

Engagement Discussion with Garbage Collectors Associations

Two Garbage Collectors Associations were invited to attend the community-university engagement discussion. They were Alem Tena Garbage Collectors Association and Denek Garbage Collectors Association.

1. Alem Tena Garbage Collectors Association is organized in 2004 with 6 males and 24 female members. But now the membership has decreased to 18 females. The reasons for membership withdrawal according to the members are less income, the work is energy and time consuming, etc. They collect dry garbage from residential houses three days a week and everyday from hotels, cafes and restaurants.



Their customers pay the service fares once a month. But now some of their customers are unwilling to pay. Because of this their income is decreasing. The garbage collection materials such as carts and spades are deteriorating and some are out of use.

2. Denek Garbage Collection Association is organized in 2003 with one female and four male members. In addition to garbage collection, they have tried to educate their customers on waste disposal and health problems associated to waste. In addition to its members, they hire garbage collectors as daily laborers based on their work load.



The members of the two garbage collection associations believe that they are giving a valuable service to the community and give respect to their work. But the income they earn is little. The garbage collection could not engage them full time. They wish if they could use their extra time in some other income generating activities. They also want to recycle the garbage and make it useful. But they lack the knowhow and a plot of land and shade to try this activity.

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

The participants were hoping that this (the Community-University Partnership) was a donor agency like others. But were clarified the partnership's motto is to equip the community with methods to identify its strengths, assets and gaps. Solutions for the community's gaps are to be sought together with the community members after identifying the community's strengths, assets and after prioritizing the community's gaps. This was out of their expectations. But, after a detailed discussion, they agreed to be part and parcel of the Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership. They elected three representatives to the Core Group and also attend the ABCD training to identify their strengths, assets and gaps to find solutions.