

Gedam Sefer Partnership Core Group & Technical Committee Strengthening



Core Group Members

A total of 49 community representatives and 13 School of Social Work students, Love for Children Organization & Gedam Sefer Partnership staff attended the meeting. The project coordinator welcomed the participants and re-briefed the importance of the community-university partnership. He also explained the results of the previous 'community strength and gap identification' discussion with the community members and children. The results of the previous discussion findings and the community-university partnership goals and objectives were prepared in Amharic as a note and distributed to the participants. Accordingly the project coordinator urged the participants to review these points carefully, since these are going to be the leading directions to the partnership's action research activities for the community development activities.

As the community strength and gap identifications indicate that there is a great need to focus on children, youth and family issues, the community members and the discussion participants should give more focus to these issues. The coordinator asked the participants to forward their issues of concern based on the previous discussions and the summaries of the findings. The participants expressed their views that they all share these findings and would work together to solve their problems based on their strengths.

The coordinator explained to the participants that today's main agenda is to strengthen or reform the Partnership Technical Committee which was formed on April 2007. The reasons are that, due to different reasons and also since most of the Technical Committee members were unable to meet because of work load and other obligations. Even though the previously formed Core Group had 19 membership, who do accept the invitation now are only 10 of them; and from the 7 Technical Committee members, 4 are willing to participate as a core group members.

The participants stressed that membership composition should have about 11 members representing all groups (Idirs, children, youth car washers, garbage collectors and former technical committee members). Based on this, the participants were asked to elect their own representatives from the five groups. That is, Idirs to elect 2 representatives with one reserve, children 2 representatives (one female and one male), car washers 2, garbage collectors 2 and the former core committee 3 representatives. The community members also advised the Technical Committee to study the alternatives to strengthen the partnership project by proposing and forming sub-committees with different community tasks. Based on this, the groups elected their representatives.

Ato Wassie expressed his concern about the composition of the technical committee members so that they should be committed and with full dedication for their community's development. He stressed that it will be good to elect members with less burden and the community members should find ways to facilitate an office for the partnership project. The participants stressed the importance of having an office for the committee activities and for the project employees. They all pledge to have a positive attitude to bring change.



Technical Committee Members

The Executive Director of Love for Children Organization, W/ro Lemlem Tekuye, appreciated the community members for their commitment to devote their time for the volunteer participation for the partnership. She explained Love for Children Organization experience in bringing attitudinal change on how to avoid un-necessary expenditures and form a saving and credit scheme, only by saving small coins per week. According to the Director of Love for Children Organization, within three years, with technical and training support given to the poor women, there are 75 saving association each having 15 to 20 members. And within the three years' time, the associations have saved more than Ethiopian Birr 200,000. These women saving associations give loans to their members, buy consumable and other

commodities at cheaper dealing places and distribute it to their members with relatively lower prices and deposit the profits to their accounts. She asked the community members to use their strengths and networks to solve their problems and not to look for donations from elsewhere.

The core group meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM and the elected representatives remained behind and elected their Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. The three elected leaders will meet on Wednesday February 6th at 5:00 PM and discuss on how to proceed, while all the elected representatives will meet at 5:00 PM Friday 8th.

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Project Coordinator