

**The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership
Three Days Discussions Summary with Community Members and Youth
December 27th 2007 up to January 5th 2008**



The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership project activity conducted community discussion with the Addis Ababa University School of Social Works PhD students as an action research project. The discussion conducted with the community members (Idir leaders, elders, women and youth), children and youth (both in and out of school) identified their community's strengths, gaps and possible solutions.

A. Gedam Sefer Community Strengths:

1. Strong motivation of community members to be engaged in productive works
 - a. Youth and women are involved in woodwork, metal work, tailoring and income generating activities.
 - b. Women organized associations and are engaged in garbage collection and disposal; food processing and selling.
 - c. Youths trained in vocational skills training are exploring initial grants for productive works.
2. Women and youth who used to consider petty trading as marginal activity are now engaged in these small scale business activities.
3. Community members trained on income generating schemes and vocational skills by Christian Children's Fund and other organizations are ready to participate in any development activity.
4. Community members within the neighbourhood are giving care and support for orphans and vulnerable children who lost their parents to due HIV/AIDS.
5. Many youth who were drug addicts and juvenile delinquents have organized association with their own project ideas.
6. When a person in the neighbourhood is chronically ill or dies, the neighbours provide psychosocial support to the family.
7. There was a coalition of Idirs with the objective of community development and welfare; this can be remobilized to contribute to the development of its constituency.
8. Some Idirs support the elderly; and provide educational material support for orphan and vulnerable children.

B. Gedam Sefer Community members gaps (weakness)

1. Inability of families to provide support for the basic needs of children mainly due to poverty.
2. Families could not provide proper care, guidance and control to their children.
3. Loose relationship between parents and schools.

4. The projects of some NGOs have led the community to develop dependency syndrome.
5. Expansion of local liquor houses and drug/substance abuse like chat has exposed the youth to addictions and negatively affected their interest and motivation to productive works.
6. Youth members who are engaged in productive works lack regular skill upgrading training. There is skill gap to produce goods and services that are competitive in the local market.
7. Juvenile delinquency, petty theft, and insecure environment for children and girls.
8. Prevalence of pornographic and violent video films which parents and children watch is affecting the children's behaviour.
9. Street girls are sexually abused and are also use commercial sex as the means of survival. This makes them vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. This has resulted to the increase of street families and children.
10. Lack of youth centres like indoor and outdoor games, library, and other sport and recreational facilities.
11. Civic education at schools and the mass media do not teach children about their obligation, but focus only on their rights.
12. Large family size and congestion at household level.
13. Lack of moral and spiritual education for children particularly in schools.
14. Conflict within the family because of drunken fathers and the development of weak family relationship
15. Lack of guardian and shortage of educational material for orphan and vulnerable children.
16. Insecurity of children by street youth.
17. Alcoholism in fathers and young male children is increasing and causing family disturbance and disintegration



C. Gedam Sefer Community Members solutions for the identified weaknesses

1. Strengthen the family ties and empower them through income generating schemes.
2. Equip families with parenting skills.
3. Change liquor houses and drug shops into productive centres.
4. Establish and strengthen youth centres.