



KESWICK  
FAIR TRADE

# WATER WORKS

(or doesn't, as the case may be)

WaterAid

Choche, the community with which we are linked, is situated in the verdant Western Highlands of Ethiopia. In spite of two rainy seasons, reliable access to 'safe' water is confined to four months. Choche's water supply consists of three protected springs: an old government facility and two paid for with the Fairtrade Premium. These are located in different places in the countryside, all about 1km. from the town centre.

The main provider of water to the township is the government spring which feeds six tap stands evenly spaced along the main street and operated by tap attendants at certain times of the day. Places are reserved in the queue by brightly coloured containers which are then collected and filled up later at 'opening time'! The facility is in need of repair. When we visited, the tank used to store water from the spring before pumping to the town was almost empty. Something had gone wrong with the ground water flow, which needed investigation.



'Queuing' for water, Choche market place.

In Ethiopia water collection is the job of women and girls, and often takes priority over education. Boys can be seen running empty handed alongside women and girls carrying heavy containers of water. When we visited the Fairtrade springs, one of them was in need of repair whereas the other was in good working order.

We also found that the school had no piped water. Any water needed has to be collected from one of the springs making hygiene as well as the teaching of health education among other things very difficult. The Director told us that the school had a right to dig a well if the presence of a viable source of ground water under the school compound could be proved. The cost of this is prohibitive for the community so we decided to see how we could help and this prompted a visit to Water Aid in Addis on our return from Choche which proved very fruitful. We now hope to find ways of funding the cost of a survey to establish whether there is a viable source of ground water. This will be done at the end of the next dry season.

If a viable source is found, we hope that sufficient money can be raised to pay for the installation of a well and a hand pump in the school compound. Water Aid also agreed to obtain estimates for the repair of the Fairtrade spring. We left the Water Aid office in Addis feeling very satisfied and optimistic at the results of our visit. Anyone who would like to support this project can get further information from campaign members.

*Cath Glover*