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CASE STUDY IN BRIEF

Water-point mapping: data for decision making in South Gondar, Ethiopia

Introduction

In order to encourage the zone government in South Gondar to invest more funds into operation and maintenance of existing water infrastructure, and decrease emphasis on new construction, CARE Ethiopia partnered with the zone government of South Gondar to conduct a water-point inventory of South Gondar Zone. By 2017, zone government had used the mWater tool to map more than 9,700 water-points, serving 1.44 million people, across all 11 woredas of the South Gondar Zone.

Intervention

- Zone government staff and CARE Ethiopia staff were trained to use digital tablets and the mWater tool.

- Investment in water-point mapping was made jointly; CARE supported and financed transportation, while zone government dedicated personnel and time to conduct surveys across all 11 woredas of the South Gondar Zone.

- Results found an average water-point functionality of 70% across the zone, ranging from 61 – 78% across the eleven woredas. Poor management was identified as the largest contributor to non-functionality.

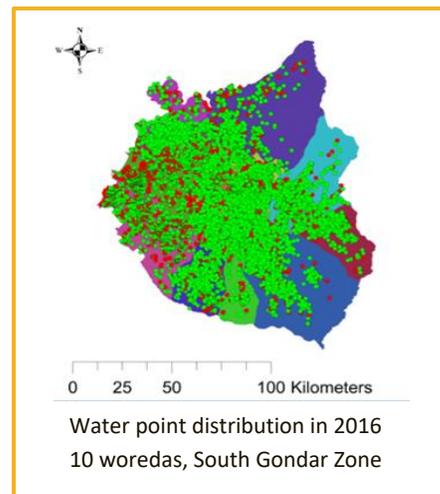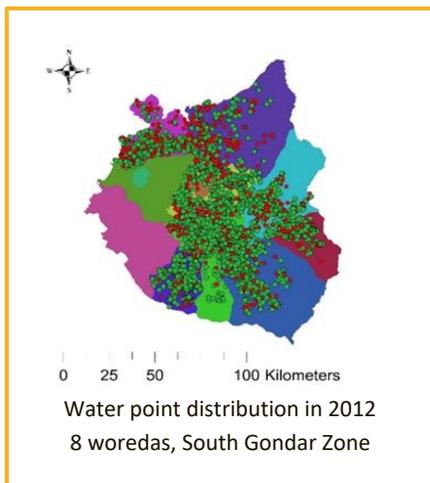**Project Name:** WASH+, South Gondar

Target Area: South Gondar, Ethiopia

Donors: Hilton Foundation, USAID, Johnson and Johnson, European Union, and AUsAid

Partner: Zone government of South Gondar

Budget: $16 million

Impact: Access to WASH to more than 808,120 people; 2,994 water supply schemes, 250 institutional latrines, and 683 self-supply water schemes

- Discussions with water point committees suggested that O&M costs averaged about $200/year or $17/month across surveyed water-points, but only 60% of communities had sufficient O&M funds to cover these costs.

- Using the mWater platform, functional and non-functional water points were digitally visualized on a map of the South Gondar Zone. (See Figure 1)

- These maps helped zone government to identify non-functional water points, as well as geographic areas that were underserved and had insufficient water access.

- As a result of this visualization, zone government increased investment in repair of non-functional water-points, and prioritized construction of new water-points in underserved areas.

Water point distribution in 2012
8 woredas, South Gondar Zone

Water point distribution in 2016
10 woredas, South Gondar Zone

Key take-aways

Investing in the right data for decision making is important: In South Gondar, water-point data has influenced planning and siting of new water infrastructure in underserved areas, and increased Zone government investment in operation, maintenance and repair.

Collaboration with South Gondar zone government was essential: This was a joint effort to map all of the zone's water points, but Zone government had to lead the way.

Data is political: For the Zone government, identifying failed water points meant a reduction in coverage rates reported regionally and nationally. There are ongoing issues of data ownership and narratives told & not told by these data.

Mapping in important, but action depends on capacity to respond to findings: Beyond data collection, how do we support government to respond, and overcome limitations?

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