Wereda inventory

Accurate data on access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services within Weredas are vital for planning, effective new investments and maintaining existing infrastructure. However, the numbers are hard to collect, and can also be contentious. There is pressure to report improvements in coverage towards ambitious goals like the Universal Action Plan and the Millenium Development Goals. At the same time, Weredas showing improvements in coverage actually risk getting reduced block grants and that can lead to under reporting.

The RiPPLE sustainability case studies provided evidence that actual figures on scheme and water point functionality are inconsistent, and often, far below the estimated figures used for regional and national level planning.

As a result, there are serious current efforts at national and regional level, especially in SNNPR, to improve WASH sector information systems. To support these efforts to improve the use of Wereda inventory systems, RiPPLE has included this theme within the Long-Term Action Research Study (LARS) on Access.

Goal

The overall goal is to help sector agencies to develop and use information management systems that lead to better planning, improved accountability, improved maintainance of existing services and ultimately better service delivery.

Main research questions

1. What is the best method for Wereda inventory to collect, record, validate, analyse and report data?
2. What are the resources needed (human, physical, skills, financial) and at what level?
3. How can the information gathered be used to improve interventions at local level and policy making?
4. What are the best mechanisms for coordination of WASH information systems, sharing knowledge and learning at different levels?
5. How can Wereda inventory be used to increase accountability between sector agencies for more sustainable service delivery?

Activities and approach

The first phase of research (to April 2009) is to better understand and link various efforts to develop information systems for WASH (and other sectors) in Ethiopia and to share best practices from other countries. A series of interviews at national, regional (focusing on SNNPR) and Wereda-level aim to document the status of existing initiatives and to identify the key issues and problems in Wereda inventory. Special attention will be given to the inventory work done in SNNPR. Findings will be presented at regional and national Learning and Practice Alliance (LPA) meetings. A second research phase after April 2009 aims to support sector agencies to improve their Wereda inventory systems and their use.

RiPPLE will promote research, learning and capacity building on Wereda inventory to support sector ownership and scaling up nationally and through:

• Supporting efforts of sector stakeholders in strengthening existing systems and processes
• Conducting action research on existing initiatives (especially issues like institutionalisation and replicability) together with implementing partners
• Helping find the right scale (water, sanitation and hygiene promotion) for indicators
• Helping test the best formats for reporting (spatial vs non-spatial analysis)
• Encouraging sharing of best practice between various initiatives within Ethiopia and other countries
• Encouraging use of information for planning and targeting at all levels