



Project Profile

Ethiopia

Tigray

Project Location: Southern Region of the Tigray Regional State

Number of Beneficiaries: 32,000

Project Start Date: 2004

Project End Date: 2005

Tigray Program

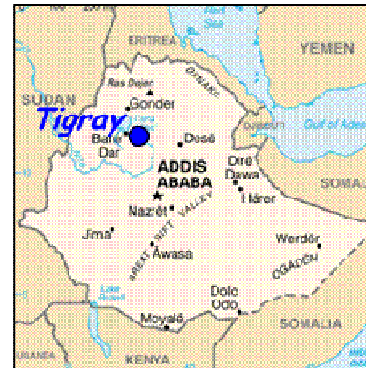
Our program in Tigray, Ethiopia is serving 32,000 people in 76 communities and six schools. Tigray is a region in northern Ethiopia that borders on Sudan. Unlike some of the regions in the higher elevations, temperatures in Tigray are usually quite high. Tigray is often one of the regions that is hardest hit by drought and crop failure.

Conditions Before the Water Project

At the start of the project, over half of the population of Tigray was dependent on direct food aid to survive. According to our partner organization, malnutrition at the start of the project was serious to severe in the worst-affected areas. In this region of Ethiopia, the disappearance of natural forests and vegetation cover has accelerated soil erosion, causing a severe decrease in water infiltration rates to underground aquifers. This ecological imbalance has led to the depletion of traditional water sources such as streams, springs and shallow wells. Villagers were forced to walk greater and greater distances to collect water from unsanitary, low-yielding, seasonal sources that were also used by livestock and for bathing. These problems were amplified during drought conditions.

The impact of the water shortages was particularly severe for women and girls who are traditionally responsible for water collection. During the dry season, many women spent up to six hours a day in search of water by walking long, steep, and rugged trails. About 75% of this time was spent walking; the remainder was spent waiting in line at the water hole. Women carried the water in heavy clay pots strapped to their backs, sapping their energy, diminishing their health status, and exacerbating the food security problem because they did not have time to participate in productive activities including food-for-work programs.

Project Completed in 2005



Tigray Location Map.



Abrahat collects water from this Gendebta water spring which is also used by cattle and other livestock. The water has caused many illnesses.



Woman collecting water at the new Asgam Community handpump.

Water Project

Because the water crisis in Tigray is so acute, the Ethiopian government declared that each community needs one adequate safe water point before organizations can provide comprehensive water coverage. Although this strategy is a departure from other WaterPartners strategies, even building one water point in each community will be an improvement.

Since the fall of 2004, 76 village water projects - hand-dug wells, boreholes, spring catchments, and a rainwater harvesting system - have been completed in the region, benefiting over 32,000 people, including six schools. These safe water projects are having a huge impact on the lives of the residents of Tigray.



Well construction in Wersege, Tigray.



The community and our partner celebrate their new safe water. Tigray.