

July 2008 Progress Report
The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership Action Research Project Progress

1. Children's Summer Program

The Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership Action Research Project program in July and August focused on a trial basis on the children's request on how to improve their basic life skills on how to communicate in English.

The Project Coordinator and the Partnership Committee members agreed that the committee members, the partnership members and families of the children would come and supervise and assist the program activity. Based on this all the children were asked to bring their family (one adult member) and sign an agreement to allow their children to participate in the program. All did except one girl, who said that she is not ready to ask her mother or brother or sister to know her participation in the program and she preferred to quit. Some partnership members and families of children were willing to come and observe the children's program, but most were not ready to come and observe.

The program participants on the last week on June were divided into two groups. Richelle and her husband Nathan have one group each. On the second week of the program, Richelle's sister, Juana, joined us and took the third group of children. Each of them had 50 minutes program with each group. The communication was so friendly. The children, their families and the partnership committee appreciate the Richelle's and families efforts. On the third week of the program, on Tuesday July 15th 2008, the children visited the Addis Ababa University Wildlife Museum. They were taken on two rounds using a public transport bus. The children expressed their appreciation and they also informed their parents about their visit. The visit has a learning objective so as to acquaint them about the importance of preserving wildlife and the destructions made by man on ecology. On the fourth week of the program, on July 22nd 2008, Tuesday, the children visited the Addis Ababa University Ethnological Museum. As of July 15th, the children were taken on two rounds. The visit was an excitement for the children.

The learning and the interaction among themselves and the volunteers (Richelle, Nathan and Juana) were very good. In addition, five volunteer high school students from within the Gedam Sefer community were five volunteer students were assisting the program activity.

The Principal of Bethlehem School and the whole staff were very uncomplaining whenever the children broke the school's rules and discipline. They were understanding and changed classrooms three times. Even though it is too early to conclude, entertaining about 100 children is very complicated and needs the involvement of more than one social worker and a community worker, and handling older children is not as easy as handling the smaller children. The partnership committee members and the community members will have discussion on how to involve children with future similar programs and also on the children's discussion forums.

2. The Partnership Committee Meetings

The Partnership Committee members have conducted 2 meetings and assigned two of its members to plan the Ethiopian 2001 Calendar Year activities. The committee members have discussed their wishes for the next year activities.

3. Life and Social Skills Discussions with Children

The Addis Ababa University School of Social Works MSW students have conducted with the children a half-day discussion with older children on July 24th and with the smaller children on July 25th. The MSW students will prepare the discussion reports on parenting issues. It was observed that the smaller children were more attentive and eager to express their ideas openly and with patience than the older children.