary communities and community ownership models for community water supply schemes to identify similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses in terms of their impact on operations, maintenance, and long-term sustainability
4. Recommend alternative approaches that improve outcomes in community water supply project implementation using the CMP approach, and PTA/CHC institutional WASH WMP projects in COWASH, and guide how future COWASH programmes should be formulated.

## **1.4. Strengths And Limitations of the Study**

The current study assessed the roles of various governmental administrations and community members involved in WASH services, both directly and indirectly, at different levels across diverse ministries and sectors such as Water and Energy, Health, Education, Finance, and Women and Social Affairs. It also included technical assistance teams from the federal to kebele levels, as well as community members. This approach provided comprehensive and comparable information from all levels regarding the study's COWASH and non-COWASH components. It ensured the representation

of different perspectives and the richness of the data collected. Additionally, the study incorporated both agrarian and pastoral regions to gather context-specific information on the implementation of community water supply schemes using various models. The study has several situational and methodological limitations. First, the use of a qualitative study design may limit generalizability to other populations or settings due to its specificity to certain contexts. Second, the security situation in various selected areas of the different regions restricted the inclusion of hotspot areas that are in urgent need of similar assessments. Third, the nature of qualitative research, which relies on the researcher's interpretation and preconceived notions, may introduce subjectivity that could influence the analysis and findings. Fourth, in the Amhara region, woreda and kebele level participants were not involved in this study due to the security situation.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. The Study Area and Setting**

The study was conducted in 13 woredas in Benishangul-Gumuz, Central Ethiopia, Oromia, Sidama, South Ethiopia, SWEP, and Tigray Regions in Ethiopia. The evaluation specifically targets COWASH and non-COWASH beneficiaries, as well as community-managed and woreda-managed projects, to observe their community ownership and assess the impact on operational efficiency, maintenance effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of projects or resources. These interventions are collaborative efforts between the governments of Finland and Ethiopia, focusing on CMPs and WMPs.

### **2.2. Study Design and Data Sources**

The research team utilized a comparative qualitative study to collect data that helps compare two groups: the intervention and non-intervention groups. To ensure the dependability of the evaluation findings, comparability between groups, and similarity in characteristics of the comparison groups, criterion-based selection was used for both primary and secondary data sources. The use of non-random data sources and participant selection helps address the main challenge of a comparative study: identifying comparison groups that represent a reasonable counterfactual to the intervention group. Accordingly, the team implemented non-random selection in choosing COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles in collaboration with the client. In this regard, comprehensive information was gathered through a review of various documents, including reports and monitoring and evaluation data. Qualitative data was collected through FGDs and IDIs with key project stakeholders at different levels and beneficiaries who were reached by project interventions.

Additionally, a desk review was conducted for different WASH sector policies and manuals, as well as relevant research findings from other projects. This included project inception documents such as the Inception Report, plans, any memorandum of understanding between Finland and the Ethiopian Government, the Project Baseline Assessment Report, interim reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, minutes of review meetings, semi-annual and annual reports from target woredas, reports from the regional offices, and related research findings on COWASH services and issues.

### **2.3. Participants and Sampling Methods**

Qualitative data was collected from a purposively selected sample of key stakeholders and beneficiaries reached by the project intervention. This was complemented by field visits to capture comprehensive information for the comparative study. IDIs and FGDs were conducted to gather detailed information for evaluation questions that require qualitative data. These data collection methods were utilized to gather information about the key institutional and external factors that have

hindered the progress of the project, on the one hand, and enhanced success, on the other. We also identified the most effective approaches and strategies used to achieve project goals, feedback from various stakeholders and beneficiaries (including women) regarding the project's relevance and usefulness, resource gaps in terms of time, materials, finance, and manpower, the effectiveness of partnerships between key stakeholders (including Finland and the Ethiopian Government) in executing the project's activities, potential programme recommendations to inform future actions, the project's impact on anticipated and unanticipated positive or negative changes, and other pertinent aspects. The study participants at different levels were selected using non-random (purposive) sampling for this comparative study.

The study was carried out in all eight COWASH IV regions. In the seven regions except in Amhara, data was collected from regional, woreda, and kebele levels. However, in the Amhara Region, only the regional bureaus were involved. Initially, a total of 13 COWASH IV woredas were included and 26 kebeles were selected from them. Of these, 13 were non-COWASH IV kebeles (refer to Table 1).

**Table 1: Sample size distribution among regions for COWASH IV comparative study, Ethiopia, 2024**

Region	Number of woredas	Number of kebeles per woreda	
		COWASH IV kebeles	Non-COWASH kebeles
Amhara	-	-	-
Benishangul Gumuz	1	1	1
Central Ethiopia	3	3	3
Oromia	3	3	3
Sidama	2	2	2
South Ethiopia	1	1	1
South West Ethiopia	1	1	1
Tigray	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

The sample of participants for both FGDs and IDIs was also determined. As a result, 212 in-depth interviews were conducted among various categories of informants at the federal, regional, woreda, and kebele levels. Additionally, 26 FGDs were arranged and conducted among the community at COWASH intervention kebeles and non-intervention kebeles to explore the community ownership between the two comparative groups (Table 2).

**Table 2: Sample size and respondents' distribution for COWASH Survey, Ethiopia, 2024**

Level of data collection	Methodology	Sample size	Stakeholders contacted	Actual interviewees
Federal	In-depth interview	6	MoWE, MoH, MoE, MoF, and FTAT	COWASH IV focal persons from each ministry and two from FTAT
Region (8 regions)	In-depth interview	50	Bureaus of Water and Energy, Education, Health, Finance, Women and Children's Affairs and RSUs	Bureau head/deputy and COWASH IV focal persons from each bureau and RSU team leaders
Woreda (13 woredas)	In-depth interview	78	Woreda Water and Mines, Education, Health, Finance, and Women and Children's Affairs	Office head/deputy and COWASH IV focal persons from each office
Kebele/community (26 kebeles)	In-depth interview	78	Health posts and schools, kebele administration	School directors, kebele water technicians, and health extension workers
Kebele/community (26 kebeles)	Focus Group discussion	26	WASHCO's, Beneficiaries, PTAs, and Kebele WASH team	WASHCOs, Beneficiaries, PTAs, and Kebele WASH team
<b>Total</b>	<b>IDIs</b>	<b>212</b>		
	<b>FGD</b>	<b>26</b>		

## 2.4. Data Collection Tools and Techniques

The study used multiple tools (desk review checklist, IDI, and FGD guides) to gather comprehensive and detailed information on the objectives of the study.

**Desk reviews:** A checklist was developed and utilized to review existing literature and data from sources such as inception reports, interim reports, semi-annual and annual reports from target districts, reports from different level offices, and other relevant documents.

**FGD Guides:** Discussion guides were created and translated into local languages to facilitate discussions and gather diverse information and insights on the project's relevance, usefulness, and performance progress from the beneficiaries' perspectives. The guides can be customized for specific groups participating in the FGDs, with 8-10 participants in each group.

**IDI Guides:** An interview guide was prepared and translated into local languages for key informants, such as community leaders or area experts. The main questions in the IDIs were open-ended and aimed to gather insights into the objectives of the comparative study.

Qualitative data was collected using tablets for audio recording (or tape recorder) and notes were taken during FGDs and IDIs. All processes were digitally recorded at each site. The recorded data was

entered daily onto an Excel template provided by the FTAT, under the supervision of the field supervisor and project coordinator.

## 2.5 Data Quality Assurance Measures

Rigorous quality assurance measures were taken to ensure the highest standards of data quality at each stage of the study. In addition, the following intensive theoretical and practical measures were employed to ensure the quality of data:

- **Recruitment of field staff:** Field staff, such as enumerators, supervisors, and coordinators, were carefully selected to facilitate fieldwork activities after a thorough review of their profile in terms of their qualifications, local language skills, ethical behaviour, culture, context sensitivity, and experience in qualitative research data collection.
- **Translation of tools:** The adapted and refined data collection tools were translated into Afaan Oromoo, Amharic, Sidamo Afo, and Tigrigna languages using bilingual experts.
- **Training of field staff:** Three days before the commencement of the actual fieldwork, data collectors and supervisors were trained on the project's purpose, method, discussion, and interview guides to implement the FGDs and key informant interviews accurately. All necessary logistics and hardware platforms for the data collection were prepared.
- Data verification, triangulation, and spot-checking were employed during data collection, along with appropriate data analysis tools to code and analyze the responses.
- Routine tracking of the FTAT's satisfaction at each stage of data collection for each major deliverable was undertaken. Feedback was needed to improve learning and provision of services subsequently, as well as create a "WhatsApp" group to facilitate communication between enumerators, field coordinators, and the FTAT.
- Ensuring a smooth flow of information among the research team members, the FTAT, and the stakeholders.
- Ensuring that the project had appropriate logistic provisions to complete the study in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The monitoring and evaluation team, represented by the FTAT, participated in the supervision to ensure that the collection was carried as agreed. This significantly helped improve data quality through working sessions with the team in the field.

## 2.6. Data Processing and Analysis

Desk review evidence was summarized using narrative synthesis to gather comprehensive information related to the comparative study and the study's evaluation questions. Thematic analysis was used to organize the qualitative data collected from IDIs and FGDs. In addition, expanded field notes from the

perspectives of different participants were used in organizing the qualitative data. The translated data transcripts were imported into ATLAS.ti version 9.1.3.0 for coding and thematic arrangement. The codebook was data-driven, developed based on the study's objectives. The themes and emerging sub-themes were managed by considering the frequency of the subject being discussed, the number of participants engaged in the topic, and the intensity of the conversation around the topic. Thematic content analysis techniques were applied to arrange the findings of the qualitative study.

## **2.7 Ethical Considerations**

To maintain ethical and scientific integrity, this study's protocol strictly adhered to the basic principles of research and ensured that the following ethical considerations were met:

- All research team members and field staff were trained in data collection, data management, research ethics, and other related sensitive issues.
- Measures were taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the data collected.
- Findings were reported transparently, accurately, and without misrepresentation.
- The design of data collection tools was culturally appropriate.
- Informed consent was obtained from research participants before data collection.
- Supervisors and data collectors ensured that the anonymity of research participants was maintained and all information gathered was kept strictly confidential.
- The team confirmed that the entire data collection endeavour was gender-responsive.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders, communities, and relevant authorities was fostered to ensure mutual understanding, support, and ownership of the study.
- Adequate measures were taken to safeguard the security of collected data. This includes backups, secured storage, restricted access, and encryption where applicable, to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the data.
- The study prioritized the well-being and safety of participants. Steps were taken to minimize any potential harm or discomfort. The benefits of the study, such as contributing to improved access to safe water supply, sanitation, and hygiene, were considered.
- The study adhered to all relevant national and international laws, regulations, and guidelines pertaining to research involving human subjects.



### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

A comparative study of the impact of community WASH ownership on operations, maintenance, and sustainability has been conducted in eight regions of Ethiopia. These regions include Oromia 43 (20.28%), Central Ethiopia 43 (20.28%), Tigray 31 (14.62%), Sidama 31 (14.62%), Benishangul Gumuz 19 (8.96%), South West Ethiopia People 17 (8.02%), South Ethiopia 15 (7.08%), Amhara 7 (3.3%), and the federal level 6 (2.83%) with key informants. Among the participants, 163 (76.89%) were male, and 106 (50%) were in the age range of 30-39 years. The majority i.e. 99 (46.70%), had a bachelor's degree.

With regard to job positions, 98 (46.23%) were experts, and 29 (13.68%) held the *head/deputy* position in their offices. The professional diversity of the majority of the participants included business professionals 51 (24.06%), engineers 48 (22.64%), and education professionals 31(14.62%). The majority, 167 (78.77%) of participants had 0-5 years' work experience. This was followed by 28 (13.21%) with 6-11 years' experience (Table 3).

**Table 3. Socio-demographic characteristics study participants at federal, regional, and woreda levels, 2024**

Variable	Categories	Number	Percent
Region	Federal	6	6.13
	Amhara	7	3.3
	Benishangul Gumuz	19	8.96
	Central Ethiopia	43	20.28
	Oromia	43	20.28
	Sidama	31	14.62
	South Ethiopia	15	7.08
	South West Ethiopian People	17	8.02
	Tigray	31	14.62
Sex	Female	49	23.11
	Male	163	76.89
Age Category	22-29 years	34	16.04
	30-39 years	106	50
	>=40 years	72	33.96
Educational status	Up to secondary school	13	6.14
	Diploma	34	16.04
	Bachelor's	99	46.70
	Masters and above	66	31.13
Job position	Expert	98	46.23
	Deputy/Head	29	13.68
	Health Extension Worker (HEW)	24	11.32
	Kebele Admin	16	7.55
	School director	21	9.91
	Team leader	17	8.02
Professional	Technician	15	6.13
	Business	51	24.06

	Education	31	14.62
	Engineering	48	22.64
	Farmer	7	3.3
	HEW	24	11.32
	Health	24	11.32
	Social sciences	21	9.91
Work experience	0-5 years	167	78.77
	6-11 years	28	13.21
	>=12 years	17	8.02

Altogether, 26 FGDs were conducted of which 6 were in Oromia, 6 in Central Ethiopia, 4 in Tigray, 2 in South Ethiopia, 2 in Southwest Ethiopia, 4 in Sidama, and 2 in Benishangul Gumuz. The majority of participants, 139 (71.6%), were men. There were variations in the number of participants in the FGDs across regions, with the highest (60) from Oromia and the fewest (9) from the SWEF Region (Table 4).

**Table 4: Sociodemographic characteristics of the FGDs participants, 2024**

Variables	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Male	139	71,6
	Female	55	28.4
Region	Benishangul Gumuz	15	7.7
	Central Ethiopia	47	24.2
	Oromia	60	30.9
	SWEF	9	4.6
	Sidama	26	13.4
	South Ethiopia	20	10.3
	Tigray	17	8.8

## 3.2. Implementation, Coordination, and Monitoring of the COWASH IV Project at Federal, Regional, and Woreda Levels

### 3.2.1. Overview Of Role and Responsibilities of The Line Ministries, Bureaus, And Offices

The successful implementation of the COWASH IV project depends on the stakeholders' roles at various levels. Accordingly, all stakeholders at the federal, regional, and woreda levels reported that they were discharging their responsibilities.

At the federal level, the MoWE coordinates all aspects of the COWASH IV project and supports all project stakeholders. It also facilitates the funds from Finland and oversees the project implementation. Moreover, it takes part in the preparation of manuals, guidelines, and provision of training, and follows when the school or health center latrine or water supply works are constructed. The MoF submits the money requested by MoWE to the Finland embassy. It also monitors the financial works and checks the allocated budget has been properly utilized. The MoH has been managing the COWASH component implementation, coordination, providing training and development, and promotion of

manuals and guides used for its implementation. The MoE is engaged as a steering committee member in COWASH IV. An informant from the MoE stated:

*“The ministry supports with planning and provides technical support while multi-stakeholder forum is organized; the experts conduct observations using checklists to evaluate, and give feedback.”*

The regional bureaus are also managing the project based on their mandate areas. For example, the Bureau of Finance is responsible for the distribution of funds to lower-level sectors in all woredas and kebeles based on their programmes and projects. Following these transactions, the bureau provides training related to financial management and it also monitors the funds' implementation and reports to the MoF every quarter. Its role also includes monitoring purchases, cash flow, materials, and general financial management. The Bureau of Water, Mines, and Energy mainly engaged in activities related to supplies of clean water for the community and ensured its sustainability through regular budgeting, funds or loans. Moreover, The Regional Support Unit's (RSU's) responsibilities include organizing the programme and coordinating experts from all involved parties. Awareness raising and ensuring the goals of the project are met are also managed by the RSU. It was stated that RSU takes part in coordinating project activities and also monitors that the activities have been implemented following the annual plan (IDI, Oromia Region, Water and Energy Bureau). The RSU also takes part in ensuring the project goals are met (IDI, SWE, Regional Support Unit).

A participant from the Amhara region reported:

*“The RSU engages in auditing to make sure that resources such as vehicles are safe and used for the intended purposes.”* (IDI, Amhara Region, BoWE, RSU).

Coordination and facilitation of training have also been indicated among the roles of the RSUs. Reporting has also been among the responsibilities of the RSU:

*“I compile reports from all woredas and submit them to the region, I coordinate capacity building activities implementation according to the action plan.”* (IDI, Tigray Region, RSU).

The woreda sector offices also have been discharging their responsibilities for the proper implementation of the COWASH IV project. The education office was taking part in site selection in schools in collaboration with experts from the water office. When the budget for the education sector is allocated, the experts of the office visit the schools to ensure they use the budget wisely and avoid unnecessary expenses. Within schools, there are teams established, and through them, experts from the education office conducted training and supervision. The finance office oversees the proper allocation and utilization of funds to ensure the budget has been used effectively and for its intended purposes, and ensures that financial processes are aligned with the established rules and guidelines. Assessing optimal locations for health facility water supply and gathering information on community needs

before construction have been indicated as the roles of the Woreda Health Offices. The quality of the latrines built under the programme and if they were constructed according to the design and specifications have also been taken care of by the health offices. Mobilizing the community, and encouraging them to take ownership of its sanitation and hygiene practices has been indicated as the role of the health office. An interviewee said:

*“We are committed to providing clean drinking water and improved latrines, working towards creating a healthier and more sustainable environment for everyone.”* (IDI, SWEP, Mari Mansa Woreda Health Office).

The Woreda Women and Children’s Offices mainly focused on whether women have been benefiting from the project and the impact it has on the lives of the women. The inclusion of women in various committees and provision of training to help them utilize the water project has been reported to be the other role of the Woreda Office of Women and Children. The office also ensures all constructed facilities including buildings are safe for women and people with disabilities. The woreda water and energy offices manage every stage of the project: planning, implementation, and monitoring. Raising awareness of the community about the project, and ensuring its sustainability have been the other roles of the offices. The woreda water and energy offices also foster a sense of ownership and encourage financial and in-kind contributions. They also monitor the budget to ensure it has been spent for the intended purposes and assesses the community's contributions.

### ***3.2.2. Collaboration Between COWASH Sectors at All Levels in Implementation and Monitoring***

The successful implementation of COWASH IV could not be realized without the collaborative effort of the sectors. The need for collaboration has been emphasized by the study participants:

*“Collaboration among government officials, stakeholders, and all sectors is necessary to implement the planned programmes.”* (IDI, SWE Region, Health Bureau).

Accordingly, participants in the study said the sectors at all levels were working together to implement and monitor the project. An informant stated:

*“All sectors including health, water, education, women and children's affairs bureaus, and even the financial sector, are considered part of the COWASH family. No sector can operate independently, and no sector can claim ownership of any particular aspect of the programme.”* (IDI, Oromia Health Bureau).

Moreover, the presence of joint monitoring was also noted in this study, where sectors have been planning, implementing, and monitoring COWASH activities together. An informant stated;

*“There is joint monitoring and evaluation led by a regional steering committee under the MoF, which reviews both financial and fiscal reports. Activities are monitored on-site to verify consistency with reports.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz Region, Bureau of Finance).

It has been reported that the finance bureaus collaborate closely with the health bureaus to ensure successful project implementation, and the health bureau collaborated with the water bureau, integrating health initiatives with COWASH efforts. The collaboration between various COWASH sectors has been indicated by the participants as follows.

*“We are working with banks together to manage the Government Fund budget through the woreda finance office which is used for human and physical capacity building and there is no gap observed in this regard.”* (IDI, Amhara Region, BoF).

An interviewee from the Benishangul Gumuz Region Bureau of Women, Children and Social Affairs observed that they initially encountered some problems due to a lack of collaboration. However, all the concerned stakeholders from the woreda to the regional level should work in collaboration to mitigate the challenges. They also conducted assessments in collaboration with others. The collaboration has also been mentioned by the study participants in various woreda offices.

*“Our office maintains strong relationships and collaboration with other stakeholders. We have regular meetings with leaders and focal persons.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia Region, Kuchaalfa Woreda, Finance Office).

The participant further noted that the WASHCO teams collaborate with water office leaders, advisors, and focal persons to oversee fund usage, material purchases, and project timelines. Any leftover funds are returned to the bank, ensuring that budgets are utilized efficiently (IDI, South Ethiopia Region, Kuchaalfa Woreda, Finance Office).

According to the interviewee from Benishangul-Gumuz, Bambasi Woreda Health Office, his office is closely collaborating with the Woreda Water Office, providing sanitation and hygiene training to the community. Together with the Woreda Health Extension, the office promoted proper toilet use and water treatment practices. Another study participant added:

*“Our office (Health) collaborated with COWASH and other partners that are working with the health Office. COWASH operates in two areas: projects and programmes. Projects include sanitation marketing initiatives, such as building latrines for the community and health organizations in this woreda. We also work on our environmental management programme, which focuses on achieving open defecation-free (ODF) status. In our woreda, we ensured all primary kebeles achieved ODF, which was a significant accomplishment.”* (IDI, Oromia Region, Kersa Woreda Health Office).

In relation to collaboration, there have been some challenges faced. According to an interviewee from the Oromia Health Bureau, there are problems among sectors that there are tendencies of competition to control project resources rather than collaborating and sharing resources.

### ***3.2.3 Strategies for Monitoring the COWASH Project Implementation***

Each stakeholder had its own strategies for monitoring the COWASH project implementation. The need for monitoring has been expressed by a participant in the study as “Continuous and strong supportive monitoring is essential at the individual, woreda, and zonal levels. This will ensure that facilities are maintained properly and hygiene practices are consistently followed (IDI, Central Ethiopia Region, RSU).

It has been further argued that ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure that resources invested, including skills and knowledge, have been applied appropriately so as to serve the targeted community effectively (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Women and Children Bureau). Having regular supervision, phone calls, meetings, and discussions among the concerned stakeholders were the main mechanisms of monitoring. An informant stated;

*“The works of the COWASH project has been assessed through consistent discussions made with all of the regional support units.”* (IDI, Ministry of Finance).

The regional support units also undertook regular supervision to monitor. An informant from the MoH indicated that the WASH healthcare facility has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for this system. The informant further noted:

*“We work by the Kobo tool which has a dashboard through Power BI (Power Business Intelligence) with which we can analyze the data.”* with a good approach.”.

According to an informant from MoE, the COWASH focal person in the Ministry evaluated the progress of plan implementation quarterly, and based on the lessons learned, corrective measures would be taken for the next quarter. Regarding the monitoring of the financial management, an interviewee from Benishangul Gumuz Region stated that auditors were in place at the regional, zonal, and woreda levels. Supervision and follow-up activities were conducted each term or phase to track how funds were used by different sectors to meet their objectives. With regard to the monitoring of the financial data, it has been stated:

*“We analyze the financial data and provide it to the Ministry of Finance. The Water Bureau monitors the matching fund, while the funds provided by Finland are monitored by the Ministry of Finance.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Central Ethiopia Region, Finance bureau, COWASH).

An interviewee from the Oromia Region Finance Bureau noted the existence of a finance structure from regional to woreda levels for the COWASH Programme and the monitoring has been made through various means such as phone calls and timely reports. The interviewee also stated:

*“There is a joint monitoring and evaluation led by a regional steering committee under the Ministry of Finance, which reviews both financial and fiscal reports. Activities are monitored on-site to verify consistency with reports.”* (IDI, Beneshaguz Gumuz Region, Bureau of Finance).

The monitoring has also been conducted by examining ledgers, and checking how the allocated money has been spent (IDI, Sidama Region, Wendogenet Woreda, Finance office). The finance officers stated that they monitor the project's progress by establishing financial laws and guidelines. Additionally, they oversee the effective use of community funds for WASH projects. Moreover, site visits have been indicated as one of the ways monitoring has been conducted.

*“We monitor progress through site visits, assessing which areas need support and supervision, and providing assistance accordingly.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Region, Geta Woreda, Education Office).

The monitoring of the projects also takes the involvement of women into consideration.

*“The representatives of the office (Women and Children) monitor the level of women's participation including their involvement in labor work such as during the construction of water schemes. The accessibility of these water schemes to older women has also been monitored.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia Region, Kuchaalfa Woreda, Women and Children Office).

In schools, PTAs also monitor students to ensure they apply their hygiene practices at home (IDI, Central Ethiopia Region, Fofa Woreda, Education Office). In spite of the various strategies employed to monitor the COWASH project implementation, the study participant from the Oromia Region Kersa Woreda Education Office stated that there are experts who only attend meetings without regularly overseeing the project implementation.

### **3.3. Implementation, Operation, Management, and Sustainability of Rural Community Water Schemes**

The implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of rural community water schemes were assessed from different participants' perspectives. Accordingly, the interview and discussion participants noted that the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of rural community water schemes had improved over time in rural communities. Participants underscored that there was a high level of community participation in this process. They emphasized that they actively participated to contribute to the sustainability of the project. In this connection, an informant was quoted saying:



*“The CMP's effectiveness is evident through the high level of community participation throughout all project phases, from planning to implementation and even post-construction. Community members contributed both financially and in-kind by providing materials like stone, wood, and sand, and assisting in construction tasks.”* (IDI, CE, RSU).

The interview participants and discussants also emphasized that the system worked effectively and efficiently over time due to its community participation and ownership elements. Additionally, they mentioned that sustainability was ensured by maintaining resources, managing finances, training people, and planning for the future to ensure that the system remained viable and did not fail due to a lack of maintenance or resources. A participant in FGD, Oromia, COWASH Kebele said:

*“The COWASH approach helped protect assets, reduced the risk of damage, and reinforced operational efficiency, solid management, and sustainability of the water schemes.”*

Participants also noted that COWASH IV Project implementation and operation had a full package and the management of community water schemes was highly improved with community ownership and active participation, compared with community water schemes constructed by other approaches in non-COWASH kebeles. They mentioned that it was efficiently managed in terms of the time it took and the resources utilized, including costs. An IDI, SWE, Water and Energy remarked:

*“The CMP approach implemented provided safe and sustainable water supply services to communities, in contrast to the non-COWASH kebeles. Additionally, the COWASH projects were completed in a shorter time and at a lower cost, while non-COWASH kebele projects often faced delays, higher costs, and other limitations.”* (IDI, SWEP, Bureau of Water, and Energy).

The interview participants underscored that the CMP approach was more effective than any other approach used for implementation so far. This is due to the community base and ownership it obtained which greatly contributed to its top benefits. In this regard, an informant stated the following:

*“Communities were COWASH project implementers; they managed construction and maintenance contracts as well as administrative activities. The communities are provided with resources, build water supply schemes, and own and manage the facilities.”* (IDI, Tigray, Bureau of Water and Energy).

### **3.3.1 Approaches to Rural Water Supply Schemes Implementation**

Ethiopia's WASH Implementation Framework identifies four financing sources for water and sanitation projects: CMPs, WMPs, NGO-Managed Projects (NGO-MPs), and Self-Supply Projects (WASH Sector Ministries, 2011). However, the One WASH National Programme introduced a fifth model, the “Rural Utility Model,” whose responsibilities and funding sources remain undefined (One WASH National Programme, 2018).



In the CMP approach, the implementation of community water supply projects is led by WASHCOs under the supervision of the Woreda Office of Water. Investment financing is provided through nearby MFIs or banks, with regions transferring funds directly to WASHCO accounts (Gossage, Rautanen & Bimrew, 2023). In contrast, under the WMP approach, the budget for constructing water schemes is controlled by a district finance office. PTAs and CHCs do not have access to this budget but play active roles in supporting the implementation and monitoring of completed water schemes.

The NGO-Managed Projects approach is a long-established model for implementing community and institutional water schemes in Ethiopia. In this model, the NGO fully controls the budget, while target districts, WASHCOs, PTAs, and CHCs are responsible for supporting the implementation and taking ownership of project outcomes.

The Self-Supply Project approach represents a model where communities take full responsibility for funding and financing water supply initiatives, as well as their ongoing maintenance (One WASH National Programme, 2018). Rural Water Supply Schemes implemented using CMP and other approaches were assessed from different participants' perspectives depending on the context of its implementation, operation, management, sustainability, resource availability, challenges, and recommendations. Accordingly, the interview and discussion participants noted that community-centered projects, such as those focused on WASH, have long-lasting impacts; they build a sense of ownership and responsibility among the local people involved. Additionally, community members feel personally invested by taking active roles in these projects, leading to better care, maintenance, and project sustainability over time. On the other hand, it was mentioned that the COWASH project provided valuable lessons on how involving the community directly could make water and sanitation systems more sustainable and effective in the long run. In this connection, an informant stated:

*“Community-centered projects tended to have lasting impacts because they fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among the participants.”* (IDI, CE, RSU).

### ***3.3.2. Implementation, Operation, And Management of Community Water Supply Schemes Using the CMP Approach***

We assessed the implementation, operation, and management of rural community water supply schemes using the CMP approach from the perspectives of different participants. Accordingly, the participants stated that the CMP Approach is a user-friendly model for the implementation, operation, and management of rural water supply schemes. Additionally, they stated that this approach placed significant emphasis on community involvement, with the community taking primary responsibility for managing and sustaining the water system. This ensured sustainability and provided long-lasting services. A Central Ethiopia, Education Bureau informant had this to reply in this regard:

*“The CMP approach involves the community taking responsibility and participating from the start, including selecting the site, providing necessary materials such as sand and wood, and digging holes for construction. The community is directly involved in the project and is responsible for its maintenance and management.”*

### **3.3.2.1. The Status of Community Ownership in the Implementation of the CMP Approach**

The study participants noted that the CMP approach strengthened the community's capacity to manage, sustain, and grow initiatives by fostering control, ownership, and responsibility. They also added that the active participation and decision-making power of the community ensured that resources were managed effectively, challenges were addressed promptly, and the project remained sustainable over time. The participants concluded that the approach empowered individuals, promoted social cohesion, and ensured the project would thrive in the long run. One informant from IDI, Sidama, had to say this during the interview:

*“The CMP approach promotes community control and fosters a strong sense of ownership and responsibility, which has a positive impact on sustainability and effective management.”*

In the participants' opinion, the key to sustainability in community-driven projects lies in empowering the community to take responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of the project. Through modest fees, a dedicated maintenance fund, and proactive savings, the community ensured the availability of resources for necessary repairs, upgrades, and other unforeseen issues. This approach fostered a sense of ownership, accountability, and long-term planning, making the project more resilient, adaptable, and capable of thriving well into the future. An FGD, COWASH Kebele participant stated the following during the discussion:

*“To ensure sustainability, we emphasized the importance of community involvement in maintaining the project. For example, when expanding an existing water facility, we may introduce a modest fee to support ongoing maintenance. In the event of system malfunctions, these fees are allocated for repairs.”* (FGD, COWASH Kebele).

### **3.3.2.2 Effectiveness of CMP Approach for Operation, Management, and Sustainability**

The participants mentioned that the community played a central role in the overall success of the initiative, with active involvement in every aspect of its functioning. Moreover, members worked diligently on behalf of the committee that chose them. In addition, they stressed that whenever issues or challenges arose, the community took responsibility for addressing them independently, collaborating to find practical solutions and implementing them effectively. Furthermore, they assured their commitment to the long-term sustainability of the initiative, as they continually evaluated and

improved processes to ensure its ongoing success and adaptability. In connection with this, an informant in SWEP stated:

*“The community was actively involved, working on behalf of the committee they chose. If issues arose, they addressed them themselves, and they were highly engaged in the management, operation, and sustainability aspects.”*

The participants emphasized that decentralizing the CMP approach allowed decision-making and responsibility to be distributed across the lower levels of the community, rather than being controlled by a central authority. As they mentioned this approach fostered a strong sense of ownership among community members and facilitated direct involvement of the community in the planning, management, and execution of the project. Additionally, they stated that the authority and responsibility to manage the project locally helped to build their skills and capacity, ensuring they were equipped to maintain and sustain the project in the long term. An informant from the Benishangul Gumuz, Education Bureau mentioned the following in this regard:

*“In CMP, the community handled project management, resource allocation, and sustainability efforts. Its decentralized structure fostered a sense of ownership, allowing lower-level community members to develop the capacity to manage and sustain the project”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz, Education Bureau).

Participants noted that the CMP approach was effective due to community participation at every stage of the project, from planning to post-construction. They also stated that community members contributed financially and in-kind, offering materials such as stone, wood, and sand, and helping with construction tasks, ensuring active engagement and ownership throughout the process. An informant from IDI, Oromia, Goba Woreda had this to state during the interview:

*“The CMP's effectiveness was evident through the high level of community participation throughout all project phases, from planning to implementation and even post-construction in contributing both financially and in-kind by providing materials.”* (IDI, Oromia Region, Goba Woreda).

### **3.3.2.3 Major Challenges in Using the CMP Approach**

The key challenges associated with implementing community water supply schemes using the CMP approach were systematically assessed. Discussants highlighted that while water coverage improved significantly with COWASH support, persistent issues in the timely maintenance of water points were evident, primarily due to minor breakdowns. These challenges were attributed to factors including budgetary constraints, limited availability of replacement materials, and insufficient commitment of committees to ensuring prompt responses.

*“While water coverage has expanded under COWASH support, challenges persist in ensuring timely maintenance of water points, primarily due to minor breakdowns. These challenges are attributable to factors such as budgetary limitations, insufficient availability of replacement materials, and insufficient commitment from committees to promptly address maintenance issues.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz, Health Bureau).

The discussant mentioned that maintenance challenges are faced due to limited access to replacement materials. With better availability, they can leverage their skills to handle many repairs independently, reducing the need for technicians. Thus, they emphasized that support in acquiring these materials would greatly enhance system efficiency.

*“To address maintenance challenges, we need better access to replacement materials from the water office. With available materials, we could handle many repairs ourselves. We’ve gained some maintenance skills over time, so we don’t always need a technician. The real issue is the lack of accessible materials, so we would appreciate support in acquiring them.”* (FGD, Oromia, COWASH).

The interview participants stated that the key challenges include delays in budget approvals, reductions in requested amounts, and a lack of consideration for additional allocations despite demonstrating capacity for effective fund utilization. The participants also added that current provisions fail to account for exchange rate fluctuations, exacerbating financial constraints. The informant stated the following:

*“The main challenges include delays in budget approvals as per requests, reductions in the requested amounts, and the lack of consideration for additional budget allocations based on prior capacity to effectively utilize funds. Additionally, current provisions do not account for fluctuations in exchange rates.”* (IDI, Amhara, BoF).

Participants noted that another challenge of the CMP approach lies in its reliance on grant funding to fulfill operational budget needs. Some participants also mentioned that inter-sectoral dynamics are hindered by competitive control over project resources, rather than promoting collaborative efforts and efficient resource sharing.

*“A challenge with the CMP approach is the dependency on grant funding to meet operational budget requirements. Additionally, inter-sectoral issues arise, characterized by competition for control over project resources instead of fostering collaboration and resource sharing.”* (IDI, Tigray, RSU).

Despite efforts to release funds promptly, allocations were often made near project completion, delaying critical activities and hindering adherence to the timeline. This funding delay limited resource efficiency and resulted in rushed implementation which affected the quality of the project. One IDI, Central Ethiopia informant stated their remark as follows:

*“While we make every effort to release funds promptly, allocations were frequently made closer to the project conclusion, which could delay the commencement of critical activities. This delayed funding presented challenges in adhering to the project timeline.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia).

The participants also stated that the allocated resources are insufficient to cover all anticipated activities, particularly with the rise in the cost of construction materials. Additionally, contractors often prioritized profit over quality, and there was a lack of comprehensive oversight to ensure that project quality was consistently maintained throughout execution. The excerpt below taken from IDI, Central Ethiopia, RSU was quoted saying the following:

*“The allocated resources were insufficient to cover all anticipated activities, particularly, given the ongoing increase in construction material costs; on the other hand, contractors often prioritize profit over quality.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, RSU).

The participants from Oromia Bureau of Finance expressed that the absence of a dedicated finance focal person for the COWASH Programme at the federal, regional, or woreda level leads to demotivation among experts. They are burdened with additional responsibilities, causing delays in financial processes. Therefore, the participants emphasized that allocating operational funds for a dedicated finance focal point is crucial to address this issue.

The study participants stated that the ongoing conflict in some regions severely impacted the procurement and transportation of services, office equipment, stationery, and other essential supplies. They further noted shortages of resources such as transport vehicles, fuel, motorcycles, laptops, computers, and printers. Additionally, the exhaustion, deterrence, and trauma experienced by experts due to the conflict presented significant challenges in reorganizing and re-engaging the workforce. These factors hindered the timely implementation of the programme to some extent. In this regard, an informant stated:

*“There were challenges in transport service, office equipment; stationary, and other materials supply (vehicles, motors, laptops, computers, printers, etc. were in short supply). Exhaustion, demotivation, and trauma of experts due to the war were serious challenges to reorganize and re-engage the manpower to the job.”* (IDI, Tigray, RSU).

The participants underscored that staff turnover among experienced personnel continued to be a persistent challenge. Furthermore, there was a shortage of reagents for water quality testing, with some existing supplies having expired. They also added that the funding from Finland is frequently insufficient to cover all necessary needs, and recent reductions in capacity-building efforts further compounded these challenges. See the excerpt below for a participant’s related opinion:

*“Despite the training provided, turnover among experienced staff, a lack of reagents for water quality testing, and expired reagents remain challenges. There is also a shortage of computers, printers, and power issues in the region due to insufficiency to meet needs. Capacity-building efforts have also been reduced recently.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Education Bureau).

The absence of water quality assurance instruments, such as testers, constitutes a significant challenge that the participants encountered. The participants stated: *“Lack of water quality assurance instruments such as testers is also the challenge we encountered.”* (IDI, Tigray, Woreda Water & Energy Office)

#### **3.3.2.4. Role Of Women and Girls in Community WASH Service Decision Making**

The study participants underscored that the involvement of women and girls in community WASH service decision-making is essential. Additionally, the programme offered women substantial opportunities by enabling them to join various teams and participate in decision-making activities on equal footing with men, and in some cases, even taking on more prominent roles. An informant had this to report in connection with this:

*“The programme gave a good chance to women in decision making since it enabled them to be involved in various teams, to engage in decision-making activities like men, even greater than them.”* (IDI, CE, Women and Child Affairs).

The project directives required women to hold key leadership positions, such as chairperson, secretary, and cashier. They also mentioned that, in line with the guidelines, the management committees organized water points to ensure that women's decision-making roles in community WASH services were clearly defined and properly integrated. In the extended discussion, they mentioned that the structure empowered women to actively participate in decision-making. This enabled prompt maintenance, procurement of necessary spare parts, and other essential activities.

Regarding women's capacity building, the participants emphasized that women were actively participating in leadership roles and decision-making regarding maintenance and procurement activities. Additionally, they stated that the shift was the result of the targeted capacity-building efforts, awareness-raising training, and changes in project directives.

They also briefed that, based on previous assessments, approximately half of the members of WASHCOs at the kebele level were women; indicating significant representation of women in decision-making roles related to water management at the local level. In addition, this highlighted the progress made in promoting gender equality within community-based governance structures, particularly in the management of vital resources like water. They underscored that this level of participation reflected the empowerment of women and encouraged their involvement in leadership



and decision-making processes within the community. An informant's opinion, quoted below, demonstrates this:

*“Based on the previous assessments, we found that about fifty percent of water management committee members at the kebele level were women. This structure enabled women and girls to participate in planning and decision-making processes, which we observed in practice.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz).

The participants pointed out that women played a crucial role in the protection and effective use of project resources, as they were often the primary managers of household and community needs, including water, sanitation, and other essential services. In addition, they mentioned that women's committees were specifically established to give them a voice in decision-making and resource management. On the other hand, these committees enabled women to take a more active role in overseeing and ensuring the sustainability of project resources. Additionally, they stated that leadership training was provided to enhance their skills in management, problem-solving, and decision-making, which empowered women to take ownership of the projects, ensuring they were well-equipped to manage resources efficiently and advocate the needs of their communities.

Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of adopting inclusive approaches to serve marginalized groups, such as women, youth, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and impoverished communities. They mentioned that during the construction of toilets and water points (*Bono*), they prioritized accessibility to people with disabilities. Additionally, it was emphasized that they supported those living in extreme poverty by building housing and offering additional incentives through women's development associations. On the other hand, the participants stated that people with disabilities were included in the COWASH Programme committee. It was also mentioned that some buildings were demolished and rebuilt to accommodate people with disabilities, including ensuring that doors opened outward for easier access. An informant stated the following in this connection:

*“When building toilets and Bono Water facilities, we ensured accessibility for people with disabilities. Additionally, we assisted those in extreme poverty by constructing housing and providing extra incentives with our women's development associations. We involved the disabled in COWASH; there were four of them who were included in the committee.”* (IDI, SWE, Women and Child Affairs).

### **3.3.2.5 Recommendations to Improve Community Ownership of Operation, Management and Sustainability of Community Water Supply Schemes**

One of the challenges of the CMP approach, as found out in the assessment, was budget constraint, as the budget for community water scheme construction has come from regional bureaus and woreda offices which have different levels of capacities and CMP experience. This was exacerbated by the

ever-increasing cost escalation of construction materials in Ethiopia. This is evident from the direct quote taken from an IDI in Central Ethiopia, RSU:

*“The allocated resources were insufficient to cover all anticipated activities, particularly, given the ongoing increase in construction material costs; on the other hand, contractors often prioritize profit over quality.”*

In addition, respondents complained that the budget allocation to regions did not consider the local capacity to implement COWASH projects and there was no room for additional budget requests; it did not encourage collaboration among regions but rather competition for budget acquisition.

Therefore, it seems reasonable that some of the funds coming from the Government of Finland (GoF) be committed to water scheme construction so that the fund could cover gaps that may come from regional capacity variation in implementation and the growing cost of water scheme construction. In addition, effective and efficient project budget utilization should be considered as one of the criteria for more budget requests so that all target regions strive their best for wise use of project budget utilization and improve their capacity to implement the COWASH project.

Another challenge, which was captured in all the reviews of the past COWASH phases, including this evaluation is the types of water schemes that have been constructed. The discussants stated that the existing water points are characterized by low power output, necessitating substantial manual effort to generate water. This presents challenges in both efficiency and accessibility, particularly in areas where labor-intensive methods are unsustainable. To address these challenges, they proposed transitioning the current system to solar power.

*“The current water points have very low power and require significant labor to generate water, so we are seeking a solution by shifting the constructed water points to the solar power system.”* (FGD, Oromia, Babo COWASH Kebele).

The majority of the participants indicated that making inclusive decisions could ensure WASH programme sustainability. Out of the seven WASHCO members, at least four were women who had key responsibilities including planning, monitoring, procurement, and the recruitment of construction workers, with support from the woreda. It was mentioned that this approach differed from the WMP, and its contribution to sustainability was significant due to the strong sense of ownership fostered within the community. This approach, they said, was recommended for the sustainability of the project.

The participants recommended establishing community-operated spare parts supply enterprises at the kebele level which could effectively address the issue. It was mentioned that, by providing easy access



to spare parts, these enterprises would significantly improve the sustainability of WASH facilities. An informant from SWEP and RSU was quoted saying the following in this regard:

*“Establishing community-operated spare parts supply enterprises at the kebele level could resolve this issue. By ensuring easy access to spare parts, these enterprises would greatly enhance the sustainability of WASH facilities.”* (IDI, SWE, RSU).

The study participants also stated that the community's perception of individuals with disabilities should be enhanced. Additionally, it is essential to foster awareness that individuals with disabilities have valuable contributions to make and are fully capable of fulfilling their roles. Furthermore, inclusive participation should be actively promoted and facilitated

It was noted that:

*“The attitude of the community towards persons with disability should be improved. The community should be convinced that persons with disability have a role to play and they can play their role; they should be allowed to participate.”* (IDI, Tigray, Women and Child Affairs).

### ***3.3.3. Implementation, Operation and Management of Community Water Supply Schemes Using Other Approaches in Non-COWASH Kebeles***

Non-COWASH projects that used the WMP approach and were overseen by regional, zonal, or woreda-level authorities, often encountered operational and maintenance challenges due to limited common understanding. The approach is hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of community ownership as captured through the following quote:

*“Non-COWASH projects are managed by regional, zonal, or woreda-level authorities, leading to gaps in understanding and challenges in operations and maintenance. This model is hampered by bureaucracy and reduced sense of ownership among community members.”* (IDI, SWEP, Water and Energy Bureau).

Discussants pointed out that maintenance tools and materials are not locally available and must be sourced from the woreda. In addition, kebeles lack resident technicians, requiring repairs to be handled by technicians from the woreda, leading to delays and logistical challenges.

*“No, maintenance tools and materials are available locally; they must be brought from woredas. Additionally, there’s no local technician in the kebele. Technicians come from woreda for repairs.”* (FGD, Central Ethiopia, Lemo Lisana, Non-COWASH kebele).

The participants emphasized that the woreda has a limited supply of materials, which is not enough to meet all maintenance needs. Furthermore, they mentioned that some items wear over time, which worsens the resource gap. The discussant said:

*“The woreda has some materials, but they’re insufficient for all needs. Some items are lacking due to loss or wear over time.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Lemo Lisana, Non-COWASH kebele).

The participants were briefed on how the ongoing security challenges have impacted the availability of essential water scheme maintenance spare parts and equipment. They said:

*“Lack of security has been the main cause for the shortage of water scheme maintenance spare parts and equipment. Even this time there is no free movement of goods and people. The woreda do not have complete set of maintenance spare parts and equipment.”* (IDI, Tigray, Ahferom, Non-COWASH kebele).

The primary cause of water scheme non-functionality is the lack of professional oversight during the project planning and design phases, resulting in construction deficiencies. Additionally, insufficient maintenance practices contribute significantly to the degradation and failure of these systems over time.

*“The primary reason for water schemes becoming non-functional is that project plans are not inspected by professionals, leading to issues during the construction process. Inadequate maintenance of the projects is another significant reason.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Fofa Coner, Non-COWASH kebele).

Some study participants mentioned that there has been no maintenance performed, despite reporting the issue to the woreda and they added that they were concerned about the water service. (IDI, SWEP, Mari Mansa, Non-COWASH kebele). To solve problems observed in Non-COWASH kebeles significant number of the participants stated that effective planning and coordination can streamline maintenance processes, reducing downtime and ensuring an uninterrupted water supply. It was noted that:

*“With proper planning and coordination, maintenance should be quick, minimizing downtime and ensuring continuous water supply.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Geta Silase, Non-COWASH kebele).

### **3.3.3.1. Community Ownership Status in The Implementation of Rural Water Schemes Other Than the CMP Approach in Non-COWASH Kebeles**

The study participants unanimously agreed that community ownership is a cornerstone of water scheme sustainability, requiring active participation from all stakeholders. Fostering a sense of collective responsibility is integral, and this perspective is reinforced during community education sessions. Accordingly, participants identified engaging the community in the construction process further instills a sense of stewardship, as involvement promotes a shared perception of the water

schemes as communal assets. On the other hand, they agreed that during maintenance, the community is informed and mobilized to provide financial contributions, complemented by coordination with Woreda WASH Offices. Given the limitations of government resources, community financial support is essential for addressing maintenance needs effectively and ensuring the long-term functionality of water schemes.

*“Community ownership plays a crucial role in the sustainability of water schemes. It's not just the responsibility of kebele officials; everyone in the community needs to protect these resources. We emphasize this mindset during our education sessions. Additionally, involving the community in the construction of water schemes helps them view it as their own property. When maintenance is needed, we inform the community and request financial contributions while also coordinating with the Woreda WASH Offices. Since the government cannot handle everything alone, community financial support is necessary.”* (IDI, SWEP, HEWs).

The participant mentioned that training has been conducted in each village, but its scope has been limited. This has led to difficulty in identifying malfunctioning water schemes. However, they also stated that the training has effectively fostered a sense of responsibility. This has enabled individuals to promptly report problems and take ownership of their roles in maintaining the system.

*“Some trainings have been provided in each village. However, with limited training, people sometimes fail to identify the problem when the water scheme breaks down. The training has helped people take responsibility for their roles and report issues promptly.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz, Bambasi Mender 41, Non-COWASH kebele).

The discussants emphasized that the most urgent need is access to clean water. At the kebele level, they are able to mobilize the community and contribute their share, but external support remains essential. While the community possesses the labor force, they lack the necessary expertise, materials, and financial resources. Attempts to secure support from private individuals have been unsuccessful, as the cost of a single digging machine, approximately 2.5 million Birr, far exceeds their capacity. Although community efforts are well-organized, financial backing and material support from the Government and donors are critical to ensuring success.

*“We need clean water. As you know, our primary problem is the lack of water. At the kebele level, we can mobilize the community and contribute our share, but we also need your support. We have labor power, but we need expertise, materials, and financial backing. We tried to get support from private individuals, but a single machine for digging costs around 2.5 million birr, which is beyond our means. We can organize community efforts, but the Government and other donors must support us financially and with materials.”* (FGD, Oromia, Waja Kersa, Non-COWASH kebele).

### 3.3.3.2 Effectiveness of Other Approaches in Terms of Operation, Management, and Sustainability of Community Water Supply Schemes

The discussants emphasized that the community has acquired foundational knowledge in water scheme maintenance through the interventions of the Water Steering Committee; however, this expertise remains suboptimal. They also added that financial constraints further impede progress, underscoring the critical need for continued capacity-building initiatives to enhance proficiency in water resource management and utilization. The discussants stated:

*“The community has gained some knowledge about maintaining water schemes through the efforts of the Water Steering Committee, but it remains insufficient. Limited financial resources also hinder progress, emphasizing the need for ongoing educational initiatives to enhance water management and usage.”* (FGD, Sidama, Chirone Daleya, Non- COWASH kebele).

The discussants added that in order to foster a sense of ownership within the community, active participation whether financial contributions or labor is essential. On top of that tangible efforts, such as transporting materials like stones or sand, reinforce their commitment and responsibility toward maintaining the water scheme are required. However, as the report of discussants, in the current approach, where the Government assumes the majority of financial responsibility while the community provides minimal input, undermines sustainable ownership and long-term engagement.

*“For the community to feel ownership, they need to contribute, whether through labor or money. When they put in effort, like carrying stones or sand, they maintain the water scheme because they remember their contribution. However, the government try to cover the majority of the costs while the community contributes insignificant portion of the costs which will not ensure their ownership.”* (FGD, SWEP, Marimansa Dashi, Non-COWASH kebele).

The discussant emphasized that community participation does not arise spontaneously but requires intentional efforts through structured discussions and mobilization. Without proper guidance, individuals are unlikely to take responsibility for communal resources. Citing past experiences, they highlighted instances where community gatherings were organized to raise awareness about protecting public assets following infrastructure damage. As a result, community mobilization was identified as a critical component, necessitating the assignment of dedicated personnel within the kebele to effectively coordinate and facilitate these efforts.

*“Community participation does not occur organically and requires deliberate engagement through discussions and mobilization efforts. Without structured guidance, individuals are unlikely to assume responsibility for communal resources. For example, in the past, when infrastructure damage occurred; we convened the community to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding public*

*assets. Therefore, community mobilization is essential, and dedicated personnel within the kebele are assigned to facilitate these efforts effectively.*” (FGD, Oromia, Waja Kersa, Non-COWASH kebele)

The discussant highlighted that inadequate oversight, absence of formal agreements and penalties, and limited material supplies, along with ineffective bank accounts for maintenance funds, have exacerbated management challenges. They also emphasized the need to align fund collection strategies with community demographics for improved efficiency. The discussant stated:

*“The absence of a designated group responsible for oversight, coupled with the lack of formal agreements or penalties for noncompliance, has hindered effective management. Limited material supplies further exacerbate the challenges. Fund collection mechanisms need to be tailored to reflect community demographics for greater efficiency, while the use of book accounts have proven ineffective and requires reassessment.”* (FGD, CE, Lemo Lesana, Non- COWASH) kebele.

The discussant emphasized the importance of training community members in the technical aspects of water supply systems, alongside skills development in project management, financial literacy, and conflict resolution. They stressed the need for clear roles and responsibilities within the committee to ensure accountability and transparency. Finally, they highlighted the value of promoting community-led fundraising to support the maintenance and expansion of water supply schemes. The discussant stated:

*“Training is crucial for community members in technical aspects of water supply systems, including maintenance, operation, and management. Skills development in project management, financial literacy, and conflict resolution can further enhance their capacity to manage water supply initiatives effectively. Clear delineation of committee roles and responsibilities is essential to ensure accountability and transparency in decision-making. Additionally, promoting community-led fundraising initiatives can support the maintenance and expansion of water supply schemes.”* (FGD, Sidama, Chirone Daleya, Non-COWASH kebele)

### **3.4. Implementation, Operation, Management and Sustainability of Institutional WASH Facilities**

#### ***3.4.1. Implementation, Operation and Management of School WASH Facilities Using the WMP Approach***

##### **3.4.1.1. Roles And Responsibilities of Schools**

The roles and responsibilities of schools in the implementation, operation, and management of WASH facilities are crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of these programmes. Accordingly, participants from various regions underscored that schools were encouraged to take a proactive role in

the long-term maintenance of WASH facilities. While COWASH's presence in the early stages garnered respect in some schools, emphasis was placed on the need for schools to begin saving from their internal income for repairs and maintenance once the project was completed. This approach ensured that schools were not solely dependent on external funding for future upkeep. Schools were also encouraged to focus on maintaining clean latrines, which are essential aspects of WASH programme success. An informant stated the following in this connection:

*“The COWASH presence, even just their vehicles, garnered respect. After project initiation, we encouraged schools to save for long-term maintenance, as funding for repairs would not be available post-completion. Schools had started saving from their internal revenues.”* (IDI, SWEP Marimansa Woreda)

Schools play a significant role in the operation and management of WASH programmes. Many schools have introduced important practices such as dry waste disposal areas, handwashing stations, and effective water management. However, the full implementation of these practices has not yet reached the expected level, largely due to damage caused by conflict. The destruction of facilities during the war means that additional budget is required to restore these essential resources to their original condition. In this context, an informant from Tigray, IDIs, Adiet Woreda reported the following:

*“The roles schools played has not reached the expected level because many of the facilities in the schools were damaged and looted during the war, which required additional budget to restore functionality.”* (IDIs, Tigray, Adiet Woreda,)

Despite these setbacks, schools took considerable responsibility for the management of WASH facilities. In some schools, the installation of new water points and the provision of maintenance services had been carried out with the schools' agreement to manage and care for the facilities independently. Another informant from the same region confirmed this as follows:

*“Yes, for example, in the four schools, we provided maintenance service, installed six new water points, and reached a consensus with them to manage and take care of the facilities by the schools themselves.”* (IDI, Tigray, Ahferom Woreda)

In addition, participants from diverse regions highlighted that schools independently managed these facilities after project completion, showcasing a significant shift towards self-sufficiency in managing WASH infrastructure. Furthermore, schools were instrumental in providing gender-sensitive facilities, such as separate toilets for boys and girls and rest areas for girls during their menstrual cycle, further demonstrating their commitment to addressing the needs of all students. An informant from Kersa, Oromia stated:



*“Schools have several roles. First, they provide separate toilets for boys and girls, as well as a rest area for girls during their menstrual cycle, which is beneficial.”* (IDIs, Oromia, Kersa Woreda).

Many participants shared their perspectives related to how schools were pivotal in the implementation, operation, and management of COWASH projects. In most instances, they also educated the community on how to implement the WASH programme and were instrumental in providing raw materials and labor support for the projects. Schools also established clubs that played a vital role in teaching, advising, and maintaining these facilities. They educated their peers and the broader school community about proper usage and hygiene practices. This is what an informant from IDI, Bambasi Woreda, Benishangul-Gumuz had to state:

*“The school has its own WASH club, which works to create awareness about sanitation among students.”*

Furthermore, several informants shared their opinions on measures that should be taken to improve the role of schools in the implementation, operation, and management of WASH facilities. They suggested that establishing WASH clubs in each school and strengthening the existing ones was central to improving the role of schools. An informant from IDI, Lemo Woreda, Central Ethiopia noted that:

*“Schools have established clubs responsible for monitoring the project’s effective use. In my opinion, these clubs should be further strengthened. As far as I know, a female student focal person is leading the club.”*

Others further emphasized the importance of providing regular training for school entities and building the capacity of gender clubs operating in WASH. See below a participant’s opinion in this regard:

*“We established a WASH club in our school to promote clean water, proper hygiene, and sanitation. The club disseminated its messages through school media in morning, afternoon, and evening sessions.”* (IDI, Sidama Region, Wondogenet Woreda,)

#### **3.4.1.2. Roles and Responsibilities of PTAs**

Many of the interview participants agreed that PTAs played a fundamental role in the initial stages of the school WASH projects. One of their primary functions was making decisions about funding for maintenance and repairs when issues arose. One of the informants stated:

*“PTAs are responsible for deciding on funds for maintenance if issues arise. Unlike other sectors, school funds aren't accessible just by submitting a letter. PTA members make a budget and take decisions in consultation with the Principal.”* (IDI, SWEP, Marimansa Woreda)

PTAs, as one of the main governing bodies in school management in school governance, are instrumental in steering the direction of the COWASH infrastructure, ensuring its alignment with the

school's overall objectives. In the early phases, PTAs also provided valuable guidance on the design and implementation of sanitation and water infrastructure. They also helped in the mobilization of resources, such as raw materials, labor, and financial contributions from parents. This active PTA involvement enabled the programme to get off the ground with adequate planning, funding, and community support. Another excerpt quoted below explains this. The informant stated:

*“PTAs are the highest bodies in the leadership and governance of schools. Every activity in schools pass through their say and involvement. The roles of the PTAs in the overall school activities including management of COWASH facilities are of paramount importance. PTAs attend the training and they play a role in leading according to the programme implementation policy. Particularly, PTAs are strong in controlling proper school resources utilization.”* (IDI, Tigray Region, Ahferom Woreda).

PTAs played a crucial role in supporting schools by community mobilization for resources like raw materials, finances, and labor. They also provided essential backing to school clubs, ensuring technical follow-up and proper maintenance. While they may not have directly offered labor, their assistance in overseeing tasks and facilitating support ensured smooth operations and sustained growth for the school community. They highly contributed to the COWASH Project's implementation, operation, and maintenance. See below for a confirmation taken from the study participant: A discussant stated,

*“For instance, during the rainy season, we faced challenges transporting stones to the project site due to inaccessible roads. The community stepped in to transport the stones without any payment, showing their commitment to supporting these projects.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Fofa Woreda)

In addition, many informants further narrated the role of the PTA in the operation and maintenance of school WASH facilities. Once the school projects are constructed, PTAs are heavily involved in the operation and ongoing maintenance of water and sanitation facilities. They take on the responsibility of overseeing the quality and functionality of toilets, water facilities, and other infrastructure. This includes checking for any faults or damage that may arise due to misuse or wear and tear. PTA members often volunteer their labour to assist with minor repairs, ensuring that the systems remain operational and safe for students. An informant, as shown below, was quoted stating:

*“PTA members still volunteer their labour and actively decide on operational matters. The PTA also oversees management, with the principal as a committee member. They address issues such as instances where we need to assess any faults in project work* (IDI, SWEP Marimansa Woreda,)

However, not all PTA members are equally involved in the oversight process. Some members actively monitor the facilities, regularly inspecting the quality of toilets and water facilities, and ensuring that they meet the standards of cleanliness and functionality. Unfortunately, some members attend meetings but do not engage in the actual monitoring or maintenance tasks, which can hinder the overall effectiveness of the PTA in ensuring consistent upkeep. An informant remarked:



*“Some actively monitor the quality of toilets, water facilities, and other infrastructure. However, some members only attend meetings without regularly overseeing the projects, which limits their effectiveness.”* (IDI, Oromia region, Kersa Woreda)

Concerning management and governance of school WASH infrastructure, the PTA oversees the overall management of resources, ensuring that funds allocated for water and sanitation are utilized appropriately. PTAs, together with the school principal, ensure that the COWASH facilities are well-maintained and that students are aware of the hygiene practices needed to keep the facilities in good condition. Through regular meetings, PTAs help foster a sense of ownership over communal resources. Under the COWASH project, PTAs have become more involved in decision-making and are encouraged to take the initiative to ensure the hygiene and functionality of the school’s water and sanitation infrastructure. Their involvement goes beyond overseeing physical infrastructure; they also support the behavioural change needed to encourage proper toilet and water usage among students. This is particularly important in ensuring that hygiene practices are consistently followed. An informant had this to say:

*“PTAs played a significant role in managing water, providing necessary materials, following up on their children's participation in WASH activities, and maintaining the hygiene of the school.”* (IDI, Tigray region, Adiet Woreda).

In addition, the PTA actively addresses school issues, such as replacing a missing toilet door or repairing damaged water facilities. By mobilizing resources and coordinating with experts, they ensure the school environment remains functional, safe, and conducive to learning for all students. An informant summarized this as follows:

*“For example, if there’s an issue with latrines, like a stolen door, they work to retrieve it. If water facilities are damaged by students, they call plumbers to repair.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Lemo Woreda,)

Despite their significant role, some challenges hinder the full effectiveness of PTAs in the management of the school WASH facilities. One major issue is the lack of familiarity with the programme's objectives and requirements. Some PTA members, especially those who are newer to the group, may require clarification on minor decisions, which can slow down decision-making and implementation. However, training programmes such as COWASH training have been beneficial in enhancing the PTA’s participation and understanding of the programme, leading to more active and informed involvement. An informant stated this further as below:

*“PTAs did not fully play their roles effectively because they lack familiarity with the work and awareness of what’s needed. They sometimes ask for clarification on minor decisions, but COWASH*

*training has helped PTAs participate more fully. Under the COWASH Programme, PTAs feel a sense of ownership over communal resources.*” (IDI, SWEP).

Moreover, informants across interviews raised a lack of broader community engagement as another challenge. While PTAs are critical in ensuring that the school’s water and sanitation needs are met, their effectiveness is limited if they do not engage other staff members or community members. Building awareness and encouraging participation across the wider school and local community is essential for the long-term sustainability of the COWASH Programme. PTAs must work to create a shared understanding of the importance of the programme, involving not only parents but also teachers, students, and other community stakeholders. An Informant stated:

*“There should be awareness to encourage participation. I see individuals missing meetings, and it isn’t enough to rely solely on PTA members; awareness-raising sessions should extend to other staff members for a shared understanding of important tasks.* (IDI, SWEP, Marimansa Woreda)

Furthermore, in some areas like the Sidama region, the interview participants witnessed that they have a lack of confidence that the PTA is playing their role. Some actively monitor the quality of toilets, water facilities, and other infrastructure. However, there are also members who only attend meetings without regularly overseeing the projects, which limits their effectiveness. This indicates that PTAs must take accountability, implement strategies to promote proper usage and ensure regular upkeep to maintain hygiene standards and provide a safe, healthy environment for students. An informant stated,

*“I cannot confidently say it is fully effective. For instance, some toilets are improperly used, leading to poor maintenance and cleanliness. This indicates a need for corrective measures, and schools must take responsibility for addressing these issues.”* (IDI, Sidama Region, Wondogenet Woreda)

Another informant added:

*“We cannot say that PTAs and CHCs are playing their role within their localities in the cases of implementing and managing institutional WASH facilities.”* (IDI, Amhara Region).

Many participants openly raised their views on measures to improve the role of PTAs in school WASH facilities. In some instances, they shared their perspectives that the PTA lacked the capacity, which could improve if schools generated internal income. The most predominantly suggested measures to improve the technical capacity of PTAs and woreda-level actors are regular training on how to use the allocated budget, evaluate the projects, and prepare bids without violating government rules. An informant from Central Ethiopia remarked that:

*“Providing them with sufficient training. Following these training sessions, continuous monitoring and evaluation support is crucial to reinforce learning and tracking progress.”* (Central Ethiopia, IDI)

The other key informants from Benishangul-Gumuz also mentioned that participating in PTAs at the planning stage and solving budget constraints can improve their roles. This excerpt explains this further:

*“Addressing the budget shortage is critical. WASH institutions should provide financial support to maintain water facilities.”* (IDI, Benishangul-Gumuz, Bambasi Woreda,)

Other informants suggested that PTAs should be established as a working committee, not as a supportive entity. They should collaborate more actively, especially in addressing problems. However, their function has ceased now because of budget shortage. An informant stated:

*“Previously, the PTA helped with maintenance when latrines were not functioning. However, due to limitations, they now assist only as much as they can.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia)

Generally, PTAs are integral to the implementation, operation, maintenance, and management of the School WASH facilities financed by the COWASH project. Their leadership in budgeting, decision-making, and overseeing infrastructure helped ensure the programme’s success. However, the effectiveness of the PTAs is contingent on continuous training, broader community engagement, and consistent participation from all members to maintain the systems and promote good hygienic practices among students.

#### **3.4.1.3 Effectiveness of School WASH Facilities in terms of Operation, Management and Sustainability**

According to the diverse opinions raised by interview participants, the effectiveness of school WASH facilities, in terms of operation, management, and sustainability, is significantly enhanced through the WMP approach, which is underpinned by strong woreda management, effective coordination, and continuous supervision. One of the interview participants from the Central Ethiopia region noted,

*“District management ensures sustained supervision and strong oversight. It helps to address awareness gaps at the community level, making long-term progress possible.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Geta Woreda,)

In addition, other informants further stated that woreda management plays a crucial role in facilitating long-term progress. Collaboration with financial offices, the water bureau, and dedicated contractors enhances the success of projects. For example, one of the respondents from Fofa Woreda openly shared the existence of a multisectoral collaborative approach: “ We work closely with finance offices, the water bureau, and responsible professionals. The contractors also show dedication to their tasks” (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Fofa Woreda).

Moreover, one of the key strengths of the WMP approach is its focus on improved project handling and maintenance. Positive changes in attitudes and practices at the local level indicate the programme's growing effectiveness. Regular budget reviews and task assessments help ensure that resources are used efficiently, with corrective actions taken when misalignments occur. This has also been mentioned as a driving factor for the effectiveness of school WASH through this approach. This is demonstrated by interview participants from Kersa Woreda, Oromia Region:

*“Yes, it is effective. Budget usage across sectors is reviewed, and tasks are assessed. If misalignment occurs, corrective measures are taken.”*

Furthermore, informants elaborated that continuous monitoring, coupled with accountability, ensures the sustainability and proper management of projects. Local management is a significant advantage, enabling prompt decision-making and streamlined execution. Delays are swiftly addressed by the woreda committee, and material procurement is expedited, ensuring timely project completion. In addition, participants from the Benishangul-Gumuz RSU also added:

*“WMP approach requires continuous monitoring and accountability by authorities to ensure sustainability and proper management.”*

However, challenges such as community ownership of the facilities and the need for ongoing joint monitoring and evaluation remain as challenges. Additionally, for larger projects, the complexity of financial and procurement processes necessitates institutional leadership. For instance, one of the interview participants from the Oromia region stated:

*“For big schemes, the WMP approach is good because the financial management system, procurement process and community financial management are difficult so it must be led by the institution.”*

“The WMP approach demonstrates clear success through local-driven management, efficient resource use, and sustainable project implementation. Respondents from the Tigray region stated:

*“Overall implementation performance is good, but there is a limitation on what the community should contribute to ensure ownership of the facilities, continuous joint monitoring and evaluation.” (IDI, Tigray Region)*

#### **3.4.1.4. Major Challenges in Using the WMP Approach to Implement the School WASH Facilities**

A sufficient number of informants shared their perspectives from diverse regions regarding major challenges in using the WMP approach to implement school WASH facilities. Budget delays and tender issues were mentioned as obstacles. Specifically, delayed budget releases have halted necessary training, hindered the smooth execution of the programme and prevented timely supervision and support of the programme. Many key stakeholders, including PTA members, are new to their roles,

making it difficult to navigate these challenges without sufficient resources or training. An informant from Central Ethiopia, Geta Woreda said:

*“The main challenges are tender delays and budget issues. Financial delays hinder timely execution and cause difficulties in accessing sites during the rainy season.”*

In addition to budget issues, several technical challenges have emerged in the field. Among these is a budget limitation that hinders the ability to effectively supervise and support the WASH programme. The budget has not yet been released, preventing the conducting of necessary training. The COWASH Programme through the WMP approach, while focusing primarily on water, has been criticized for not giving equal attention to latrines. An informant stated:

*“The COWASH Programme mainly focuses on rural community water supply issues, but giving equal attention to sanitation and hygiene facilities would be beneficial.”* (IDI, Oromia region, Goba Woreda)

Participants have pointed out that including hand pumps in addition to hand-dug wells would improve the overall outcomes of the programme. This concern is especially pertinent in areas with deep water tables, where accessing water can be difficult and resource relocation becomes challenging. The lack of hand pumps in many schools and *kebeles* further exacerbates this issue. An informant stated,

*“In many places, the water table is too deep, and relocating resources is challenging. A major issue is the lack of hand pumps in many schools and kebeles.”* (IDI, Oromia region, Goba Woreda)

The institutional WASH through WMP also faces obstacles related to community involvement and the management of funding. Many participants emphasized the importance of securing early community engagement and ensuring adequate funding before the project's launch. However, complications arise due to inflation, rising material costs, and complicated financial processes, which delay progress. One suggestion was to have a government-supervised construction office handle these processes to streamline operations. An informant said:

*“The main challenges include securing early community involvement and funding before the project launch, as well as managing funding during implementation. The bid and financial processes are complicated by inflation and rising material costs. It would be helpful if a government-supervised construction office handled these processes. Additionally, the COWASH Programme focuses on hand-dug wells, which aren't suitable for schools and health posts.”* (IDI, Oromia, Goba Woreda)

Another informant from the SWEP Region added that WMP is considered very costly as compared to the CMP approach:

*“Woreda-managed projects, in contrast, require higher logistical costs and are less efficient due to the need for frequent travel and support from distant offices.”* (IDI, SWEP Region Water and Energy Bureau,)

Moreover, a lack of ownership by the community and students is a recurring problem. If the community does not take responsibility for maintaining the facilities, such as toilets and water sources, these essential resources can quickly fall into disrepair. A specific example was shared regarding latrines built by the WMP approach, which lacked on-site water access, forcing students to bring water from home, especially female students. A more comprehensive approach, including water provisions, is recommended to ensure the programme's sustainability and success. Overall, addressing these challenges requires timely financial support, community involvement, and a more holistic approach to water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure.

#### **3.4.1.5. Recommendations to Improve Community Ownership of Operation, Management, and Sustainability of School WASH Facilities**

Based on feedback from most respondents, it is recommended to enhance the role of PTAs in the implementation and management of school WASH programmes. Respondents expressed a strong preference for the CMP approach, which increases PTA engagement and decision-making involvement. This approach empowers PTAs to take a more active role in managing school WASH initiatives, ensuring better sustainability and ownership of the projects. By involving PTAs in decision-making processes, schools can benefit from increased community involvement, greater accountability, and improved maintenance of WASH facilities. The reintroduction of the CMP approach into the institutional WASH implementation would foster stronger collaboration between schools, parents, and communities, leading to more effective and lasting improvements in hygiene practices and infrastructure. It is therefore crucial to institutionalize this approach for greater impact in school WASH programmes.

One of the gaps identified in the assessment was the lack of early engagement of PTAs in the initial stages of the project and the continued capacitation of PTA members. Thus, the use of the CMP approach for institutional WASH paves the way for engaging PTAs at the start of programme implementation including decision-making and getting required capacity-building training.

The study participants elaborate that WMPs exhibit significant limitations compared to CMPs. They noted that CMPs operate with greater cost-efficiency, reducing financial wastage and fostering a strong sense of ownership among community members. In contrast, the participants describe the WMP approach as follows:

*“In my opinion, WMPs don’t have strengths when compared to CMPs. CMPs operates at lower costs, minimizing cash wastage, and communities develop a sense of ownership. In contrast, the WMPs did not achieve similar results.”* (IDI, Oromia, Woreda Health office)

In addition, a respondent from SWEP added:



*“WMPs, require higher logistical costs and are less efficient due to the need for frequent travel and support from distant offices” (IDI, SWEP Region)*

Therefore, using the CMP approach for school WASH constructions, the project budget could be used efficiently, which will provide opportunities for more school WASH facility constructions. However, the use of the CMP approach for institutional WASH is not immune from challenges, especially while running big construction initiatives at schools and health institutions. A respondent from Oromia for example said:

*“For big schemes, the WMP approach is good because the financial management system, procurement process and community financial management are difficult so it must be led by the institution.” (IDI, Oromia Region, Goba Woreda Health Office).*

Therefore, to minimize, such challenges, PTAs should be capacitated to the required level; moreover, the technical collaboration between Woreda offices and school PTAs should be strengthened further.

According to most informants' views, the existence of devoted school WASH clubs plays a crucial role in promoting WASH projects by raising awareness, educating students, and ensuring the maintenance of hygiene facilities. Further, they witnessed that WASH clubs are responsible for fostering positive hygiene behaviour, organizing activities, and leading efforts to maintain clean and safe school environments. To improve the implementation, operation, and management of school WASH, it's recommended that schools establish dedicated WASH clubs. These clubs should be institutionalized, with students receiving regular training on cleanliness, particularly during flag-raising ceremonies, to promote hygiene awareness and responsibility. Another informant also stated that establishing strong school WASH clubs means that we are working at each household, community, and country level:

*“Schools should institutionalize clubs focused on improving these services. After establishing these clubs, students should receive training on cleanliness, such as during the flag-raising ceremonies.” (IDI, SWEP, Marimansa Woreda)*

Participants raised several key recommendations. Focusing on changing students' mindsets and raising awareness is essential. Encouraging students to adopt a positive attitude toward cleanliness will have a direct impact on maintaining a hygienic school environment. When students value cleanliness, they are more likely to keep the facilities clean and encourage others to do the same, thus ensuring the sustainability of WASH initiatives.

A significant concern raised among informants is the lack of sufficient sanitary pad changing rooms. While some schools have started to receive these facilities, only a few schools have been equipped so far. To address this gap, it is recommended to expand both the number of schools receiving these



facilities and the budget allocated for their construction. This would ensure that all students, particularly girls, have access to adequate hygiene facilities, which is crucial for their health and dignity.

Strengthening follow-up and monitoring is also highlighted as an important aspect of improving the Operation and Maintenance of school WASH. Regular follow-ups can ensure that projects remain functional and that any issues are addressed promptly. Commitment and collaboration among stakeholders are emphasized as vital for better outcomes. Currently, efforts are often carried out individually, but greater cooperation between the government, schools, and the community is essential for achieving long-term success. An informant stated:

*“Commitment and collaboration are essential. Until now, we have been working individually, but for better outcomes, cooperation is crucial.”* (Bambasi Woreda, Benishangul-Gumuz region)

Another recommendation is strengthening the involvement of local investors in school WASH. An informant also stated,

*“Engaging the community and seeking contributions from investors would help the school build clean water systems and latrine facilities. With stakeholder support, improvements can be achieved.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Geta Woreda Education office).

Given the insufficient and declining government budget, it is critical to explore alternative solutions and prioritize the upgrade of water infrastructure to meet the growing demand. Finally, it is crucial that the community takes ownership of the facilities. Repeated awareness-raising efforts are needed, as the community can be slow to embrace new projects. Ensuring that everyone understands the value of these facilities will help in their long-term care and sustainability.

### ***3.4.2. Implementation, Operation, and Management of Health WASH Facilities Using the WMP Approach***

#### **3.4.2.1. Roles and Responsibilities of Health Facilities**

Health institutions play an essential role in the successful implementation, operation, and management of WASH programmes, particularly within health facilities. From the initial stages, health facilities are critical in identifying sanitation and hygiene issues and planning for their resolution. They are responsible for ensuring that water infrastructures are properly maintained and used, as well as educating the community on the importance of maintaining hygiene. This responsibility extends to guiding communities on how to manage water points effectively, appointing guards for protection, and ensuring that financial mechanisms, such as monthly cash collections, are in place for ongoing upkeep. An Informant stated:

*“Communities must be sensitized to use water points responsibly, and guards should be assigned to manage them effectively. Monthly cash collection for maintenance is also crucial for sustainability. Collaboration between institutions and communities is key.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia, Kuchalfa Woreda).

A key aspect of health institutions' roles is their ability to collaborate with the community and other stakeholders to improve sanitation. For instance, health facilities are often involved in raising awareness about proper sanitation practices, such as handwashing, and they provide alternatives when resources like soap are scarce. These institutions also play an integral part in the promotion of materials for sanitation, like locally produced concrete slabs for latrines, which not only address local needs but also generate employment opportunities for local youth. Such initiatives exemplify how health facilities contribute to both public health and local economic development. An informant stated,

*“Yes, health institutions have played a critical role. For instance, in our initiatives, we use plastic slabs sourced from the region and locally produced concrete slabs with regional support for cement, steel, and sand. This approach addresses local sanitation needs while creating jobs for 12 youths organized into a sanitation market association.”* (Marimansa and Bambasi Woreda, SWEP and Benishangul Gumuz regions respectively)

Moreover, health institutions ensure the sustainability of these COWASH projects by fostering a sense of ownership among all stakeholders. They promote a "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" approach, encouraging all involved parties to take responsibility for the upkeep of facilities. This ownership is crucial for the long-term success of water schemes and sanitation projects, as it prevents misuse or neglect.

According to the opinions of many informants, health institutions actively participate in training community members to manage these facilities, though they acknowledge that their efforts may not always yield the same level of ownership as in community-managed projects. An informant stated:

*“Health institutions and schools don’t make direct cash or labor contributions. However, since we use the WMP approach, we provide them with awareness training from the beginning. This training helps them manage the project, but they still don’t have the same sense of ownership as in community-managed projects.”* (Oromia region, Goba Woreda).

Participants from diverse regions stressed that to improve the roles of health institutions in WASH management, several measures can be adopted. First, health institutions should continue to enhance their involvement in training and educating communities on hygiene and sanitation practices. This training ensures that local leaders and residents are equipped to manage WASH systems effectively. Second, health institutions should strengthen their collaboration with other local organizations and partners, particularly at the Woreda or regional level, to ensure better coordination and prioritize WASH issues. Lastly, fostering stronger community engagement and ownership through continuous

follow-ups, sensitization campaigns, and evaluations will help improve the sustainability of health facility-managed WASH systems and prevent facility degradation. An informant stated:

*“Collaborative efforts include community sensitization, continuous follow-ups, and evaluations to ensure effectiveness.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia, Kucha Alfa Woreda Health Office).

By enhancing these measures, health institutions can play a more proactive and enduring role in the successful management of water and sanitation programmes, ultimately improving public health outcomes and community well-being.

#### **3.4.2.2. Roles and Responsibilities of CHCs**

Participants from various regions highlighted the critical role of CHCs in the implementation and operation of health facility WASH projects. These committees are deeply involved throughout all phases of a project, from planning and overseeing progress to the actual operation and ongoing management of health facilities WASH. As essential community stakeholders, CHCs help ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these projects by taking ownership of their responsibilities. One informant noted that CHCs play an integral part in project success by being actively involved from conceptualization to implementation, operation, and continuous management. Their leadership and oversight at every stage enable better community engagement and ownership, which are vital for long-term sustainability. An informant stated:

*“Community health committees are involved from the planning phase, overseeing work progress, and facilitating success by taking ownership throughout all stages from concept to implementation, operation, and ongoing management.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Geta Woreda).

The central belief in CHCs’ ability to play their role effectively is strong. Many key informants emphasized that the committees, through their leadership, actively contribute to community mobilization, and raising awareness about hygiene, sanitation, and waste management. An informant stated:

*“CHCs significantly contribute by raising awareness about hygiene, sanitation, and waste management. They also manage budgets allocated for WASH projects and mobilize communities for maintenance activities.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia, Kuchalfa Woreda).

In addition, a strong sense of ownership is central to their success, where the committee members receive various training sessions, equipping them with the skills needed to sustain and manage projects effectively. CHCs also take responsibility for maintaining WASH facilities, such as latrines and water sources, ensuring that these resources are protected from pollution and are kept functional. This level of responsibility helps ensure that health facilities remain operational and accessible, ultimately contributing to a reduction in waterborne diseases. An informant witnessed:

*"CHCs protect water and latrines from pollution. They educate the community on cleaning their surroundings and maintaining WASH facilities. For example, they ensure that latrines built by COWASH are protected and maintained."* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz region, Bambasi Woreda).

However, the informants also highlighted several measures that could improve the roles of CHCs in managing WASH projects. One critical recommendation was for CHCs to be officially granted ownership of health facilities, a move that would further enhance their ability to manage and maintain them. Official ownership would ensure that the committees have the authority and accountability necessary for the long-term sustainability of the projects. An informant stated:

*"To enhance CHCs' roles in implementing and managing health facilities, ownership of the facilities should be officially granted to them, ensuring long-term sustainability."* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Region Geta Woreda Health Office).

Another significant measure suggested was the allocation of continuous follow-up and support, including providing adequate budgets for monitoring and maintenance activities. While CHCs contribute greatly, the informants stressed the need for sustained financial and technical support to address gaps in their capabilities, particularly in areas such as thorough water source exploration and damage repair to facilities. Key informants' views from Lemo Woreda supported this and stated:

*"They need continuous follow-up and support; so, it would be better if a budget is allocated and continuous follow-ups and support must be given to them."* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Lemo Woreda).

To further enhance the effectiveness of CHCs, the informants emphasized the importance of strengthening supervision and improving community buy-in. A regular, structured follow-up system is necessary to monitor the progress of the committees' work and to address any challenges they encounter. Increased supervision can also ensure that CHCs are held accountable for their roles, making them more committed to delivering sustainable outcomes. Additionally, the committees' involvement in regular training sessions helps them build their capacity and address knowledge gaps. However, some informants noted that while training is helpful, it is often insufficient when it comes to providing the technical knowledge required for complex tasks like water source exploration.

The role of CHCs in managing and overseeing WASH facilities is already significant. They educate the community about hygiene practices, prevent disease transmission, and play a vital role in maintaining water sources and latrines. For example, CHCs ensure that latrines constructed by initiatives like COWASH are properly maintained and protected from contamination. Their efforts go beyond basic maintenance; they also work to raise awareness about proper sanitation practices, which can reduce health risks in their communities. One informant highlighted that the CHCs actively manage WASH projects and work hand-in-hand with health offices to select sites for these facilities, ensuring that they are located in areas where they are most needed.

Despite these successes, there are still challenges. The informants pointed out that gaps in funding and support hinder the ability of CHCs to fully meet their responsibilities. There is often a lack of sufficient follow-up, which can affect the progress of ongoing projects. One informant expressed concern that without adequate monitoring, there may be doubts about the proper implementation of WASH projects. Furthermore, while committees are responsible for managing the projects, the need for more comprehensive planning and regular meetings was highlighted as crucial for ensuring that all tasks are completed effectively. In conclusion, the key informants strongly believe that CHCs are central to the success and sustainability of WASH projects. They play a significant role in community health promotion, raising awareness, and maintaining essential sanitation facilities. However, to maximize their effectiveness, CHCs must receive continuous support, appropriate training, and official ownership of the facilities they manage. Strengthening supervision, increasing community involvement, and addressing technical and financial gaps will help ensure the long-term success of these initiatives.

#### **3.4.2.3. Effectiveness of Health Facility WASH in Terms of Operation, Management, and Sustainability**

The effectiveness of health facilities' WASH initiatives has been significantly enhanced through the WMP. It has brought about substantial improvements in hygiene and sanitation facilities across several health facilities. Notably, latrines in some health facilities now meet the required standards and are accessible to people with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity. The Skut Health Center in Geta Woreda, for instance, has nearly completed 95% of its sanitation facilities, including handwashing stations, reflecting a notable commitment to health and hygiene. An informant stated,

*“Latrine facilities, such as those in Qabul, Fuchare, and Sabola Kebeles, meet the required standards and are accessible to people with disabilities. For example, the Skut Health Center has completed about 95% of its hygiene and sanitation facilities, including handwashing stations.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Geta Woreda)

Participants also stated that COWASH has effectively transferred ownership of the WASH facilities to all levels of authorities which is one of the critical factors contributing to the success of these projects. This ownership extends across all levels, from regional authorities to local community members, promoting long-term commitment to the success of the project. The support from woreda-level authorities has also been instrumental in ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives. An informant stated:

*“This sense of ownership spans all levels, from regional authorities to the COWASH board, and contributes to long-term sustainability.”* (IDI, Sidama Region, Chirone Woreda).

Although challenges persist, particularly around resource availability, the COWASH project through the WMP approach has shown progress in organizing, directing, and monitoring efforts. This approach has proven effective in improving sanitation and water supply in over seven health centres. The overall impact of the project on public health, sanitation, and water accessibility demonstrates the effectiveness of a well-managed, community-driven WASH programme. However, further improvements in resource availability could enhance its overall impact, allowing for more widespread and sustained benefits.

#### **3.4.2.4. Major Challenges in Using the WMP Approach for Health Facilities' WASH**

According to informants from diverse regions, the use of the WMP approach for health facility WASH project implementation faces several significant challenges, primarily revolving around budget limitations and a lack of community involvement. One of the most pressing issues is the insufficient availability of matching funds, which has led to delays or abandonment of important tasks. An informant noted that *“the tasks we were following have been aborted because of the matching fund”*

which highlights how financial constraints can hinder progress. This lack of funds is especially problematic when trying to evaluate the success of WMP projects, as there is no adequate budget for regular monitoring or assessment. The absence of resources for follow-up activities prevents a thorough evaluation of whether the projects are being properly implemented or maintained. An informant said:

*“The first one (the CMP approach) was good but now as I have told you, there are gaps to go there and evaluate what is happening; the greater obstacle to evaluating whether the project is being implemented as plan is the issue of matching funds.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Lemo Woreda)

Another key concern raised by informants is the quality and sustainability of WMP projects. Contractors, driven by profit motives, often prioritize completing the work quickly over ensuring the longevity and quality of the facilities. An informant pointed out:

*“Contractors focus on profit, and there is no oversight of the quality or cleanliness of the facilities. This poses challenge to the durability of facilities.”* (IDI, Sidama region, Chirone Woreda).

Without proper oversight, the WMP approach fails to guarantee that the constructed facilities will endure or remain functional for long, compromising the sustainability of health facility WASH initiatives. Furthermore, ensuring community involvement is another challenge. Many health facility projects suffer from limited consultation with the local community regarding project locations or the construction process. Authorities often do not involve the community in decision-making, which limits the sense of ownership and responsibility. The absence of community oversight and participation in the project also diminishes its effectiveness and long-term impact. An informant mentioned:



*“The primary challenge is the lack of community involvement. Authorities do not consult or inform the community about the project location or allow them to oversee the construction process.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia Region)

The high cost of toilet equipment is another obstacle, leading to delays in project completion. Contractors struggle to meet deadlines due to the high costs of necessary materials, such as toilet fixtures and fittings. Similarly, the administrative burden at the woreda level, where officials like the Woreda Administrator are often occupied with other responsibilities, causing delays in decision-making and project implementation. Furthermore, although there is strong interest in WMP at the woreda level, the number of projects that can be implemented is restricted by the limited budget, constraining the ability to expand health facility coverage. An informant stated:

*“A major challenge is the high cost of toilet equipment, which has led to delays in project completion by contractors trying to meet deadlines.”* (IDI, Benishangul-Gumuz region, Bambasi Woreda,).

Finally, gaps in the budget are sometimes filled by the community, with the woreda providing some materials, such as cement and stone, while other materials, like sand, are supplied by local communities. This patchwork funding approach underscores the financial limitations that severely restrict the scope and efficiency of WMP-based health facility WASH projects.

#### **3.4.2.5. Recommendations to Improve Community Ownership of Operation, Management, and Sustainability of Health Facilities WASH**

Informants have shared several insightful recommendations for improving the implementation, operation, and management of health facility WASH programmes. A central theme is the need for increased community ownership alongside institutional oversight to ensure long-term sustainability. An informant from Geta Woreda, Central Ethiopia, emphasized that while communities should take ownership of improvements, institutions must retain ownership of the facilities to safeguard continued functionality and accountability:

*“Communities should maintain ownership of improvements, while institutions retain facility ownership to ensure sustainability.”*

Strengthening follow-up activities is another essential recommendation. Regular monitoring ensures that WASH initiatives are implemented correctly and helps identify issues early on, allowing for timely corrective actions. The importance of continuous health education also emerged as a key component. Informants stressed that the community’s limited knowledge of environmental sanitation, hygiene, and the cleanliness of water and toilets requires ongoing educational campaigns to improve health practices and outcomes. The role of health centres in allocating extra funds for sanitation and hygiene was also highlighted. Informants suggested that health centers should use revenue from services like medicine



sales to support hygiene and sanitation initiatives. This would provide additional resources for the necessary upkeep of facilities, ensuring they remain functional and hygienic. An informant remarked:

*“Health centers should allocate extra funds for sanitation and hygiene from revenue sources like medicine sales. They should also organize health campaigns across health posts.”* (IDI, Sidama region, Wondogenet Woreda)

Furthermore, a major issue raised is the need for water facilities to serve all rooms within health institutions, particularly critical areas like treatment, emergency, and laboratory rooms. Ensuring that all parts of a health facility have direct access to water is crucial for maintaining hygiene and preventing cross-contamination, particularly in high-risk areas. Some informants added that sharing health facility water points should be restricted:

*“Yes, in some cases, communities use water from health centers due to the lack of other options. This issue needs to be addressed.”* (IDI, South Ethiopia, Kuchalfa Woreda)

To address budget constraints, informants recommended that woreda governments allocate an initial budget for health facility WASH projects, supplemented by the COWASH budget. This combined funding approach would help expand coverage and mitigate financial gaps. Additionally, they suggested that woreda institutions collaborate more closely with health facilities to share resources, enhance capacity building, and organize sanitation campaigns that involve the community. An informant said:

*“However, the project budget has been shrinking over time, so it would be better if the programme continued. Increasing community engagement through woreda-level capacity-building training would be beneficial. It would also be helpful if the COWASH budget could be combined with community contributions.”* (IDI, Oromia Region, Kersa Woreda)

Lastly, expanding the scope of health facility WASH projects is believed to be crucial. Currently, some health units are left out of projects, and expanding coverage would address gaps and ensure that more communities benefit from improved sanitation and hygiene services. Furthermore, integrating new social affairs offices into the project could strengthen the initiative by addressing health, education, and women’s issues simultaneously.

To improve the operation, management, and sustainability of health facility WASH programmes, it is recommended to adopt the CMP approach, shifting away from the WMP approach. This model emphasizes community ownership while maintaining institutional oversight for accountability. By engaging CHCs in maintaining improvements, alongside health facilities’ responsibility for resource allocation, sustainability is enhanced.

Respondents from target regions repeatedly mentioned that budget constraint was a bigger bottleneck that has crippled the capacity of the CHCs to monitor project progress and quality. Thus, the use of the CMP approach could provide an opportunity for the committee to commit some of the budget for project monitoring and evaluations. For instance, a respondent from Central Ethiopia stated as follows:

*“The first one (the CMP approach) was good but now, there are gaps to go there and evaluate what is happening; the greater obstacle to evaluating whether the project is being implemented as plan is the issue of matching funds.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Lemo Woreda).

The assessment findings, however, revealed that the CHCs have been doing well; therefore, their capacity should be strengthened further for more profound impact on future project implementation.

### **3.5. COWASH Fund Flow and Financial Management at the Federal, Regional, and Woreda Levels**

#### **3.5.1. Fund Flow and Financial Management Transparency in COWASH IV Funds**

##### **3.5.1.1. Effectiveness of Fund Flow and Management of COWASH IV Funds**

The exploration of the flow of funds for the COWASH Programme presents a mixed picture with much of the findings suggesting delays. Participants from various regions stated that the management and flow of funds were generally effective as offices were disbursing funds promptly and ensuring they were used according to guidelines. For instance, an informant stated,

*“Our office collaborates closely with the WASH Bureau to ensure successful project implementation. We work to utilize the allocated funds effectively to meet the project goals without facing bureaucratic obstacles, enabling the project to continue operating in the area.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz, Bambasi Woreda).

The key informant interviewee from Oromia region, Kersa woreda finance office of attributes the success of funding of the COWASH to the self-managed procurement stating: *“A key difference with COWASH is their self-managed procurement. For example, they directly procure items like personal computers rather than sending a budget for procurement. Additionally, COWASH funds are strictly designated for specific projects, with no reallocation allowed, which has been an important lesson.”*

The absence of nepotism in the utilization of finance, adherence to established procedures and guidelines in managing COWASH funds, and many others have also been highlighted as contributors to effective financial management. An informant mentioned:

*“The CMP financial management is going very well. It is managed by the seven committee members themselves. It is free from nepotism and females are members of this committee.”* (IDI, Amhara Region, Finance Bureau)

Similarly, an informant from the Federal MoF underscored that there are no significant gaps or delays in the COWASH fund flow and financial management, as the office has been effectively transferring money and managing financial proceedings. This informant stated:

*“We have completely assigned or credited this year’s required money before the last year’s ended. The financial section puts the money in our account and we deliver it whenever there is a requirement and request from the working units.”*

“Despite this achievement, participants mentioned that delays in the funding of COWASH were attributed to different bodies, with some blaming the regions and others pointing to microfinance. More specifically, the budget transferred by the MoF was not fully distributed to each woreda by the Regional Government. This delay has been noted to affect project timelines each year.”

The delay in the delivery of COWASH funds is acknowledged by the MoF, which argues that the flow of funds takes time as the request goes from the MoF to the Finland Embassy, accompanied by an explanation of the work. This occurs because all regions must submit their funding requests to the ministry. While some regions request funds early, others with a large number of woredas request them late, which seems to penalize those regions which file requests early. Due to these delays, when the money reaches the community, inflation and hard currency issues arise.

Interviewees from the finance offices of Bambasi Woreda of Benishangul Gumuz and Goba Woreda of Oromia regional states mentioned attempts to bypass financial regulations in accessing funds and transparency gaps in COWASH from the finance offices of various regions.

### **3.5.1.2 Financial Monitoring Mechanisms of COWASH IV Funds**

It was learned from the interviews made with different personnel at different capacities in the governance and management of COWASH funds that there are mechanisms put in place to monitor the financial flow of COWASH funds. Most participants from the Woreda-level office noted that the financial management, auditing, and documentation are generally in good standing. An informant stated:

*“For budgetary matters, we don’t display the figures publicly like other financial sectors, but we do present them to the Woreda WASH Team. This budget is reviewed by focal persons from various sectors. There are seven concerned sectors, and each one’s focal person comes in, and we discuss the annual budget.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz region, Bambasi Woreda).

Referring to the goal of the financial monitoring, the participant underscores that the finance office does not directly allocate funds for sanitation projects. Instead, it approves funds upon request from the WASH sector and monitors fund usage to ensure intended goals are met. They indicated that the planning and budget team monitors ongoing projects and presents reports to the office, which are then reviewed by the internal plan and budget team, financial administration, and finance teams. An informant stated:

*“Our roles include handling budgets, making payments, and monitoring project progress. For instance, if the second round of payments is scheduled but the project lags, we may halt payment until progress improves, in collaboration with the project and Woreda committees.”* (IDI, Oromia Region, Kersa Woreda).

Participants from various regions mentioned that there are internal and external audits of financial usage, with an appeal for more attention to be given to community-level audits. Auditors are present at the regional, zonal, and woreda levels. Additionally, it was noted that there is supervision and follow-up at each term or phase to track how funds are used by different sectors to meet their objectives. They also noted that there are financial monitoring activities at the regional level, where a bidding committee and an approval committee oversee the process regularly. Additionally, they mentioned that the management is solid, with no significant issues except for occasional challenges with budget and cost estimation.

Most participants mentioned financial monitoring through reports. Financial and physical reports are prepared and evaluated in phases by financial personnel, ensuring alignment with planned activities and transparency in fund usage. This system is implemented through a finance structure from regional to woreda levels, with focal persons communicating via phone calls and submitting reports on time. Through this mechanism, they perform reconciliation of financial report documents.

The participant from the MoF stated that the allocated funds for COWASH projects are used transparently. The Ministry assesses the work through consistent discussions with all regional support units. Additionally, the Ministry conducts detailed investigations and discussions on how the funds are allocated. An informant stated:

*“Our team checks upon it in addition to Finland's personnel who audit the financial aspects of the works. It is they who go down to the low-level working units to make sure the money is spent in a required and planned way.”* (IDI, Ministry of Finance)

### 3.5.1.3. Recommendations for Improvement of the Fund Flow and Financial Management of COWASH IV Funds

Participants from finance offices at various levels mentioned several recommendations to improve the fund flow and financial management of COWASH IV funds, such as the direct allocation of funds from the federal ministry to the woredas. Direct federal engagement with woreda finance offices would ensure budget sufficiency and effectiveness in completing various tasks. Additionally, a streamlined receipt issuance system would help document contributions and ensure lawful spending. An informant stated:

*“I recommend that the Federal Government directly transfers budgets to the woreda level. Currently, the regional administration sometimes withholds parts of the budget, complicating project completion. When we raise concerns about this with the regional administration, they often do not respond.”* (IDI, Benishangul Gumuz region, Bambasi Woreda).

Participants from the Bureaus of Finance of Amhara and Benishangul Regional States recommended using the channel two approach. The interviewee from the Amhara regional Bureau of Finance explains that this channel of funding allows for the Finnish Government to directly disburse the budget to regions, shortening the funding process. Additionally, they suggested increasing the Finnish funding, along with matching funds contributed by communities, while ensuring that zones and woredas submit funds on time. An informant stated,

*“For instance, the Finnish government currently covers about 30-40%, so to address the gap created by the limited capacity of the woredas, we would request an increase in that percentage”.*

On the other hand, participants from the Finance Bureau of different regions such as the SWEP Region, forwarded several useful recommendations as follows:

1. Facilitating experience-sharing programmes to learn from other regions supported by the Finnish government, particularly on effective water project management and financial practices.
2. Assigning dedicated financial personnel at the regional finance bureau to enhance efficiency.
3. Ensuring that matching funds are consistently available to prevent delays.
4. Allocating investment funds directly for their intended purposes to streamline financial processes.
5. Considering contributing to construction of community water supply scheme on the part of the Finnish government.

A participant from the MoWE stated that the fund flow should go through the MoWE with support from the FTAT and that the rules should be dictated by the MoWE, not the MoF. They emphasized the need to transition from a bilateral project to a multilateral trust fund, with different countries

contributing funding, matching funds from the regions, doubling the number of water points, and increasing the number of regions involved.

### ***3.5.2. Fund Flow and Financial Management in the Implementation of Community Water Schemes Using the CMP Approach***

#### **3.5.2.1. Partnership between the Bureau of Finance, Woreda Office of Finance and WASHCOs**

Study participants suggested that the partnership between the Bureau of Finance, Woreda Office of Finance, and WASHCOs was effective, along with strong collaboration and a good working relationship between the Bureau of Finance at the regional level which contributed to the successful financial management. They underscored that the community benefits from this positive relationship, as both parties meet to decide on budget allocations and the necessary actions. An informant stated:

*“Our office collaborates closely with the WASH Bureau to ensure successful project implementation. We work to utilize the allocated funds effectively to meet the project goals without facing bureaucratic obstacles, enabling the project to continue operating in the area.”* (Benishangul Gumuz Region, Bambasi Woreda Finance office).

These findings align with the views of participants from the Finance Bureau of Central Ethiopia Region who stated:

*“The partnership has been very effective because we receive the funds directly from the MoF, which has resulted in a high level of effectiveness at the woreda level.”*

#### **3.5.2.2. Effectiveness of Using Banks and MFIs as Financing Systems for Water Scheme Implementation**

Study participants stated that the efficient functioning of banks and collaboration with them was mentioned as a success factor in effective fund flow. An informant stated:

*“With regard to banking, Siinqee Bank processes payments for water system construction and other projects, and our community saves money with this bank to facilitate COWASH project implementation. If funds are transferred to the Commercial Bank, the community also uses this bank, benefiting from both institutions without any challenges.”* (IDI, Oromia Region Kersa Woreda).

Informants underscored the importance of depositing funds with microfinance institutions and collaborating with banks and MFIs whenever relevant woreda authorities assign specific tasks. They also highlighted the positive contribution of banks in ensuring the smooth flow of COWASH funds and the effective functioning of water schemes. An informant stated:

*“We have two primary sources of funds: regular funds through the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and community contributions via Siinqee Bank.”* (Oromia Region, Goba Woreda).

Despite the suggestions above, participants mentioned that the delayed release of COWASH funds by microfinance institutions is a factor in the ineffectiveness of their involvement. An informant stated:

*“Once they receive the money, they use it for other activities, like lending it out to their customers. So, when we needed funds to purchase building materials, their account was often empty.”* (IDI, SWEP, Marmansa Woreda Finance Office)

### **3.5.2.3. Effectiveness of Using WASHCOs to Manage the Funds/Budget for Water Scheme Implementation**

Members of WASHCOs have been instrumental in funding COWASH projects by collecting money from the community and managing to cover maintenance costs. A discussant stated:

*“I am the treasurer of the water committee. Each day, I collect the cash from water services, record the date and amount, and deposit it monthly in the bank. Withdrawals require the chairman, secretary, and myself. We don’t ask the community for additional contributions, as fees are charged for water usage and they cover maintenance costs as well. Currently, we charge one birr per 20 liters.”* (FGD, Oromia, Kersa Woreda, Babo Kebele).

There are practices of providing training to members of WASHCOs for effective fund management. The Goba Woreda Water and Energy Office focal person asserts that each committee in the Woreda receives training on various topics, including financial management. This has significantly strengthened the committees. An informant stated:

*“Currently, WASHCO members are receiving training that covers everything from project management to technical skills, ensuring that the committee has the awareness and expertise needed to manage projects effectively. Additionally, the water and finance offices provide technical support as needed, which equips the committee to execute projects successfully.”*

Participants from finance offices at various levels mentioned the importance of the roles played in the management of COWASH finances, highlighting the discussions between WASHCOs and relevant stakeholders to plan where facilities are most needed, prioritizing based on water scarcity and disease prevalence. After budget allocation and thorough discussions, they proceed with implementation.

Despite their role, issues have been raised in some areas regarding the effectiveness of WASHCOs in financial management due to their limited skills. These include bureaucratic challenges in the banking sector during fund transfers, difficulty understanding procedures for those from rural areas, and a



perceived low level of financial management literacy among WASHCO members. An informant stated:

*“Most WASHCO members are farmers from the community, and they face challenges in understanding financial and operational aspects. They often struggle with using the funds correctly, managing water resources, and organizing labour effectively. Without training, they find it difficult to carry out their tasks effectively, so they need consistent support.”* (IDI, Marimansa Woreda of SWEP)

### **3.5.3. Fund Flow and Financial Management in the Implementation of Institutional WASH Facilities Using WMP**

#### **3.5.3.1. The Partnership Between the Woreda Sector Office in Managing COWASH IV Funds**

The woreda offices that have been mandated to manage the COWASH IV project were working in partnership to utilize the funds allocated for each office. According to the interviewees from Central Ethiopia and Sidama Regions, there were strong partnerships among the woreda finance, education, water, and health offices. The fund allocated to each office was released immediately upon request. It has also been stated:

*“In the woreda, latrines were successfully constructed, and the budget was used as planned. The successful outcomes reflect the strength of our partnership with the various offices of woreda and COWASH, ensuring efficient and impactful project execution.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia, Geta Woreda Finance Office).

An informant from the Finance Office of Benishangul Gumuz Region advised that the woreda financial sector manages budgets for various offices in consultation with them in order to process their financial requests following all relevant financial guidelines and regulations for budget withdrawals.

#### **3.5.3.2 Effectiveness of Using Woreda Finance as a Financing System**

The financing system of institutional WASH managed by the Woreda Finance Office has been favoured by some study participants. An interviewee from SWEP was in favour of it as the financial processes are managed locally. He further noted that the financial resources are available, and decisions are made promptly without the need for consulting regional or zonal offices. For instance, if a delay occurs, the woreda committee addresses it immediately. Material procurement and task execution are done right away, ensuring timely project completion.

The effectiveness of woreda finance as a system has also been argued by the other study participants. An interviewee remarked:

*“Our financial monitoring system is transparent so that we ensure that funds are allocated fairly across sectors, health, water, and community, according to the budget plan.”* (IDI, Central Ethiopia Region, Geta Woreda, Finance Office).

Moreover, it has been stated:

*“We are working with the Woreda Finance Office which is used for human and physical capacity building and there is no gap observed in their financial management.”* (IDI, Amhara Region, BoF)

Despite this, budget limitations hinder the ability of the woredas to supervise and support the WASH programme effectively. Moreover, delays in the release of the budget were also a challenge to effectively provide the required services such as training, according to an informant from Benishangul Gumuz Region, Bambasi Woreda, Finance Office.

### **3.5.3.3 Recommendations to Improve Fund Flow and Financial Management**

The study participants proposed a number of recommendations to enhance the fund flow and management of institutional WASH. The need for a timely release of funds would support better planning and allocation of resources, leading to smoother operations, more effective project execution, and improved financial oversight, as recommended by a participant from Central Ethiopia.

The other issue is related to the allocation of the budget. As most of the funds have been allocated to human capacity development and investment, the money allocated for per diem when travelling to kebeles was not enough. Thus, it has been challenging to work at lower levels and get workers to participate in meetings or various activities, as stated by an informant from the SWEP Marimansa Woreda Finance Office. Moreover, as there is no specific financial code for fuel expenses in the project, it is not possible to allocate a budget for fuel without this code. To effectively work in rural areas, motorbikes and fuel are needed. Thus, it is recommended to allocate sufficient budget for per diem and other activities.

An informant from the Benishagul-Gumuz Finance Office also recommended that the Federal Government directly transfers the budget to the woredas. It has also been noted that the regional administration (in the Sidama Region) sometimes withholds parts of the budget which delays project completion, and they are not in a position to address the concerns raised by the woreda. In line with this, an informant from Sidama argues that due to the lack of transparency in the COWASH budget at the woreda level, a transparent budget allocation is crucial. An informant from the Amhara Region recommended the need for fair distribution of the budget towards the working units. He noted that the Finland budget is allocated for only water supply construction. There have to be measures to include water supply, latrines, as well as other related works.

Moreover, a timely release of funds was recommended to have better planning and allocation of resources so that operations would be smoother and the project execution improved (IDI, Central Ethiopia Geta Woreda Finance Office). In support of this, an interviewee from Oromia Region, Goba Woreda Finance Office, added that funds should arrive promptly as delays impact project operations. After funds arrive, communities should also be notified transparently to ensure clear tracking.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1. Conclusions

The current comparative study found that all stakeholders and sectors at federal, regional, woreda, and kebele levels, were discharging their responsibilities in implementing COWASH IV. The stakeholders employed various approaches to monitor the implementation of the project. Regular supervision, meetings, and discussions among the concerned stakeholders were the primary mechanisms for monitoring COWASH project implementation.

The effectiveness of the CMP approach is demonstrated by the active and consistent involvement of the community at every stage of the project. From the initial planning phase to implementation and post-construction, community members have shown their commitment through both financial and in-kind contributions. Their support, including the provision of materials such as stone, wood, and sand, as well as hands-on participation in construction tasks, highlights the deep sense of ownership and collaboration. This strong community engagement has played a crucial role in the success of the project, ensuring its sustainability and alignment with local needs and priorities.

The finding demonstrated that the sustainability of the project relies on the continued active involvement of the community in its maintenance, a modest fee for services (such as when expanding an existing water facility), and the creation of a sustainable funding source for ongoing maintenance and repairs in the event of system malfunctions. Furthermore, encouraging the community to establish savings helps build financial resilience for future maintenance and unforeseen challenges. This proactive approach not only supports the long-term success of the project but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, ensuring the facility remains functional and well-maintained for years to come.

The programme provides women with significant opportunities to participate in decision-making, allowing them to be actively involved in various teams and to make decisions on equal footing with men. This empowerment fosters gender equality and strengthens women's roles in leadership and influence within the community.

The community has developed a strong sense of ownership over the water point, as it has significantly reduced their burden of travelling long distances for water. With easy access to water for drinking, cooking, washing, and other tasks, the community values the water point deeply, sometimes even more than food. Everyone feels a collective responsibility to protect and maintain it.

The successful implementation and sustainability of school WASH facilities under the COWASH project depends on active participation from schools, PTAs, and communities. Schools are crucial in maintaining WASH facilities, emphasizing proactive savings for maintenance, establishing WASH

clubs, and ensuring gender-sensitive sanitation. PTAs play a key role in resource mobilization, decision-making, and overseeing funding for repairs, which contributes to the programme's long-term success. However, challenges such as budget delays, inadequate community ownership in some areas, and limited capacity hinder effectiveness. Financial constraints, such as delayed budgets and rising material costs, disrupt timely execution and maintenance. Additionally, a lack of community engagement and ownership, especially in areas with deep water tables, exacerbates these issues. For the COWASH Programme to succeed, addressing these challenges requires stronger community involvement, regular training for school staff and PTAs, and improved funding mechanisms.

Ensuring adequate resources for repairs and fostering a culture of cleanliness among students is essential. A holistic approach to water and sanitation, including the provision of hand pumps and on-site water access for latrines, will further enhance the sustainability of the facilities. Effective collaboration between schools, local authorities, and communities is crucial for the continued success of school WASH initiatives.

The implementation, operation, and management of health facility WASH projects using the WMP approach faces several challenges, primarily related to budget limitations, lack of community involvement, and quality concerns. Key issues include insufficient matching funds, which lead to delays or abandonment of tasks, and inadequate resources for monitoring and follow-up activities. Community involvement is often limited, diminishing ownership and accountability, both of which are crucial for the sustainability of the projects. A profit-driven approach by contractors often results in poor quality and short-lived facilities. Health institutions play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of WASH programmes by maintaining water infrastructure, educating the community on sanitation practices, and promoting sustainability through local partnerships. CHCs are also vital, contributing to community mobilization, managing budgets, and raising awareness. However, challenges such as insufficient technical training, lack of follow-up, and financial constraints hinder the effectiveness of CHCs.

Increasing community ownership, enhancing institutional oversight, and ensuring continuous follow-up were the recommendations put forward by participants to improve the effectiveness of the WASH programme. Health centres should allocate additional funds from service revenues for sanitation upkeep, and Woreda Governments should provide initial budgets to fill financial gaps. Expanding the coverage of health facility WASH projects and ensuring water access across all areas of health institutions is crucial. Strengthening collaboration between institutions and communities, alongside regular training and supervision, will enhance sustainability and improve health outcomes.

Though COWASH fund flow and management can in general be characterized as effective, delays in the release of funds have been repeatedly mentioned by participants as a factor jeopardizing the timely

completion of projects. In all areas where COWASH is operating, financial monitoring mechanisms have been established, including supervision at community, woreda, regional, and federal levels. These practices contribute to a sense of community ownership and build trust with funders for future cooperation.

Although several recommendations have been forwarded to improve the flow of funds and financial management practices, shortening the path of funds flow has been recommended repeatedly. The partnership between the Woreda Finance Office, the Bureau of Finance, and WASHCOs is considered one of the most effective facilitators of proper fund allocation and management. The Woreda Finance Office noted that banks and MFIs are effectively used as financing systems for water scheme implementation, except for a few microfinance enterprises that have expressed dissatisfaction.

WASHCOs play a remarkable role in the financing and financial management of water scheme implementation. However, there are instances of ineffectiveness linked with low financial operation literacy.

The financing system of the institutional WASH, managed by the Woreda Finance Office has been favoured by some study participants due to the fact that decisions are made promptly without the need for consulting regional or woreda offices. However, budget limitations hinder the woreda's ability to supervise and support the WASH programme effectively. Moreover, delays in the release of the budget pose a challenge to providing the required services, such as training.

## **4.2. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended.

- Adopting the CMP approach has proven to be highly effective in promoting community ownership of water schemes, enhancing operational and maintenance efficiency, reducing costs, and building local capacity to manage WASH constructions. Therefore, it is recommended that the CMP approach be prioritized for implementation in future community-based WASH projects, given its demonstrated track record of success.
- The findings suggest that the CMP approach be adopted for both community and institutional WASH initiatives to improve programme quality, enhance cost-effectiveness, and reach more communities and institutions, as was done in COWASH phases I to III.
- The findings indicated the need to support local PTAs, CHCs, and WASHCOs in fulfilling their responsibilities, as well as the revitalization of a technical support team to provide necessary guidance and oversight to communities.
- Integrating national strategies: while the COWASH Programme is highly effective, considering national strategies such as the "Clean Ethiopia" initiative could further enhance its impact.

- Adapting a more inclusive programme: efforts should be made to include localized versions like "Clean Woreda" or "Clean Kebele" so as to create a stronger alignment with national efforts and promote a more comprehensive and sustainable community.
- Increasing community ownership: engage communities early in the planning and implementation stages to promote responsibility and ensure the long-term sustainability of WASH facilities.
- Strengthening institutional oversight: enhance monitoring and oversight of WASH projects to ensure timely execution, quality, and accountability.
- Ensuring continuous follow-up: conduct regular follow-up both for school and health facility WASH projects to address emerging issues and ensure consistent functionality.
- Enhancing stakeholder collaboration: foster improved cooperation between schools, local authorities, health institutions, and communities for successful and sustainable WASH initiatives.
- Investing in technical training: provide comprehensive training to CHCs and PTAs to improve their capacity to manage and maintain the WASH projects effectively.
- Securing stable funding: address financial constraints by establishing stable funding mechanisms to ensure the timely execution and sustainability of WASH projects.
- Promoting a culture of cleanliness: encourage schools to foster a culture of cleanliness among students to maintain the ongoing success and sustainability of WASH programmes.
- Establishing WASH clubs: create dedicated WASH clubs in schools to actively engage students in hygiene promotion, cleanliness maintenance, and raising awareness, ensuring long-term ownership of the programme.
- Providing gender-sensitive facilities: ensure schools provide sanitary pad changing rooms and other gender-sensitive facilities to support girls' menstrual health, improving their participation and retention in school.
- Granting ownership to CHCs: officially transfer ownership of health facilities to CHCs to enhance accountability and long-term sustainability in managing and maintaining WASH projects.
- Avoiding delays in fund disbursement: this should be seriously considered by the Federal MoF. The Ministry should seek ways where intermediate levels in the funding chain can be removed.
- Encouraging existing financial monitoring mechanisms at all levels of the COWASH governance: in addition to this, financial performances at the community level should be displayed in visible places to contribute to monitoring processes.
- Strengthening collaboration: the already effective collaboration among the Woreda Finance Office, Bureau of Finance and WASHCOs should be strengthened and supported in all necessary mechanisms



- Maintaining working schemes: the existing operation of banks and microfinance institutions as financing mechanisms for the implementation of water schemes should be continued. However close supervision of the disbursement of finance by financial institutions should be in place.
- Organizing tailored training: training on matters of financial management should be offered to all members of WASHCOs. This could be achieved by incentivizing participation in the training.
- Releasing funds on time: this would support better planning and allocation of resources, leading to smoother operations, and more effective project execution.
- Allocating budgets for necessary activities: Funds have been allocated to human capacity development and investment.

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## Annex: Data collection tools

### Annex A: In-depth Interview (IDI) guide

#### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR COWASH IV STAKEHOLDERS AT FEDERAL, REGIONAL, AND WOREDA LEVELS (SECTORS: WATER AND ENERGY, HEALTH, EDUCATION, FINANCE, WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS AND FTAT**

**PROJECT NAME: Analyzing Community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Ownership's Impact on Operations, Maintenance, and Sustainability: A Comparative Study**

**Current Project Activity: conducting in-depth interviews at different COWASH IV sectors operating at federal, regional, and woreda -levels**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this interview is to gather relevant data and comprehensive information to conduct a comparative study of WASH projects managed by woredas and communities, aiming to delve deeper into the impact of community ownership on operations, maintenance, and sustainability of community-led WASH projects.

Participation in this interview is voluntary and only aggregate information will be used in any reports of findings. Individuals will not be identified unless specific consent is obtained. Your participation in the discussion or your responses will not influence your current role. Information from all discussions will be collated and reviewed internally by COWASH IV and Frontieri Consult PLC, and research experts. This discussion will take 45 to 60 minutes. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this in-depth interview. Before we begin, we would like to set some ground rules.

Unstructured interview ground rules:

- Speak your own experience
- Minimize side conversations
- Keep focused on the topic or question

**Basic information about the key informant interview**

Name of the interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the note taker: \_\_\_\_\_

Locality: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning and ending times of the interview: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1: Demographic information about the interviewee (IDIs). Please record these details for all sectors separately before commencement of interviews**

S/N	The interviewees basic Demographic information	
<b>1</b>	Sex	<b>1=Male 2=Female</b>
<b>2</b>	Age (in years)	<b>Age</b> _____
	Education	<b>Highest grade completed</b> _____
<b>3</b>	Work experience related to COWASH Programme	<b>Years</b> _____
<b>4</b>	Position of the interviewee	_____
<b>5</b>	Profession of the interviewee	_____
<b>6</b>	Interviewee's role and responsibilities related to COWASH	_____

## Federal

### In-Depth Interview with Federal COWASH Sectors (Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and FTAT)

Interviewees	Guiding and probing questions
1. COWASH Focal person, Ministry of Water and Energy	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community- and woreda-managed models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Water and Energy?</li> <li>• How often did the WASH sector ministries and regional bureaus come together to monitor the progress of the COWASH programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If the ministries and regional bureaus conducted regular progress monitoring, could you mention the most significant learnings and insights that have emerged?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What are the key objectives behind promoting different community implementation models for rural water schemes for communities?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the WMP regarding the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What is your evaluation of the CMP approach in relation to implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What do you think the contributions of the COWASH IV and what lessons did the COWASH project bring in terms of community ownership, operation, management and sustainability?</li> <li>• Were there challenges in implementing the CMP and WMPs? If yes, what were the major challenges?</li> <li>• Based on the programme learnings, which rural water implementation modality was most effective to ensure regular water supply, operation and maintenance? And why?</li> <li>• What alternative model do you recommend for effective implementation, ownership, management and suitability of rural water supply schemes?</li> <li>• Do you have any other points you want to add?</li> </ul>
2. COWASH Focal Person, Ministry of Health	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP and WMP approaches/models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Health?</li> <li>• How often did the WASH sector ministries and regional bureaus come together to monitor the progress of the COWASH programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If the ministries and regional bureaus conducted regular progress monitoring, could you mention the most significant learnings and insights that have emerged?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What is your evaluation of the WMP projects regarding implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you assess the CMP approach regarding its implementation, operation, management, and sustainability in community water schemes?</li> <li>• What do you think the contributions of the COWASH IV and what lessons did the COWASH project bring in terms of community ownership, operation, management and sustainability?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you evaluate the Institutional WASH with WMP approach regarding its effectiveness, in implementation, operation, management and sustainability?</li> <li>• Do you think the WMP approach is effective in terms of effectiveness, operation, management and sustainability WASH services in the health facilities? If so, what are the driving factors?</li> <li>• From your experience, what were/are the major challenges in using the WMP approach?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation, and management of Institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Do you have any other points to add?</li> </ul>
3. COWASH Focal Person, Ministry of Education	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP and WMP approaches/models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education?</li> <li>• How often did the WASH sector ministries and regional bureaus come together to monitor the progress of the COWASH programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If the ministries and regional bureaus conducted regular progress monitoring, could you mention the most significant learnings and insights that have emerged?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What were/are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in the COWASH project implementation?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the WMPs regarding the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the CMP approach in terms of implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the contribution of COWASH IV and what lessons did the COWASH project bring in terms of community ownership, operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the implementation effectiveness of institutional WASH using WMP terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• Do you think that the WMP approach is effective in terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability of health facilities WASH? If so, what are the driving factors?</li> <li>• What are the major challenges in implementing the WMP approach?</li> <li>• What is your recommendation to improve the implementation, operation, and management, of Institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Do you have any other issues/points you want to add?</li> </ul>
4. COWASH Focal Person, Ministry of Finance	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme, has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP and WMP approaches/models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were/are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance in the COWASH project implementation?</li> <li>• How often did the WASH sector ministries and regional bureaus come together to monitor the progress of the COWASH Programme?</li> <li>• If the ministries and regional bureaus conducted regular progress monitoring, could you mention the most significant learnings and insights that have emerged?</li> <li>• How effective was/is the Finance Bureau in transferring and managing COWASH IV funds?</li> <li>• What is your evaluation of the CMP approach regarding financial management in the implementation of community water schemes?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your assessment of the WMP approach regarding financial management of institutional WASH implementation?</li> <li>• What financial monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that funds allocated for COWASH IV projects are used efficiently and transparently by communities or woreda governments?</li> <li>• What challenges have you faced in the financial management of COWASH IV funds?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the fund flow and financial management for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• Do you have any points to add?</li> </ul>
5. FTAT members	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP and WMP approaches/models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were/are the responsibilities of the FTAT in the COWASH IV project implementation?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the CMP approach regarding implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What is your evaluation of the WMP model regarding the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Could you mention some of the major challenges in implementing the community water schemes using the CMP approach?</li> <li>• Similarly, what were/are the major challenges of WMP approach to implement institutional WASH?</li> <li>• What measures are necessary to address the key challenges in implementing community water schemes with CMPs and institutional WASH in WMPs?</li> <li>• Did you face any financial management challenges on COWASH IV funds? If yes, could you mention the most important ones?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the fund flow and financial management of the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• Do you have any other points to add?</li> </ul>

Do you have any other general suggestions and comments?

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Thank you for your kind response!



## Regional

### In-depth Interviews with the head/deputy of regional water, Health, education, and women and social affairs and finance bureaus and their respective COWASH focal person

<b>Head, Regional Water Office</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP approach for community water schemes and WMP approach (for institutional WASH).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are the responsibilities of the Bureau of Water?</li> <li>• How often did the WASH sector regional bureaus come together to monitor the progress of the COWASH Programme?</li> <li>• If the regional bureaus conducted regular progress monitoring, could you mention the most significant learnings and insights that have emerged?</li> <li>• What are the different rural water implementation modalities currently being implemented in the region?</li> <li>• What are the key objectives behind promoting different community implementation models for rural water schemes?</li> <li>• What is your assessment of the WMP approach regarding implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• Similarly, what is your evaluation on the CMP approach regarding the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure kebele WASH, WASHCOs, and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to implement, manage, and maintain WASH infrastructure?</li> <li>• Could you comment on the contribution and lessons of the COWASH IV project in terms of community ownership, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• What are the key challenges associated with the implementation of CMP and WMP approaches?</li> <li>• From experience, which rural water implementation modality was most effective to ensure regular water supply, operation and maintenance? Why?</li> <li>• Is there any alternative and better implementation model, which you may recommend to improve implementation, ownership, management and suitability of rural water supply schemes?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of community water supply?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional points to make?</li> </ul>
<b>Focal Person, COWASH</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight</p>

<b>Programme at Regional Water Bureau</b>	<p>regions using two models: - CMP (for community water schemes) and WMP (for institutional WASH) approaches/models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• What is your assessment of the WMPs regarding implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• Similarly, what is your evaluation on the CMP approach regarding the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure kebele WASH, WASHCOs, and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to implement, manage, and maintain WASH infrastructure?</li> <li>• Could you mention the contributions and lessons of the COWASH IV project in terms of community ownership, management and sustainability?</li> <li>• How do you compare the community water schemes managed through CMPs in COWASH kebeles against non-COWASH kebeles (other than the CMP approach) in terms of operation, management, and long-term sustainability? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Did you observe any significant difference between COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of WASH service delivery? If, yes, what are they?</li> <li>✓ How do the levels of community engagement in managing and maintaining WASH infrastructure differ between COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles?</li> <li>✓ What are the differences between the COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles regarding the sustainability of WASH services, regular maintenance and repair? Do you think the COWASH kebeles are more successful in maintaining infrastructure over the long term? If so why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What are the key challenges in implementing the CMP and WMPs?</li> <li>• From experience, which rural water implementation modality was most effective to ensure regular water supply, operation and maintenance? Why?</li> <li>• Is there any alternative and better implementation model, which you may recommend to improve implementation, ownership, management and suitability of rural water supply schemes?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation, and management of community water supply?</li> <li>• Do you have any other points you want to add?</li> </ul>
<b>Focal Person, COWASH Programme at Regional Health Bureau</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 districts of eight regions using two models: - CMP approach (for community water schemes) and WMP (for institutional WASH) approaches/models.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• What is your assessment of the WMPs regarding the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• Similarly, what is your evaluation of the CMP approach regarding the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate institutional WASH using the WMP approach in terms of effectiveness, operation, management and sustainability?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure institutions and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to manage and maintain institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>• Do you think that the WMP approach is effective in terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability of institutional WASH? If so, what are the driving factors?</li> <li>• What were/ are the key challenges to implement the WMP approach for institutional WASH?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation, and management of Institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional points to make?</li> </ul>
<b>COWASH Programme Focal Person Regional Education Bureau</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed (for community water schemes)- and woreda-managed (for institutional WASH) models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the WMPs regarding the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What is your evaluation of the CMP approach in terms of implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the implementation effectiveness of institutional WASH using WMP in terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure that institutions and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to manage and maintain institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>• Do you think that the WMP approach is effective in terms of operation, management and sustainability? If yes, what are the driving factors?</li> <li>• What are the major challenges to implement the WMP approach for institutional WASH?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional points?</li> </ul>
<b>COWASH Programme Focal Person Regional Women and Children Affairs Bureau</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme, has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed (for community water schemes)- and woreda-managed (for institutional WASH) models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the community, especially women and girls, involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What strategies are in place to ensure communities feel ownership over WASH infrastructure and services?</li> <li>• What is the role of women and girls in decision-making regarding WASH services in the community?</li> <li>• What efforts were made to build the capacity of women and girls on operation, maintenance and management of WASH facilities?</li> <li>• How does the Bureau ensure that WASH services are inclusive and accessible to all members of the community, especially women, children and marginalized groups?</li> <li>• What challenges did you face while ensuring community ownership of WASH services?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve community ownership of WASH services?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional remarks to make?</li> </ul>
<b>COWASH Programme Focal Person Regional Finance Bureau</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme, has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed (for community water schemes) and woreda-managed for institutional WASH) models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• How effective was/ is the partnerships with the Ministry of Finance and Woreda Finance in transferring and managing COWASH IV funds?</li> <li>• How does the Bureau of Finance collaborate with the Banks to implement community-managed water schemes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What were/are the strengths and weaknesses of banks or MFIs to for channelling investment fund to WASHCOs for community water schemes implementation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What role does the Bureau play in monitoring the financial management of COWASH IV projects funded through the Woreda Office of Finance and Communities/ WASHCOs?</li> <li>• What financial monitoring systems were/are in place to ensure that WASHCOs and Woreda level governments use the COWASH IV project funds efficiently and transparently?</li> <li>• What challenges did you face during the management of COWASH IV funds?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the fund flow and financial management of the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional remarks to make ?</li> </ul>
<b>COWASH RSU</b>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed (for community water schemes) and woreda managed for institutional WASH) models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation of Community Water points through the CMP approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your evaluation of the effectiveness of the CMP approach in terms of operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think that the CMP approach is effective in terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability? If so, what are the driving factors?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure that the Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to implement, manage, and maintain community water points?</li> <li>• What were/are the major challenges in using the CMP approach to implement the COWASH Project?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve community ownership of the operation, maintenance, management and sustainability?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Implementation of Institutional WASH through the WMA approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional WASH through WMP in terms of operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• What roles did /do PTAs and CHCs play in the implementation, operation and management of institutional WASH (water point, latrine, etc.)?</li> <li>• Do you think that PTAs and CHCs are playing their role in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes, how?</li> <li>➤ If not, what measures are in place/ what should be done to improve the roles and responsibilities of PTAs and CHCs in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure that PTAs, CHCs, and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to manage and maintain institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>• What do you think about the effectiveness of the WMP approach in terms of operation, management and sustainability of institutional WASH?</li> <li>• What were/ are the key challenges to use the WMP approach for institutional WASH implementation?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of Institutional WASH?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional points?</li> </ul>

Do you have any other general suggestions and comments?

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Thank you for your kind response!

## Woreda

### IDI with Woreda Level COWASH IV Focal Persons

Interviewees	Guiding questions
1. COWASH IV Focal from Woreda Water Office	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed (for community water schemes) and woreda managed for institutional WASH) models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the WMPs regarding the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the CMP approach in terms of implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>• What measures are in place to ensure that communities including kebele WASH, WASHCOs, and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to implement, manage, and maintain WASH infrastructure?</li> <li>• How do you compare the community water schemes managed through CMPs in COWASH kebeles against non-COWASH kebeles (other than the CMP approach) in terms of operation, management, and long-term sustainability? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What differences have you observed in the efficiency and effectiveness of community water supply scheme service delivery between COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles?</li> <li>✓ How do the levels of community engagement in implementing, managing, and maintaining community water supply schemes infrastructure differ between COWASH and non-COWASH kebeles?</li> <li>✓ What are the differences in the sustainability of water points in terms of maintenance and repair between the COWASH non-COWASH kebeles?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What evidence is there to suggest that one implementation modality (CMP vs. WMP) is more effective? (reliable, high-quality WASH services)</li> <li>• What were the contributions and lessons of the COWASH IV project in terms of community ownership, operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>• What were/are the key challenges to implementing community water supply through the CMP approach? Could you suggest the possible solutions for the challenges?</li> <li>• What are the major challenges to implement Institutional WASH through the WMP approach? Could you recommend the possible solutions for the challenges?</li> <li>• Is there any alternative and better implementation model, which you may recommend to improve implementation, ownership, management and suitability of rural water supply schemes? Why?</li> <li>• What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of community water supply?</li> <li>• Do you have any additional points?</li> </ul>
2. COWASH IV focal person from	Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finland Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using

<p>Woreda Office</p> <p>Health</p>	<p>two models: - community managed for community water - and woreda-managed for institutional WASH models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>❖ What is your evaluation of the CMP approach regarding the implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>❖ Similarly, what is your evaluation of the implementation of WASH using the WMP approach in terms of effectiveness, operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>❖ What roles did/do the health institutions play in the implementation, operation, and management of WASH (water point, latrine, etc.) in the health facilities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you think that health institutions were/ are playing their role in the implementation, operation, and management of WASH facilities? If yes how? If not why?</li> <li>✓ What should be done to improve the roles and responsibilities of health institutions in the implementation and management of WASH facilities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ What roles did/do CHCs play in the implementation, operation, and management of health facilities (water point, latrine, etc.)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you think that CHCs were/are playing their roles in the implementation and management of health facility WASH? If yes how? If not why?</li> <li>✓ What should be done to improve the roles and responsibilities of CHCs in the implementation and management of health facility WASH?</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ What measures are in place to ensure that health institutions and woreda-level authorities have the technical capacity to manage and maintain health facility WASH?</li> <li>❖ Do you think that the health facility WASH managed through the WMP approach is effective in terms of operation, management, and sustainability? If so, what are the driving factors? If not, what should be done?</li> <li>❖ What are the key challenges in implementing the health facility WASH through the WMP approach?</li> <li>❖ What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation, and management of health facility WASH?</li> <li>❖ Do you have any additional remarks?</li> </ul>
<p>3. COWASH IV focal person from the Woreda Education Office</p>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed for community water - and woreda-managed for institutional WASH models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ During the programme implementation what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>❖ How do you evaluate the CMP approach in terms of implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water schemes?</li> <li>❖ Likewise, what is your evaluation of the implementation effectiveness of institutional WASH using the WMP approach in terms of operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>❖ What roles did/do the schools play in the implementation, operation, and management of school WASH (water point, latrine, etc.)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you think that school institutions were/ are playing their roles in the implementation, operation and management of institutional WASH? If yes how? If not why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What do you suggest to improve the roles and responsibilities of schools in the implementation and management of WASH facilities?</li> <li>❖ What roles did/ do PTAs play in the implementation, operation and management of school WASH (water point, latrine, etc.)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you think that PTAs were/ are playing their roles in the implementation and management of institutional WASH? If yes how? If not why?</li> <li>✓ What do you suggest to improve the roles and responsibilities of PTAs in the implementation and management of institutional WASH?</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ What measures are in place to ensure that schools and woreda-level authorities have technical capacity to manage and maintain institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>❖ Do you think that the school WASH through the WMP approach is effective in terms of operation, management, and sustainability? If so, what are the driving factors? If not, what should be done?</li> <li>❖ What were/ are the major challenges to implementing school WASH through the WMP approach?</li> <li>❖ What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation, and management of school WASH?</li> <li>❖ Do you have any additional points?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. COWASH IV</b> focal person from the Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office</p>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community-managed for community water- and woreda-managed for institutional WASH models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>❖ How were/are the community, especially women and girls involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of community water schemes?</li> <li>❖ What strategies were/ are in place to ensure that communities have ownership over WASH infrastructure and services?</li> <li>❖ What was/is the role of women and girls on community WASH service decision making?</li> <li>❖ What efforts were made to build the capacity of women and girls in relation to the operation, maintenance and management of WASH facilities?</li> <li>❖ How do the Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office ensure that WASH services are inclusive and accessible to women, children, and marginalized groups?</li> <li>❖ What challenges did/do you face while ensuring community ownership of WASH services?</li> <li>❖ What do you recommend to improve women and girls' ownership in WASH?</li> <li>❖ Do you have any other points to add?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. COWASH IV</b> focal person from the Woreda Finance Office</p>	<p>Since April 2021, the COWASH Programme, the Ethiopian and Finnish Governments' bilateral programme has been implemented in 104 rural districts of eight regions using two models: - community managed for community water- and woreda-managed for institutional WASH models/approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ During the programme implementation, what were/are your responsibilities as a focal person for the COWASH IV project?</li> <li>❖ How effective was/is the partnership between the Bureau of Finance and WASHCOs in transferring and managing COWASH IV funds?</li> <li>❖ How did/ does the Woreda Finance Office collaborate with the Banks or MFIs and WASHCOs to implement community-managed water schemes?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What were/are the strengths and weaknesses of banks and MFIs as financing systems for water scheme implementation?</li> <li>✓ What were/ are the strengths and weaknesses of WASHCOs to manage the funds/budget for water scheme implementation?</li> <li>❖ How did/does Woreda Finance Office collaborate with Woreda Health and Education Offices to implement Institutional WASH? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What were/are the strengths and weaknesses of Woreda finance as a financing system for institutional WASH?</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ What roles did/does the Woreda finance play to monitor the financial management of COWASH IV projects funds channeled by Woreda Office of Finance to sectors and communities/ WASHCOs?</li> <li>❖ What financial monitoring systems were/are in place to ensure that COWASH IV project funds were/ are used efficiently and transparently by communities and Woreda governments?</li> <li>❖ What do you recommend to improve the fund flow and financial management of Woreda Finance Office and Community/WASHCO for the COWASH IV project funds?</li> <li>❖ What were/are the lessons that the Woreda Finance Office learned from the financial management practices of the COWASH project?</li> <li>❖ Do you have any additional points to make?</li> </ul>
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Do you have any other general suggestions and comments?

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Thank you for your kind response!

## Kebele/community

### In-Depth Interview with COWASH Kebele/Community Level Actors

#### Interview with School Directors

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>Does the school have water schemes and latrines constructed by the COWASH Programme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Who built them?</li><li>➤ Are they adequate water schemes compared with the number of students?</li><li>➤ Who were/was your budget source?</li></ul>
2	<p>Could you explain the impacts of programme achievements on your students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Are water schemes and latrines girl-friendly and disability-inclusive?</li></ul> <p>(Availability of sex-segregated latrines and accessibility of water schemes and latrines by students with disabilities ).</p>
3	<p>Are water schemes and latrines functioning at this time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ If they are not functioning, what are the challenges?</li><li>➤ Who provides maintenance services to schools?</li><li>➤ Who covers maintenance costs?</li><li>➤ Is it easy to get a maintenance budget?</li><li>➤ What is the experience of the school on getting non-functional schemes functional?</li><li>➤ If maintenance often delays, could you explain the reasons for the delay?</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ What roles did/do the school institutions play in the implementation, operation, and management of institutional WASH (water point, latrine, etc.)?</li><li>➤ Do you think that the school was/ is playing its role in the implementation, operation, and management of institutional WASH facilities? If yes how? If not why?</li><li>➤ Could you suggest how to improve the roles and responsibilities of school institutions in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities?</li><li>➤ Does the school have plans that sustain water schemes and latrines functioning if both technical and financial support from the district and COWASH Programme stop?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If there are schemes/plans, could you mention them?</li><li>• If there is no plan at this time, what is your school's plan to sustain services?</li></ul></li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Does the school have a committee (parent-teacher associations) that attends water schemes and latrines?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ If there is a PTA, how effective it is in making follow-ups and taking remedial actions when services fail to function?</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you think that PTAs were/are playing their roles in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities? If yes how? If not why?</li> <li>✓ What do you recommend to improve the roles and responsibilities of PTAs in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>✓ If the school does not have PTAs, who attends the services currently?</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What were/ are the key challenges to implement institutional WASH through the WMP approach?</li> <li>➤ What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of school WASH infrastructure?</li> </ul>

Do you have any other general suggestions and comments?

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Thank you for your kind response!

**Interview with Kebele water scheme maintenance technical person (in the absence of a plumber, please interview kebele manager)**

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>What are your roles regarding the operation, management and sustainability of community water supply schemes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could you explain when did you commence water scheme maintenance works in the kebele?</li> <li>➤ How did/do you handle the operation and maintenance requests? Does community ownership of water schemes influence the speed or quality of maintenance work?</li> <li>➤ What kind of accountability systems exist between the community (WASHCOs) and the technicians regarding repairs and operations?</li> <li>➤ What roles did/do the community (WASHCOs) play in community water supply schemes during operation, management, and sustainability?</li> <li>➤ From your experience, what were/ are the major causes of water schemes non-functionality?</li> <li>➤ On average, how many days/weeks does it take to maintain a nonfunctioning water scheme and get it to re-start serving?</li> <li>➤ Could you mention factors that delay water scheme maintenance works?</li> <li>➤ Was/is it easy to access maintenance tools and materials in the kebele?</li> <li>➤ Who provides you with maintenance materials?</li> <li>➤ At this time, do you have enough maintenance materials? If not, why?</li> </ul>
2	<p>How do you evaluate the financial capacity of the kebele to cover maintenance costs? (Enough or not enough, if not enough - why?)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who covers major maintenance costs?</li> <li>➤ If the district covers major maintenance costs, was/is it easy to get the budget support timely? If not, why?</li> <li>➤ Did community members receive trainings or capacity-building sessions for maintaining community water supply schemes? If yes, how did this training influence their contributions for maintenance and operation works?</li> <li>➤ In your opinion, were/are communities who trained were more proactive to identify and address challenges on community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ How did/do community contributions (financial or in-kind) for operation and maintenance of community water supply schemes affect the sustainability of the water service?</li> <li>➤ What challenges did you face while working with communities on the operation and management of community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ From your experience, what do you recommend to ensure the sustainability of water schemes?</li> <li>➤ Do you think the kebele, at this time, has a plan that sustains the functionality of water schemes? If yes, could you explain the plan?</li> </ul>
5	Do you have additional ideas on the water service provision and maintenance works?

#### Interview with Kebele Health Extension Workers

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>Do you think that the sanitation and hygiene coverage of COWASH water scheme beneficiary households improved? (How many households have improved latrines as per the SDG standards?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Did community members have the chance to access construction materials, like, sato pans and slabs for improved latrines? (If yes, what were the sources?)</li> <li>➤ Was the cost of the construction materials (sata pans, slabs etc...) within the reach of the community members? (For example, what was the cost of a piece?)</li> </ul>
2	<p>How do you describe community members' commitment to invest in WASH products/ willingness and commitment to pay for improved latrine construction materials?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you compare achievement versus plans, do you think the COWASH programme achieved its target fully? (If not, what were the reasons and challenges?)</li> <li>➤ To what extent community members' habits of washing their hands with water and soap after latrine use have improved?</li> <li>➤ If we conduct a household visit, can we find water and soap by the side of each household latrine? (If the answer is yes, how did such community commitment come? / If the answer is no, why?)</li> </ul>

3	What is community members' habit when their latrines get full or collapse? Do they construct a new one/ maintain it or go back to open defecation practice? (If community members practice open defecation again, what are the driving factors?)
4	<p>How does community ownership affect the sustainability of community water schemes in this kebele?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Did community members receive training or capacity-building sessions to maintain community water supply schemes? If yes, how did this training influence their contribution for maintenance and operation?</li> <li>➤ In your opinion, were/are communities who trained were more proactive to identify and address challenges regarding community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ What challenges did you face while working with communities on the operation and management of community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ Finally, what do you recommend to improve community ownership on the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water supply schemes?</li> </ul>

### **In-depth Interview with Non-COWASH/CMP Kebele Level Actors**

#### **Interview with School Directors**

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>Does the school have water schemes and latrines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who built them?</li> <li>➤ Are they adequate compared with the number of students?</li> <li>➤ Who was your budget source?</li> </ul>
2	<p>Could you explain the impacts of programme achievements on your students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are water schemes and latrines girl-friendly and disability-inclusive?</li> </ul> <p>(Availability of sex-segregated latrines and accessibility of water schemes and latrines by students with disabilities ).</p>
3	<p>Are water schemes and latrines functioning at this time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If they are not functioning, what are the challenges?</li> <li>➤ Who provides maintenance services to schools?</li> <li>➤ Who covers maintenance costs?</li> <li>➤ Is it easy to get a maintenance budget?</li> <li>➤ What is the experience of the school on getting non-functional schemes functional?</li> <li>➤ If maintenance often delays, could you explain the reasons for the delay?</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What roles did/do the school institutions/community play in the implementation, operation, and management of institutional WASH (water point, latrine, etc.)?</li> <li>➤ Do you think that the school was/ is playing its role in the implementation, operation, and management of institutional WASH facilities? If yes how? If not why?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could you suggest how to improve the roles and responsibilities of school institutions in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>➤ Does the school have plans that sustain water schemes and latrines functioning if both technical and financial support from the district stop? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If there are schemes/plans, could you mention them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ If there is no plan at this time, what is your school's plan to sustain services?</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the school have a committee (parent-teacher associations) that attends water schemes and latrines?</li> <li>➤ If there is a PTA, how effective it is in making follow-ups and taking remedial actions when services fail to function?</li> <li>➤ Do you think that PTAs were/are playing their roles in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities? If yes how? If not why?</li> <li>➤ What do you recommend to improve the roles and responsibilities of PTAs in the implementation and management of institutional WASH facilities?</li> <li>➤ If the school does not have PTAs, who attends the services currently?</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What were/ the key challenges to implement institutional WASH at the school?</li> <li>➤ What do you recommend to improve the implementation, operation and management of school WASH infrastructure?</li> </ul>

Thank You!

#### **In-depth interview with Kebele water scheme maintenance technical person/ kebele manager**

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>What is your role in community water supply schemes in terms of operation, management, and long-term sustainability?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could you explain when you commenced water scheme maintenance works in the kebele?</li> <li>➤ How do you handle operation and maintenance requests? Does community ownership influence the speed or quality of maintenance work?</li> <li>➤ What kind of accountability mechanisms exist between the community (WASHCOs) and the technicians when it comes to repairs and operations?</li> <li>➤ What role do the community (WASHCOs) play in community water supply schemes in terms of operation, management, and long-term sustainability?</li> <li>➤ From your experience, what are the major causes of water scheme non-functionality?</li> <li>➤ On average, how many days/weeks does it take to maintain a nonfunctioning water scheme and get it to start servicing?</li> <li>➤ Could you mention factors that delay water scheme maintenance works?</li> <li>➤ Was/is it easy to access maintenance tools and materials in the kebele?</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who provides you with maintenance materials?</li> <li>➤ At this time, do you have enough maintenance materials? If not, why?</li> </ul>
2	<p>How do you evaluate the financial capacity of the kebele to cover maintenance costs? (Enough or not enough, if not enough - why?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who covers high maintenance costs?</li> <li>➤ How do community contributions (financial or in-kind) to the operation and maintenance of community water supply schemes affect the sustainability of the service?</li> <li>➤ If high maintenance costs are covered by the district, was/is it easy to get the budget support? If not, why?</li> <li>➤ What challenges have you faced when working with communities in terms of the operation and management of community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ From your experience, what should be done to ensure the sustainability of water scheme services?</li> <li>➤ Do you think the kebele, at this time, has a plan that sustains the functionality of water schemes? If yes, could you explain the plan?</li> </ul>
5	If you have any additional ideas on water service provision and maintenance works!

Thank You!

#### In-depth interview with Kebele Extension Workers

#	Guiding questions
1	<p>Do you think that the sanitation and hygiene coverage of households improved? (How many households have improved latrines as per the SDG standards?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Did community members have the chance to access construction materials, like, sato pans and slabs for improved latrines? (If yes, what were the sources?)</li> <li>➤ Was the cost of the construction materials within the reach of the community members? (For example, what was the cost of a piece?)</li> </ul>
2	<p>How do you describe community members' commitment to invest in WASH products/ willingness and commitment to pay for improved latrine construction materials?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you compare achievement versus plans, do you think the programme achieved its target fully? (If not, what were the reasons and challenges?)</li> <li>➤ To what extent community members' habit of washing their hands with water and soap after latrine use have improved?</li> <li>➤ If we conduct a household visit, can we find water and soap by the side of each household latrine? (If the answer is yes, how did such community commitment come? / If the answer is no, why?)</li> </ul>

3	What is community members' habit when their latrines get full or collapse? Do they construct a new one/ maintain it or go back to open defecation practice? (If community members practice open defecation again, what are the driving factors?)
4	<p>What roles did/do the health extension workers (HEWs) play on the operation, management and sustainability of community water supply schemes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you notice any differences in the efficiency of implementation, operation, and management of community water supply schemes between communities that are highly engaged versus those that are less involved?</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How does community ownership affect the long-term sustainability of community supply water schemes in this kebele? Did the community members receive trainings or capacity-building sessions to maintain community water supply schemes? If yes, how did this training influence their contribution for maintenance and operation?</li> <li>➤ In your opinion, were/are communities that trained are more proactive to identify and address challenges on community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ What challenges did you face while working with communities on the operation and management of community water supply schemes?</li> <li>➤ Finally, could you recommend solutions to improve community ownership on the implementation, operation, management and sustainability of community water supply schemes?</li> </ul>

Thank You!

**Annex B: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide (Kebele WASH team, Beneficiaries, WASHCOs, CHCs, and PTAs)-**

**For Both Community Managed COWASH Kebeles (01) and non-COWASH Kebeles (02)**

#	Guiding questions	Possible Respondents
1	What type of community water supply scheme is available in your community for drinking? Could you specify?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, CHCs
2	How did you and other community members involve in decision making during the planning, implementation, operation and maintenance works of water points?	WASHCOs, households
4	Is there any committee or group in the community that manages or oversees the operation and management of water points?  ✓ If yes, who are they and how effective are they?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
5	What do you think about the community's role to ensure that water supply schemes continue to function properly?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs
6	Who is responsible for repairing water points when they break down?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs
7	What challenges do you face in maintaining or operating water points?  ✓ How do you think we can effectively address maintenance challenges?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs
8	Do the community members/beneficiaries contribute financially or in-kind (e.g., labor, materials) for the maintenance and repair of water points?  ✓ If yes, how much do you contribute, and how often?	WASHCOs and households
9	Are there any systems in place for collecting funds from the community for the maintenance and repair of water points (e.g., water fees)?  ✓ If yes, how effective is the system?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
10	Do you feel that the community has a strong sense of ownership over the water point? If yes, why, or if no, why not?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs,
11	How are decisions made regarding water points (e.g., how to maintain, when to repair)? Who is involved in these decisions?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, Households
12	Do you believe that the community has the necessary skills, resources, and knowledge to manage and sustain the water points on its own? What support is need to improve?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
13	Have there been times when water points were not operational for an extended period?  ✓ If yes, how long have you stayed without access to drinking water? ✓ How did the community respond?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households,

14	What do you see as the main challenges facing the long-term sustainability of the water supply scheme in your community?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
15	Do you think that the water schemes will continue to function without the financial support of the external body/other than community contribution? If yes how? If not why?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
16	What are the key factors that contribute for effective community ownership in community water schemes?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
17	What roles did the community members play in the management of finance and resources allocated for the community water supply schemes implementation and management?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
18	What do you recommend to improve community ownership in terms of implementation, operation, management, and sustainability of community water supply schemes?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households
19	Are there water schemes and improved latrines available at the school? If yes, do the water schemes and latrines function at this time?  ✓ During the construction process, what were the roles of the PTA? ✓ Who were the sources of budget for the construction?	PTA
20	When maintenance is required for both water schemes and latrines who is responsible?  ✓ Who were/are the source of the budget?	PTA
21	What were/are the major challenges in the implementation and management of water schemes and latrines in the schools?	PTA
22	What is your recommendation to improve the implementation, and management, of water schemes and latrines?	PTA
23	Are there water schemes and improved latrines available at the health facilities? If yes, do the water schemes and latrines function at this time?  ✓ During the construction process, what were the roles of the CHCs? ✓ Who were the sources of budget for the construction	CHCs
24	When maintenance is required for both water schemes and latrines in the health facilities, who is responsible?  ✓ Where was/is the source of the budget?	CHCs
25	What were/are the major challenges of water schemes and latrines during the implementation and management?	CHCs
26	What do you recommend to improve the implementation and management of water schemes and latrines?	CHCs

27	Do you have any other issues/points you want to add	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households, PTAs, CHCs
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### **Institutional WASH/ Woreda Managed COWASH Kebeles (03)**

#	Guiding questions	Possible Respondents
1	<p>Are there water schemes and improved latrines available at the school? If yes, do the water schemes and latrines function at this time?</p> <p>✓ During the construction process, what were the roles of the PTA?</p> <p>✓ Who were the sources of budget for the construction</p>	PTA
2	<p>During the construction period, who managed the budget?</p> <p>✓ Was it easy to use the budget for work?</p> <p>✓ Were you satisfied with the budget management?</p> <p>✓ If not why?</p>	PTA, CHCs
3	<p>Do you think that the Committee was adequately engaged in the construction process?</p> <p>✓ If not, what were the reasons/gaps?</p>	PTA, CHCs
4	<p>When maintenance is required for both water schemes and latrines in the schools, who is responsible and where is the source of the budget?</p> <p>✓ Is the PTA aware and prepared for maintenance and management of the scheme after the construction</p>	PTA
5	What plan does the school/the committee have to make existing facilities (water schemes and latrines) serve for the coming years?	PTA
6	What were/are the major challenges of water schemes and latrines' implementation and management?	PTA
7	What do you recommend to improve the implementation and management of water schemes and latrines in schools?	PTA
8	<p>Are there water schemes and improved latrines available at the health facilities? If yes, do the water schemes and latrines function at this time?</p> <p>✓ During the construction process, what were the roles of the CHCs?</p> <p>✓ Who were the sources of budget for the construction</p>	CHCs
9	What plan does the CHCs/health facilities have to make existing facilities (water schemes and latrines) serve for the coming years?	
10	<p>When maintenance is required for both water schemes and latrines in the health facilities, who was/ is responsible?</p> <p>✓ Is the PTA aware and prepared for maintenance and management of the scheme after the construction?</p>	CHCs

	✓ Where is the source of the budget?	
11	What were/are the major challenges of water schemes and latrines during the implementation and management?	CHCs
12	What do you recommend to improve the implementation and management of water schemes and latrines in health facilities?	CHCs
13	Do you have any additional points you want to add?	Kebele WASH team, WASHCOs, households, PTAs, CHCs