

July to August 12, 2008 Progress Report
The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership Action Research Project Progress

1. Children's Summer Program

The Partnership's Children's Summer Program from the last week of June to the first 12 days of August focused on improving the communication skills. The program was to be conducted by Richelle Haines, an MSW student from Loyola University in Chicago, USA who was doing her field placement in Ethiopia. But accompanying her was her husband Nathan, her sister and her two friends came. They all worked with full devotion and committed their time from one week (two of her friends), three weeks (her sister) and throughout the program, she and her husband.

The communication skills of the children were progressive. They were motivated to read short storybooks both in class and by borrowing books. The children had a chance to perform short drama both in Amharic and English. What was surprising was that most of their plays were focused on parent and children relationships, family issues such as disagreements between a husband and a wife, and issues related to daily neighborhood disputes on minor issues. And they did it perfectly—as if they were trained to do it by adult instructors!

On August 8, 2008, the children's parents and the partnership members were invited to windup the summer program. The children staged English songs, and conducted two short plays (one in Amharic and the other in English).

The English short play was about parenting. It lasted about eight minutes, but with a strong message. It was about a family with one daughter and one son. Their daughter has friends and was visiting her friends, but did not focus on her education. At the same time, one of her friends was focusing on her education. The family was lenient and the mother wanted the father to advise their daughter, but the father wanted the mother to advise the daughter and follow her advice.

The Amharic short play focused on child trafficking and was also about a lax family. The lax family had one daughter and was similar to the family in the English play in that they did not advise their daughter in a proper way. The husband and the wife were blaming one another about their daughter's situation. At last the father chased their daughter and she joined two street children (a girl and a boy). In addition to this, one boy and a girl were brought by a middleman (trafficker) to Addis Ababa. He had promised that the two children will get the opportunity for an education, but the children end up as a guard and a maid. After a while, the children could not bear the situation. They end up as street children and join the other three street children. These street children discussed their former days and the causes that forced them to the street.

The parents and the partnership members appreciated the program. Finally, the children gave presents to the two teachers (Richelle and Nathan Haines). The partnership also awarded a certificate of appreciation to all volunteers, five US citizens and five Ethiopian youth.

2. The Gedam Sefer Community Partnership August 8th 2008 Meeting

2.2 Reflection about the Children's Summer Program

The community members appreciated the Children's Summer Program and the improvements they saw on the children's communication skills both in English and Amharic. Community members, organizations and schools who wish to have a generation to take responsibility and build their country and who claim to promote children's wellbeing should focus on improving the life skills and communication skills of children similar to the Gedam Sefer Partnership.

2.3 Strengthening the Community Partnership Committee

Due to different reasons the Committee Chairperson and the Secretary were not able to accomplish their tasks. The chairperson informed the community members that he could not continue to be the chairperson and also as a committee member because of workload. He prefers and insisted that he should be replaced. After a detailed discussion, the community members agreed to replace him. The secretary was asked to lead the meeting, but he was absent. Since this was not his first time, the partnership members decided to replace him and he was replaced.

2.4 Annual Action Plan

The partnership committee has presented the draft Annual Action Plan to the members three days before the GS-CUP General Assembly Meeting. After a detailed discussion they agreed that the Action Plan is workable and has a good intention to the livelihood of the community.

The 2001 Ethiopian calendar Action Plan approved by the partnership community members has 11 major items. The partnership community members appreciated the partnership committee members for their efforts and concerns for their community's wellbeing.

According to them, the points that should have more emphasis are securing an office. They appreciated the Children's Summer Program and stressed that more children should be involved in this program. For this, since the kebele has 14 zones (neighborhoods), the committee together with the community members should facilitate conditions to the children to conduct different discussions forums. They believe that the life skills improvement of the children is their primary concern.

They also believe that more community members should be invited to contribute their share for the wellbeing of their community. Similar to the children's discussions, the community members should benefit from such discussions and include more members.

In order to accomplish the above tasks and have a legal backing, the committee and the community members agreed that the Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership be registered as a legal civic association by the Federal Ministry of Justice. The committee assigned two of the committee members and the project coordinator to accomplish this task.

Gedam Sefer Community University Partnership 2001 (2008/2009) Annual Plan

	Action	First quarter Meskerm - Hidar	Second Quarter Tahisas- Yekatit	Third Quarter Megabit- Ginbot	Fourth Quarter Sene- Nehasie	Remarks
1	Negotiate with the Kebele Administration for the Partnership Office Space	X				This is a priority for the partnership to be settled by the First quarter
2	Identify community concerns, problem and look for alternative solution	X	X	X	X	It is an ongoing process throughout the year
3	Incorporate new members and strengthen the Partnership		X	X	X	
4	Mobilize the community and other collaborators to establish a Youth Centre and Library	X	X	X	X	
5	Strengthen the children's participation with more educational discussions by including more children under the age 14	X	X	X	X	
6	Look for income generating activities to strengthen the partnership	X	X	X	X	
7	Facilitate educational discussion and training forums	X	X	X	X	
8	Follow up the conditions of books distributed to different schools and libraries	X	X	X	X	
9	Strengthen the partnership with different networking possibilities	X	X	X	X	
10	Evaluate the partnership activities	X	X	X	X	
11	Plan for the coming year 2002 (2009/2010)				X	Based on the achievement and lessons learnt throughout the year