

## Ethiopia – Samre

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Girl collecting water from Samre's existing water source.

In Samre, Ethiopia, water resources are critically low. With traditional sources of drinking water either at risk of depletion or already dried up, most families must walk 2-3 hours to the nearest water source. During the dry season, this distance doubles. The lack of safe drinking water is having devastating effects on the communities - instances of water-related diseases, such as giardia, bilharziasis, schistosomiasis and cholera, are on the rise, resulting in a significant regional increase in child mortality.

Using an integrated approach, the Samre Water and Sanitation Project combines health/sanitation education with the sanitation and water system construction. Combining these two approaches has shown to lead to a greater reduction of childhood mortality than any other tactic. In addition, the project will move water collection sites closer to the homes, leading to a significant decrease in the amount of time women and girls spend collecting water (from 2-3 hours to 15-20 minutes). Decreasing the amount of time women and girls spend collecting water will ultimately

benefit the whole family. Women will have time to pursue other activities, such as farming and other income-earning activities, and girls will be able to attend school.

The project got underway in late 2005. Initial project activities focused on establishing representative baselines. In cooperation with local health care workers, our partner organization began the first stage of an intensive community hygiene and sanitation education program. Samre also began construction of latrines in model homes. These model homes will then be used to encourage wider community participation. With the help of our partner organization, the communities also elected a water committee to oversee the project.

Additionally, our partner initiated and conducted a comprehensive well site selection survey. With traditional sources so depleted, the survey was critical in identifying the most viable water supply. Whatever sources were chosen had to be hydrologically, financially and socially viable. Based on the surveys findings, eight sites for new wells have been selected and construction will begin over the next three months.



With water sources critically low in the Samre region, women are often forced to collect their family's water one cup at a time.