



Integrated Water Resources Management Strategies in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: Challenges and Solutions

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One of the millennium development goals adopted by the international community requires “to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies”. To reach these goals, various management approaches are being tried ranging from top down to bottom up. While top-down approaches require precise and centrally available knowledge for engineering design and management of the water resource with minimal involvement at the local level, bottom-up approaches start at the local level with limited and disparate information. For this approach priority setting and information gathering require participation of all stakeholders including agency personnel, land owners and others. The latter presumes organizational skills within the community that are usually not available. In addition, these communities face a host of other problems some of which are rooted in poverty preventing them from fully participating.

This paper highlights two watersheds in Ethiopia in Amhara regional state in which integrated water resource management activities were attempted. These activities carried out by different implementing agencies consisted of existing drinking water systems repair, erosion control measures, protecting land, water-saving supply structures, income-generation activities, and community empowerment. Financing of labor was achieved through food aid, community volunteer programs, and other means.

We will report on the effectiveness, successes and failures of the watershed management approaches and water resource activities. The initial results show that one of

the most critical steps in the project was the early involvement and training of the stakeholders.

Although planning at regional scale can set the regional priorities, implementation on the local scale requires a watershed community that is well organized and dedicated, cooperating with knowledgeable and trust worthy collaborating-agency personnel.