



MILLENNIUM WATER ALLIANCE

Waye Godha Primary School & Community: The School Wins and the Community Does Too A Millennium Water Alliance (MWA)/Food for the Hungry (FH) Success Story

“Water helps humans, animals and plants, water is life, it finishes your thirst and gives you good health. We welcome FH and we thank them for our cleanliness. Water helps humans, animals and plants” – Original song translated from Kiswahili sung by health club members at Waye Godha Primary School – April 10, 2011

Waye Godha Primary School is set in a beautifully remote, rural community in the northern part of Kenya in a district called Sololo. Waye Godha is in the arid and semi-arid lands where water is extremely hard to come by.



Ethiopia lies just on the other side of the mountains overlooking the Waye Godha Primary schoolyard, seen in the picture on the left. To provide the school with water to drink, cook, and wash hands, many children at Waye Godha made a seven hour round-trip hike over those mountains and into Ethiopia. They left after school at 4 pm and arrived back in the village at 11 pm or later, depending on the size of the queue at a contaminated, open well on the other side. Fetching water didn't leave much time for doing schoolwork.

Since October 2010, those mountains aren't the only things gracing the Waye Godha schoolyard. A new 45m³ rainwater harvesting tank, 4 new latrines and 2 hand-washing stations are there too and life has changed dramatically for the schools' 228 students. Students no longer have to walk to Ethiopia for water. The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) improvements were made by Food for the Hungry (FH), teachers and the local community working together. I could see the pride in the eyes of Guyo Sara, the village elder, as he said “everything you see here physically, we united and we did the work. If we have water, this school lives, if there is no water this school closes.”

The head teacher and the parents easily recite the changes in their children's lives as a result of their partnership with FH: no more long trips to fetch water, no wasting instruction time queuing to use the latrine or running to use the bush, no more dirty hands spreading illness. More girls stay in school. Kids have more energy to play and study. Kids teach parents and younger brothers and sisters what they are learning about hygiene, sanitation, and sing that a clean environment is a healthy environment.

The school project has had an impact on the community as well. While the villagers continue to pray for rain – there has been a severe drought in the region since July 2010 – the school tank is being utilized to store government emergency relief water supplies for all 146 households. Without it, the community could store less than 10,000 liters of water, now they can store nearly 5 times that much.

Also with FH's help, villagers are building a rock catchment with underground storage to provide another source of precious water and they are constructing cattle troughs for livestock, donkeys and goats. Hygiene promotion activities designed and led by schoolchildren have spurred households to find ways to build latrines on their own. More and more are under construction each day.

“I am a mother who loves my children” said Buke Wago, mother of five, “the people at FH are also like mothers who love their children teaching us the importance of the tank and improved latrines. That is why I say you are like mothers. Thank you for coming to us.”

