

## Engagement Discussion with Godnaw Garbage Collectors Association

Godnaw Garbage Collectors Association is different from other garbage collectors associations by its composition and formation. According to the members, they were all street dwellers around the Saint George Church and some were residing in the demolished cemetery. The name of their association is derived from the Amharic word Godana (Street).



While they were street dwellers, before 8 years, one individual approached them and hired them as garbage collectors in his garbage collection agency. He used to pay them very little. But when garbage collection associations started being organized, they quit the agency and formed their association with 17 members (15 males and 2 females). In the association, there are former army officers and former civil employees expelled from their jobs. When they formed their association, they do not have a cart nor a spade, etc. But they preferred to work for themselves and started to carry the garbage on their shoulders. Observing their effort an individual gave them Birr 3,000.00 (Three thousand). By that fund they purchased 22 small carts and other necessary cleaning equipments. Now they all have formed a family and their wives/husbands work with the association by replacing them when a member has a problem.

They believe that their life has a difference, since they have formed a family. But the life has become unbearable since the cost of living is so high both for themselves and their customers. The new municipality rules allocating garbage collecting vehicles only for three half days have made their working very difficult. The other four days and the three half days, they are idle. They tried to look for other jobs, but they could not get any.

The meeting participants were briefed about the past three year activities by the AAU MSW students' community assessment and MSW thesis research. They were briefed about the basic principles of the Community-University Partnership and what the Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership has done so far and its future plans.

The participants appreciated the principles of the Community-University Partnership, and what they want is an institution or group of people or individuals who could fill their gaps on building their knowledge and show them the directions for community development. They believe that they could work in a better condition if trained and are not looking only for donors to support them. They wish to be trained in driving license. They have also checked the possibility of recycling the garbage and decompose for fertilizer, but getting plot of land for such activities and training was difficult for them.

They hope that the core committee and the technical committee could support them after taking the ABCD training. The Godnaw garbage collection association members hope that this process is their additional support for their wellbeing. They agreed to be part and parcel of the Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership and elected two representatives to the Core Group and also attend the ABCD training to identify their strengths, assets and gaps.