



*Children benefitting from clean water through constructed water points hold a Samaritan's Purse flag aloft near their homes*

For 20 year-old Getenesh, a student at Soda secondary school in the southern Hadiya zone of Ethiopia, extremely limited access to safe drinking water had effects that reached into almost every aspect of her and her community's lives: "We faced frequent episodes of communicable diseases, like thyroid fever, cholera and other diarrheal diseases. We always felt that the water we collected beforehand could be contaminated."

As water collection duties typically fall on women and girls in Ethiopia, Getenesh had to take trips each day lasting over an hour to collect and carry water, on her back or via a donkey, from rivers and intermittent springs. These long journeys would not only put strain on young girls' backs, but also on their school lives too: "We would be late for school, and we would also need more water for our personal hygiene, including for our menstrual hygiene. During water collection time, many women would also quarrel at the water collection queues.

"My school uniform lost its original color when I washed with river water, forcing my family to buy extra uniforms each year," Getenesh continued, "The river water was so dirty it even changed the color of our food and kitchen utensils. Sometimes we were not interested to drink water from the river, even when we were thirsty."

Over the last three years, Samaritan's Purse has worked in the Hadiya zone to improve communities' access to clean water, provide sanitation facilities such as latrines and menstrual hygiene management materials, and teach optimal hygiene and sanitation practices.

Through the construction of multiple water points and a concrete reservoir in the area, Samaritan's Purse has provided tens of thousands of people with access to clean drinking water. For one water spring in the Sidama neighborhood in the Hadiya zone, 16,135 people will benefit from potable water which will make a great difference to many parts of their lives.

For many of these water points, Samaritan's Purse laid water pipe networks underground, with many members of the beneficiary communities excavating the trenches for these pipes. At each water point, Samaritan's Purse has established water user committees, training and equipping members of the community to conduct minor maintenance works that may be required once the water points are handed over.

For Getenesh, the new clean water points have had a considerable impact on her life: "Now I don't have to walk and carry water so far, there is no more waiting time at the water points, I am no longer late for school, and psychologically I feel free from the fear of contaminated water! It is unbelievable for my community to have safe and clean water within our village. Our community have no words to express the feeling of having this water – we can say thank you Samaritan's Purse!"

Getenesh has also benefitted from the water, sanitation and hygiene program at her school, where Samaritan's Purse also constructed a clean water point and school latrines: "As a student of Soda Secondary School I am lucky because we were also gifted with water and improved latrines built by Samaritan's Purse last year. Now we use water for drinking and washing our hands, and we can now easily manage our menstrual hygiene.

"We did not feel comfortable washing our hands beforehand, since we knew that the water was unclean. Now we can wash our hands using clean water and soap! As a student I am sure that the waterborne diseases that frequently affected our community will dramatically decrease, if we keep using these clean and safe water sources, and so avoid the contamination of water while at home, too.

"We thank our almighty God, because as Christians we had prayed for a long time to have clean and safe water to our community... Now our prayers have been answered through Samaritan's Purse. On behalf of the community I am grateful and appreciate all the efforts made to construct these water points here."



*Getenesh collects clean drinking water for her family from a water point constructed by Samaritan's Purse*