



Information Sheet

Communication in RiPPLE

Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile region (RiPPLE) is a DFID-funded Research Programme Consortium hosted by WaterAid Ethiopia

RiPPLE Information Sheets introduce an aspect of RiPPLE, related issues and references to further resources.

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Communication in RiPPLE is not just about producing written research reports, but is geared towards supporting active learning and knowledge-sharing in the sector, and is a core component of the programme from the start.

RiPPLE communication has three objectives:

1. To enhance the learning process within and between Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs, see LPA Info Sheet)
2. To share the knowledge developed in the LPAs more widely to influence policy making and implementation practices in the water and sanitation sector
3. To enable the development of capacities in communication of key sector issues

A wide range of activities are being undertaken which seek to support these objectives:

Strengthening the LPA communication system

This means supporting internal communications between RiPPLE LPA members, ensuring interconnectedness between levels and regions (for example through exchange visits and an LPA bulletin) and ensuring that the LPA concept is well articulated. The LPA learning process will also be enhanced by being well connected with other learning processes in the region, both in the WASH sector and beyond. Communications work will support this, by developing information materials to explain RiPPLE wide audience and by supporting network-building events.

Dissemination of research results and interaction with other WASH initiatives

Taking research outputs to local, national and international audiences is critical. RiPPLE will disseminate accessible information to a wide range of audiences in Ethiopia and the Nile region through outputs including newsletters, briefing notes, an interactive website, documentary films, toolkits, cooperation with national and international media, and documentation of the change and learning processes initiated by RiPPLE. Wherever possible we will link such outputs to major communications initiatives and events including the WASH campaign and EUWI Multistakeholder Forum.

Capacity Development

RiPPLE takes a broad capacity development approach to sector communications issues. RiPPLE will aim at developing individual (journalists, students, bureaus members) and institutional (University, Information and communication bureaus, the Multi Stakeholder Forum) capacity in encouraging reflection, analysis and debate about policies and practices on WASH issues, including financial flows, pro-poor growth strategies, governance and planning mechanisms, sector harmonisation and co-ordination, and supply chain management. Activities include curriculum development, holding seminars, and supporting woreda and regional government to strengthen their information systems.

Challenges

Communication in RiPPLE faces a number of challenges. These relate to the diversity of languages and audiences in Ethiopia and the region, the traditional top-down nature of information flows, low levels of communication technology at woreda level, and a gap in capacity for communication among both sector staff and the media. Sensitivity to local communication styles and approaches is vital, and RiPPLE will use innovative communication approaches alongside traditional tools to engage a wide audience. In the long term RiPPLE aims to devolve its communications activities to an Ethiopian institution.

Profile: the RiPPLE website

The RiPPLE website (www.rippleethiopia.org) is a key communication tool. It explains RiPPLE's activities and holds all the RiPPLE outputs such as photos, videos, newsletters and research reports. Further website development will include an electronic library of spatially-referenced resources, including bureau-level data on the water sector, maps and multimedia outputs.

