

## **January 2008 Progress Report**

**The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership Action Research Project is on progress.**

### **1.1. Discussion with Idir Leaders**

In order to have a fertile ground for the Community-University Partnership, working with the civil society organization leaders such as Idir leaders is vital. The reasons are that Idir is the communities' own organization that can mobilize its members if they think it is beneficial for the community. The core task is to convince them and get their full support. It is based on this that we tried to scan and identified that there are about 18 Idirs within the kebele 03/09. We invited all the 18 Idirs and 10 of them, participated our discussion meetings. Of which 8 of the Idirs volunteered to join the partnership Core Group. These eight Idirs have a large number of heads of household membership. From the eight Idirs leaders, two of them are elected as members of the Technical Committee. Again, one of them is elected as Vice Chairperson of the Technical Committee.

### **1.2 Discussions with the Two Garbage Collectors Associations**

The engagement discussion with groups involved with garbage collection activities continued with Edget Fana Garbage Collectors Association and with Godanaw Garbage Collectors having 17 members. Both groups have positive attitude towards their activities and appreciate what they earn from their duties. Especially, the Godanaw Garbage Collection Association members have made an effort to change their living conditions, and improved themselves. They were former street dwellers, but now formed a family and live by renting private and kebele houses.

### **1.3. Discussions with Children age 7 and 14**

The previous engagement discussion was conducted with 28 children aged between 7 and 14. In order to involve more children and gather more ideas on the assets, gaps and solutions from the children, we invited additional 28 children and conducted a discussion with 56 of them. They identified theirs and their community's assets and gaps and forwarded innovative solutions for these identified gaps based on the communities assets. They also elected their representatives democratically.

### **1.4. Strengthening the Partnership Core Group and Technical Committee**

The two car washers associations representatives (8) having 87 members; the four garbage collectors association representatives (8) having a total of 66 members; the seven Idir leaders with more than 700 heads of households memberships; and six children delegated by the 56 children together with the former 10 Core Group members and the nine newly added community elders and women strengthened the Core Group. Now the strengthened Core Group has 48 members. The Core Group members proposed to improve the composition of the Technical Committee by incorporating the representatives of all groups with 11 members. Accordingly, all groups elected two representatives each, while the 19 community members elected three representatives. The newly reformed Technical Committee elected a chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

## **2. Tentative Programs for February 2008**

- 2.1. The Technical Committee will prepare its own rules and regulations to perform its duties and coordinate the Core Group in contributing its share to partnerships objectives and goals.
- 2.2. In line with the community assets and gaps identifications, the Core Group and the Technical Committee will facilitate discussion meetings with children; and then with children and their parents. These two discussions may lead to consecutive engagement activities focused on children's issues.
- 2.2. In consultation with the Technical Committee, Core Group members will form different committees with different tasks.