

water and sanitation SUCCESS STORY



THE STORY OF HAFI-ELA VILLAGE IN ETHIOPIA

Life in the village of Hafa Ela, Ethiopia, was challenging before the construction of a local water system. Women and children had to travel long distances, often spending more than half a day to reach the nearest water source, which wasn't safe for drinking. Having sufficient water for basic drinking and cooking needs was challenging enough, let alone finding enough water for livestock. "Our livestock died of thirst and the rest were sold before they were lost," says Holaa Korbu (center in above photo), a resident of Hafa Ela and a member of the local Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) committee. "This resulted in a serious economic problem for the community."

Thanks to the work of CRS and its partner, Ethiopian Catholic Church Social Development Coordination Office of Meki (ECC-SDCOM), a water scheme was established in Hafa Ela village in

2006 to provide safe water for drinking, cooking and bathing for residents, and watering troughs for livestock.

With the construction of the new water system however, individuals like Mr. Korbu realized that without a structure in place to coordinate the operations and maintenance requirements, the water scheme would fall into disrepair and clean water would no longer be available. In light of this, the community, with support from CRS, formed a WASH committee.

Today, six years after the water system was installed, the WASH committee continues to successfully manage the system to ensure that safe water is available to the residents of Hafa Ela. Responsibilities of the committee include day-to-day operations, water fee collection, procurement of spare parts and small-scale repairs to the scheme. The committee also coordinates with

the local government water office in an effort to build capacity and obtain financial support in anticipation of large-scale capital maintenance expenditures in the future (e.g. pump replacement). As of May 2012, the committee had \$3,300 in the bank to finance intermediate maintenance and repair requirements. Interestingly, the community discovered that proper management meant fewer maintenance requirements.

The bottom line in the Hafa Ela experience is that the WASH committee is central to ensuring that safe water continues to flow in the village. As Mr. Korbu put it, "A water scheme is for our own benefit – who else should manage the resource but ourselves?"

