






Ethiopia



## School Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion


Oromo Self Reliance Association (OSRA)   

OSRA targets school communities to increase access to WASH software such as education about hygiene combined with hardware such as sanitation facilities at school. Focusing on the two together reinforces change.

Launched in 2004, Not-for-profit, Drinking Water, Cross-sector, Cross-sector: Education, Women's Empowerment, East Africa: Ethiopia

Partners: District level government line offices, including the education office, water mineral and energy office, and health office.



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### Problem Addressed

Lack of water supply sources and sanitation services is one of the most critical problems of many schools in rural Ethiopia. Students, especially younger ones, skip school in search of water and often drink water from unprotected traditional hand dug wells, rivers, and streams. As a result, school communities are exposed to various water borne diseases such as diarrhea, intestinal worms, stomach aches, fever, etc and students miss school.

Another issue is the lack of appropriate sanitation facilities for children and teachers. Girls often skip school during their menstrual period as there is no Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) facility in the school compound. Furthermore, students defecate outside in and around the school compound which in turn is detrimental to the health of both students and teachers. Occasionally, girls get raped in the bushes when they relieve themselves outside or during their period. In addition, due to the lack of sanitation facilities near schools, teachers sometimes miss school as well. The lack of sanitation facilities exacerbates the health situation and the teaching-learning process in the schools and is one of the main reasons for large numbers of students dropping out of school.

### Innovative Approach

OSRA's WASH program is innovative in that it integrates both the implementation of improved sanitation and water "hardware" with the "software" of encouraging long-term behavior change. They have created an innovative water distribution structure by elevating the well head and placing a tanker to accommodate 11 students at a time that avoids a queue of students during break time to quench their thirst. They have also created a menstrual hygiene management room in the girls' room so girls can attend school. To ensure effective behavior change, OSRA has established school health clubs to educate and build the capacity of students, who can then teach their families how to make healthier sanitation choices.

## Program Solution

OSRA's WASH program in schools focuses on creating access to safe water supply, sanitation facilities, and capacity building of the school community, including development of safe water supply sources, construction of sanitation facilities, and promotion of behavior changes towards hygiene and sanitation, especially for menstrual hygiene management (MHM). The program also builds the capacity of the school to manage the water supply schemes and sanitation facilities in place.

The schools and families take significant ownership of the initiative by availing local materials and contributions from the school's annual budget, respectively. To further ensure sustainability, OSRA trains technicians to maintain the water schemes and establishes Water Supply and Sanitation committees (or WASH Committees) consisting of students, teachers, and parents. The committee is elected by the school community assuming their long-lasting contribution and dedications to the betterment of schools.

A secondary focus is on establishing and training school health clubs that promote hygienic practices, including for MHM, in the school and local community. OSRA works with the whole community utilizing an outreach approach via children. OSRA also collaborates with district-level health and education government officers. Teachers have started living around the schools and supporting their students even after classes are finished. All of these factors have significantly reduced school dropouts and have created an improved learning-teaching environment in the schools. OSRA uses schools as the center of change for the promotion of hygiene and sanitation, as well as environmental reconstruction and climate action.

Please visit this program profile at:

<http://washinnovations.r4d.org/program/school-water-supply-sanitation-and-hygiene-promotion>