Social and Behaviour Change Interventions for Better Health

The stated outcome of COWASH IV is increased and sustained coverage of safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene in the rural areas of the selected woredas. Furthermore, improved public health status and well-being, social development and climate resilience in the communities in the project area are key elements of the COWASH IV Impact Statement. The achievement of the expected outcome and impacts is built on four pillars:

- Community-led construction of new inclusive and safe community rural water supply schemes and household sanitation;
- Construction and rehabilitation of inclusive institutional water and sanitation infrastructure including menstrual hygiene promotion and maintenance;
- Rehabilitation of community WASH facilities and building operation and maintenance capacity to enhance functionality with a focus on water safety planning and legalization; and
- Promoting inclusive women leadership in WASH management, developing inclusive enterprises in WASH service delivery and ensuring disability inclusion.

The achievement of the project targets is highly dependent on the successful implementation of social and behaviour change and hence the COWASH IV team has designed and is currently implementing coordinated and effective sanitation and hygiene demand creation and behavioural change interventions in the project woredas. The main objectives are to create demand for improved latrines and hand-washing facilities among rural households in the project regions and to promote and sustain the usage of latrines and handwashing with soap at critical moments by all household members.

COWASH IV is strengthening the capacity of WASH sector stakeholders, from regional to kebele levels, to plan and implement sanitation and hygiene behaviour change activities with a special emphasis on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, women and girls and the poor .

Ebsa Feyisa, the Behaviour Change Specialist of the COWASH IV Federal Technical Assistance Team said "*A Social and Behavioural Change Strategy has been developed to guide the project in order to achieve the main targets set out in the Project Document.*

The Strategy is expected to improve the effectiveness of WASH service delivery by addressing the demand/user side gaps by creating awareness, demand and acceptability for the WASH products and services provided through community-based approaches. The strategy addresses the social support and norm to improve WASH behaviour in the project intervention areas through a multi-level approach that includes the harmonization of interpersonal communication, community mobilization, direct consumer contact and mass media that helps the project to achieve its objectives.''

Based on the Strategy, COWASH IV has prepared a social and behavioural change training manual on WASH and is currently conducting training of trainers workshops in its use. These have been completed for Oromia, Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples and Sidama regions. The training of trainers for the rest regions will continue throughout the second quarter of 2015. The necessary monitoring will also be carried out to ensure the cascading of the training and knowledge to the front-line workers.





Ebsa added, "*It has been possible to prepare messages that can be distributed in different ways to bring the desired change in behaviour at the community level. For example, six disability-inclusive video messages focusing on hand hygiene and improved latrines were prepared in Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Sidamo Afo languages. Nine audio messages have been prepared in the same languages, focusing on hand hygiene, the preparation and usage of improved latrines and safe water storage and treatment at the household level. In addition, to the above messages, nine posters on different COWASH thematic areas have been designed and printed for use in the three languages, 675 posters in the Sidamo Afo language, 4,050 in Afan Oromo and 7,335 in the Amharic language. A total of 12,060 posters are currently being distributed."* The team is working to disseminate the prepared video and audio messages on television and frequency modulation radio in the regions and through various broadcasting methods to bring social behavioural change to the community. COWASH IV has put in place mechanisms to monitor the utilization of the materials by the target communities and to assess their impact.

The following links are for the TV messages prepared for hand washing: Amharic, https://youtu.be/VhFr1wFa5l0 Afan Oromo, https://youtu.be/BwErjJ3uBL0, Sidamo Afo https://youtu.be/x3ZGsMcnfwA), *and messages for an improved latrine, Sidamo Afo* https://youtu.be/n8AIN8ESFzo, *Afan Oromo* https://youtu.be/ByjswCwTaOA, *and Amharic,* https://youtu.be/xxmFu1eMKnE.



Sample behavioural change message posters prepared by COWASH IV, Oct. 2022

In parallel, the FTAT Communication and Dissemination Specialist visited the Arbegona Woreda Health Office and met with Ato Hanka Harkie, the Sanitation and Hygiene expert and focal person for COWASH IV. Ato Hanka reported "*COWASH IV is supporting our woreda both in capacity building activities and in the construction of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for health institutions*."

Ato Hanke went on to say, "*We have tried to improve the behaviour of the community of our woreda by using the knowledge we have gained through the COWASH IV project and other stakeholders. We will focus on identifying the kebeles, sections of communities and households that are victims of the problem by establishing a discussion group, choosing community facilitators, deciding the days on which community discussions will be given and facilitating the discussions. Health extension workers and health development armies are primarily responsible to facilitate the community dialogue sessions and house-to-house visits in order to support the households to overcome behavioural barriers*."

According to the brief from Ato Hanke, the community was able to construct improved latrines with locally available materials depending on household economic status, with

most using bamboo. In relation to the Open Defecation Free (ODF) situation in the woreda, 10 of the 30 kebeles were declared ODF.

“Although the social behavioral change task is challenging and requires the commitment of different stakeholders, we will continue to strengthen the activities that will increase the behavior change of the woreda community by making proper use of the provided capacity-building training and favorable conditions.’’ Ato Hanka said.





In addition to increasing social behavioral change in terms of water supply, sanitation and hygiene, the COWASH IV project also works by incorporating new innovations that allow the public to access and use improved sanitation and hygiene products. For effectiveness, COWASH IV would like to recommend that all the relevant stakeholders should execute their responsibilities while maintaining the responsibility of the user community.