

Annex 1

Case Study 1: WaterAid's impact on people living with HIV/AIDS

The impacts of WaterAid's projects go beyond the provision of clean water and improved sanitation. WaterAid's work, by improving access to water and sanitation, is vital to improving people's standard of living, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable, such as people living with HIV/AIDS, female headed households, the elderly, disabled and widows. WaterAid is ensuring that the benefits of improved services are felt by the most vulnerable people in communities by developing more effective targeting tools. WaterAid's work decreases poverty and improves people's lives by leading to better health. more specifically, WaterAid's work has had a positive health impact on people with HIV/AIDS.

Water, sanitation and improved hygiene – essential for people living with HIV/AIDS

There is well documented evidence that people living in poverty who contract the HIV virus do not live as long as people who are not poor. People who are overworked, poorly nourished, and who have parasitic diseases already have weakened immune systems, and are likely to progress to AIDS much more quickly than those that are healthy. Not surprisingly the time between HIV infection and the development of AIDS is much shorter in Africa than in Europe and North America.

The risks posed by poor water and sanitation facilities can be fatal for people who have contracted the HIV virus. HIV carriers have debilitated immune systems and are highly susceptible to acquiring communicable diseases and infections, including those that are water and hygiene related. Minor diarrhoea, typhoid or typhus can all prove fatal for someone suffering from HIV/AIDS. The provision of a safe and adequate water supply can help to prevent the risks of exposure to such illnesses.

Diarrhoea is extremely common amongst those living with the HIV virus. In Ledeta, an area of Addis Ababa, 90% of HIV/AIDS cases have diarrhoeal problems related to illnesses like dysentery, typhoid and food poisoning, according to WaterAid local partner Progynist. This forces them to make frequent visits to unsafe latrines. For many in Ethiopia the availability of any latrine is still a luxury. In areas of Addis Ababa where WaterAid works with Progynist 61% of houses do not have access to latrine facilities. Instead people are using open spaces or old over-flowing latrines, or throwing faeces wrapped in a plastic bag into open ditches.

Improving access to safe water and sanitation improves the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS. Fetching water and visiting the latrine require time and energy, both of which people with HIV/AIDS are likely to have increasingly less of as their condition worsens and their needs increase. Not only will they be less able to walk to fetch water for

themselves, they are also likely to be in a poor financial situation, and will struggle to afford to pay for any extra water. Their illness also places other financial burdens on them, and for some people difficult choices may have to be made between buying water and other necessities, such as medicine. Providing access to water at rates affordable to the poor ensures that people have more money for essential medicines.

Discrimination is also a huge problem for those suffering with HIV/AIDS. This is most commonly experienced in relation to latrines, where ignorance leads to sufferers being banned from using latrines as others fear they will become infected. There can also be discrimination amongst family members with children refusing to care for their parents through fear of contamination.

Monitoring change in Ethiopia amongst people living with HIV/AIDS.

Improved water and sanitation facilities can have a strong impact on the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. WaterAid is working with an Ethiopian women's organisation, Progynist, to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations improve their access to water and sanitation services. They have conducted research which not only shows the importance of water and sanitation to people living with HIV/AIDS, but also the direct improvements to people's lives that this can have.

WaterAid works with Progynist in Lideta, an area within Addis Ababa where only 33% of the population has adequate access to clean water. The project area is a highly congested and neglected slum area. There is a shortage of health facilities with only one health centre and two health posts. Lack of an adequate number of sanitation facilities, poor hygienic practices, and low awareness of the links between sanitation and health has exposed the population to hygiene and sanitation related diseases. 67% of residents are forced to walk more than ten minutes to fetch water. To avoid a lengthy walk to a tap-stand many people buy water from private vendors and in recent research 32% of interviewees said that this was their usual source of water. At 15p for a 20-litre jerry can (4 times the price at tap stands) such savings in time and energy come at a high price.

Living with HIV/AIDS requires paying close attention to personal hygiene. In research carried out by Progynist 34% of people interviewed with HIV/AIDS reported that their water consumption had increased since they'd been ill. Wounds and lesions need cleaning, and clothes and bedding must be washed often. Fever, accompanied by sweating, is common and many people drink more water or need bathing to cool down. Clean, well-aired houses are important if tuberculosis – the most common opportunistic infection – is to be avoided. 23% of respondents said that they needed more water but either couldn't afford it or had no-one to fetch it for them, clearly shortages of time, energy and/or money can prevent people living with HIV/AIDS from getting access to the extra water they need.

In families living with HIV/AIDS the responsibility of caring for the sick and providing for the family often falls to the children, with all the implications this has for their education and development. Those people who are ill with the virus may be too weak to fetch water and so their children may carry out this hard, time-consuming task. The

volume of domestic waste also increases with illness: used bandages, medicine bottles, etc. Again it is often the children who become responsible for its disposal. Yet many are too small to reach up into the skips and so leave the rubbish lying around the skip on the street, adding to the pollution and creating a breeding ground for disease.

Progynist

WaterAid has been supporting Progynist since 1998 and is tackling the issues facing people living with HIV/AIDS head on. Progynist delivers hygiene and sanitation education by training school teachers, running workshops, and employing sanitation guards who carry out house- to-house visits. It also constructs sanitation facilities including communal latrines, public baths, waste water drainage, water points and laundry slabs. Progynist understands that those people living with HIV/AIDS are some of the most vulnerable in the community and should be targeted.

Progynist is trying to support people like **Keria Teshome**. Keria is 32 years old and has been living in Lideta sub-city for the last 8 years. She has 3 children. 6 months ago her two-year old son died from an AIDS-related illness after acquiring the virus from his parents. Keria was tested in 2000 following her husband's diagnosis as HIV positive. Six months ago she developed full-blown AIDS and now experiences regular diarrhoea and fever. It is essential that she has access to clean water for cooking and cleaning. Her eldest daughter, aged 13, has been forced to drop out of school to look after her mother as well as perform all the house-hold tasks such as cooking, fetching water from the public water stand 20 minutes away, cleaning the house, and looking after her young siblings. Even though the family's water needs have increased since Keria has been sick, the family are unable to fetch enough water because her daughter is already over-burdened with the household activities and looking after her mother. Progynist is helping to establish a cheaper and closer water source that will mean that the family has enough water to improve Keria's quality of life.