

## **Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership Project December 2007 Report**

The Gedam Sefer Community-University Partnership Action Research Project is on progress. This is a continuation of the MSW 1<sup>st</sup> batch students' community assessment and MSW research findings.

### **1. Recruitment of Community Outreach Workers.**

In order facilitate the ongoing action research, two community out-reach workers employment was facilitated. Vacancy announcements were posted. A total of 11 applicants submitted their documents; among these 7 fulfilled the criterion. Written exams were given, and 3 female and 3 male applicants were called for interview. The interview was conducted on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2007; with the collaboration of three PhD Social Work students. Betemikal Markos Moges started to assist us on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2007. Maura Bucci Carlo started work on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

#### **Maura Bucci Carlo, 1965.**

Mother of 5 daughters

- Certificate in Pre School Teaching
- Diploma in Nutrition
- Attending First Cycle Teachers education (evening class)

Work Experience from 1996-2007

- Babysitter
- Assistant Teacher
- Head of Daycare



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#### **Betemikal Markos Moges, 1971.**

Married and father of 2 children

- 12<sup>th</sup> grade complete
- Certificate in cuisine

Work experience:

Assistant purchaser  
CCF community worker  
Kindergarten Parent Committee



### **2. Finding Office Space**

The Keble 03 Kinder Garden director has promised a community meeting place and an office. But due to some administrative reasons, it is difficult to get the permission now. It will take months. In due course we are using the cafes, tea rooms, school compounds to discuss our daily plans and to compile our reports. Different letters are submitted to two schools for possible cooperation. In the mean time, we are using tea rooms and the Bethlehem Public School compound as our meeting and activity planning center.

### **3. Ongoing Action Research Project**

#### **Community Strength and Problem Identification Process.**

In order to identify the community's strengths (assets) and problems, we conducted meetings with different community members. The groups were children aged between seven and fourteen; youth between 15 and 30 years-old including the youth group engaged with car washing and parking services at night; and community elders, Idir leaders, women involved in food processing and garbage collection. While we tried to call these community members, there were good opportunities and challenges.

The opportunities were, our community outreach workers were former volunteers and employee of the Christian Children Fund. When they knock from house to house they were accepted positively assuming that they came again to facilitate children's schooling and other support. After they clarify their present mission, the parents and the children accepted our invitation positively. Idir leaders, some youth and women engaged with food processing and garbage collection also accepted our invitation positively. The willingness of the Bethlehem Public School administration to use their school to conduct meetings outside school hours is a good opportunity.

The major challenge was that we are trying to work on different ways than the NGO and government practice. The expectations of the community members (both who attended our meetings and the others who refused) is that we might have a defined project that might be out of their own interest; this will take time to convince them. Some also want immediate intervention and express their views that our activity will terminate without a tangible result.

Office facilities to plan and make consultation with community members without a fixed office makes it hard to convince some of the community members that we are serious and want to work with the community. But some of the elders and Idir leaders are appreciating the problem and are ready to work with us.

#### **Community Strength and Problem Identification Meetings.**

As part of the ongoing action research project we conducted three consecutive meetings starting on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 up to January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. (The summary is attached separately).

During the meetings all the participants expressed their ideas very actively. Their ideas were very constructive and show the community members readiness to work with us. They all expressed the community's strengths, assets and problems. They all agree that it is when there is a sense of ownership that all community development activities will be successful. It was so amazing and encouraging to see children expressing their and their community's strengths, assets and the gaps for their wellbeing and education.

Particularly, the children's and the Idir leaders request to conduct a series of such discussions are worth giving attention. The youth who are engaged with car washing and car parking service at night; and the women engaged with garbage collection seems that they have their own project ideas on how to improve their activities; they also have asked a separate discussion forums.

#### **4. Tentative Plans for January and February**

##### **4.1 Discussions with Idir Leaders**

Before conducting separate discussions, basic information on each Idir's establishment dates composition of membership (male and female) and if possible their activities in addition to funeral support activities will be gathered. After that, we will have consecutive meetings with volunteer Idir leaders. We have called 18 Idir leaders to the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, of which 10 have attended.

##### **4.2. Discussions with the two garbage collectors associations**

We will collect the basic information on their membership and conduct with them on their strengths, assets and problems to find out on how to improve their services and incomes.

The Keble 03 Kinder Garden director has promised a community meeting place and an office. I went several times to receive the room and renovate it, but she was unable to give us due to some misinterpretations by the KG school staff. They assumed our presence in the KG compound might be a threat and a cause to attract possible private investors to purchase the school. But I have clarified our motto is to help the community to identify the community's strengths, and work to fill the gaps together with the community members. Even our presence in the KG might be an additional input to the KG's improvement. I have submitted a letter of cooperation and a promissory note signed by the Social Work Assistant Dean to the Parents Committee. The majority are in favor of our project. I hope they might come out with concrete and affirmative decisions.

##### **4.3. Discussions with the Car Washing Youth Association leaders**

Basic data on their membership and their present status will be collected. At present we have found that there are seven car washing associations, of which two have volunteered and attended our meetings.

##### **4.4. Discussions with children aged between 7 and 14**

We will call more children and conduct different meetings and come out with their own project ideas. It seems that by their first meeting, they suggest that they need some recreation facilities, additional tutorial classes, etc.

##### **4.5. Electing their own Core Committee members**

After digesting our ongoing action research objectives, we have agreed with the community members on the January 5<sup>th</sup> meetings to strengthen the present core and technical committee and be ready for the ABCD training.