

ASGAM, ETHIOPIA

Rural community needs water supply, sanitation

Current Situation in Asgam: The 565 people of Asgam struggle to meet their daily needs for water and food. The traditional water sources in the rural community of Asgam, located in a drought-prone region of Ethiopia, are vanishing. The disappearance of natural forests and vegetation cover has accelerated soil erosion, causing a severe decrease in water infiltration rates to underground aquifers. During the dry season, the villagers are forced to walk long distances to dry riverbeds, where cup by cup they fill their water containers from seepage points. They must share the available water sources with

172 of every 1,000 Ethiopian children die before the age of 5.



neighboring villages, resulting in long queues at the waterholes and fighting between village men and women who are desperate to provide water for their families.

The Solution: The villagers of Asgam are prepared to provide all the labor and local materials and pay 100% of the maintenance costs of a new water system. This will include the construction of a new road, built entirely by hand, to provide access to the community for the well-drilling rig. Our local Ethiopian partner organization will work with the people of Asgam to develop and



Mebrehel Adijue of Moull drinks clean water from a new handpump.

implement a sustainable community water supply and sanitation system.

Proposed New Water System: Deep tubewell with a hand pump and drainage system.

Proposed Sanitation Facilities: Individual household pit latrines.

Project Implementation Schedule: Project will take approximately 1 year to complete.

Goals of the Asgam water project:

- Eliminate hours of labor by women and children who collect water every day;
- Ensure that residents use improved hygiene practices;
- Provide enough safe water to meet every resident's personal needs for drinking, cooking and washing;
- Ensure that every household has access to a latrine;
- Protect the new water source.



Asgam is located in the Kushet of Seraske, the Tabia of Hibret in the northern region of Tigray, bordering Eritrea.

The water crisis in Ethiopia

There is clearly an urgent need to develop safe water supplies and basic sanitation for the majority rural population of Ethiopia. Access to safe water is estimated to be only 12% in rural Ethiopia. Latrine access is also extremely poor at merely 7%. Water related diseases are endemic and health services are limited. The lack of access to safe drinking water places a heavy burden of morbidity and mortality on children who are especially vulnerable to diarrheal disease. These diseases are a particular threat to people with HIV/AIDS, who have compromised immune systems with limited resistance to opportunistic infections. Repeated bouts of diarrhea are not only debilitating for the patients but also increase the burden on caregivers, family livelihoods, and ultimately the community.

