

# **ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR WATER SUPPLY SERVICES IN THE ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS**

Seifu A. Tilahun; Tammo S. Steenhuis; Aschalew A. Tigabu; Tegene M. Tarekegne; Meseret Belachew Addisie; Zemenu Awoke Alemayehu

## **ABSTRACT**

Access to safe drinking water supplies services in the Ethiopian Highland are among the lowest despite high investment. To find the underlying causes, a study was conducted evaluating administrative and management approaches of over 100 water supply systems. In general, the results show that adaptive administrative procedures with decision making power at the community level during design and construction were more sustainable than when the decisions were made by a central authority. Participatory approaches that did not include transfer of decision power were only marginally more effective than typical engineering methods. Other factors important for the sustainability of water system were the degree of community organization before the project was implemented, follow-up training and the existence of clean nearby water sources. Access to drinking water in the Ethiopian Highlands can be improved significantly in giving communities real ownership of their potable water systems starting a the design phase.

**PALAVRA-CHAVE: potable water, ownership**