

## **Preface and Acknowledgments**

College of Education, as one of the oldest academic units in the University, has evolved through time to reach its present status to be among the largest faculties at Addis Ababa University. It was a Department in the Faculty of Arts in 1958, and later a Faculty of Education since 1964 housing five academic departments.

In the year 2003, the Faculty of Education was transformed to a full-fledged College and reorganized into 15 departments. Under this academic structure, it has produced teachers through the blended approach (i.e., pedagogy and subject matter integrated from the time of entry to exit). That was in line with the Teacher Development Program (TDP) which was based on the National Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program of the Ministry of Education. Following the paradigm shift in the teacher education, the College of Education underwent continuous consultative workshops, national conferences and rigorous curriculum revision. The College has been aggressively engaged in the undergraduate and graduate programs with the mission to fulfill the target of producing graduates in the area of high level expertise as educational managers, supervisors, curriculum experts, school psychologists, special needs educators and above all qualified subject area specialist teachers to be deployed in the education sector in general and secondary schools in particular.

In the year 2009, a new paradigm shift was again introduced by the Ministry of Education and no students were placed in the undergraduate departments where subject area specialists were trained. That is, the phase-in of the add-on or consecutive approach and the phasing out of the blended or integrated approach. In the consecutive program, undergraduate students follow their three years course in their respective subject area departments and those who prefer to join the teaching profession take a one year postgraduate diploma course in the College of Education.

The International Conference happened in the midst of the debate on the paradigm shift among teacher educators and policy makers. What is more, it was the time when the College of Education has laid out its

future direction focusing on the expansion of graduate and PhD programs and educational research at all levels of the educational ladder.

Indeed, the College of Education has been conducting series of annual national conferences on topical issues in education for the last five years. This International Conference under the theme Educational Research for Sustainable Development attracts the Ethiopian Diasporas and renowned international educators from Europe, North America, Africa, Middle East and Far East. There were a total of 233 participants among these 54 were international participants whereas 179 were local and expatriates based in Ethiopia. The Conference was also attended by government dignitaries, public university presidents/representatives, professionals from international organizations, private universities and nongovernmental organizations.

The Conference was opened on May 13, 2009, by His Excellency Ato Demeke Mekonnen, the Minister of Education of Ethiopia which was preceded by the Welcoming Speech made by Professor Andreas Eshete, the President of Addis Ababa University. The Minister and the President of the Addis Ababa University expressed the commitment of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to expand higher education, improve quality of education and build-up the research capacity of higher education institutions in the country. There was also a call for the international community and the Ethiopian Diaspora to work in partnership with Higher Education Institutions to bridge the existing gaps to run graduate and PhD programs.

Following the opening events, all the Conference days started by a keynote speech of plenary session and followed by five concurrent thematic panels. The keynote addresses were made by five internationally acclaimed scholars in the field of education, Professor Emeritus David Bridges, Director St. Edmund's Institute, University of Cambridge, Professor Emeritus Teshome Wagaw, African and Afro-American Studies, the University of Michigan, Professor Morwenna Griffiths, representing British Society of Philosophy of Education, Edinburgh University, Professor Samuel L. Odom, Director of Child Development, Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Professor John Furlong, representing British Educational Research

Association (BERA), University of Oxford. Among others, the following pertinent issues were raised during the plenary sessions:

- The need for faculties to engage in research at local, national and international levels and undertake different types of research including illuminative, policy directing, policy implementation and evaluation. It was also acknowledged that the research scenario in Ethiopia is not encouraging and requires a great deal of commitment and determination to successfully undertake research. Further more, it was noted that the current expansion of higher education in Ethiopia needs to be accompanied by parallel expansion in research infrastructure.
- The quality of teaching force represents a single most important factor in improving education and teachers have to come on the top agenda of quality education and it was underscored that the key part of professional education must take place in the context of classroom or school setting.
- The usual emphasis on the need for generalisable and universal knowledge is wrong and personal narratives can lead to trustworthy knowledge. Further more, it was noted that there is a global tendency for a shift of focus of research questions from efficacy to implementation and the emergence of implementation science.

Following the key note addresses five panels were held on concurrent parallel sessions under the following thematic issues:

- Educational Research Paradigm (24 papers)
- Innovation and Challenges in Higher Education (15 papers)
- Teacher Education (13 papers)
- Early Childhood Care and Special Needs Education (6 papers) and
- Gender, Adult and Environmental Education ( 5 papers)

A total of 63 scientific papers were presented in the panels where lively and stimulating discussions were observed.

Along side the parallel sessions Roundtable Discussion, Poster Presentations and Networking Sessions were organized. The Roundtable Discussion Session was held on the topic “Transforming African Higher Education through International Linkages and Engagement of the Diaspora: The Case of Ethiopia”. The Roundtable Discussion was initiated by Ethiopian/American Foundation and a concept paper for discussion was developed by Professor Assefa Mehretu, The Executive Director of the Foundation. In this regard, it would be important to recognize the contribution of Professor Sisay Aseffa of the Western Michigan University for initiating and organizing this important discourse. Furthermore, the Poster Presentations on the results of the educational and psychological researches on children with hearing impairment was made by the German Research Team of Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich (LMU). The German Research Team was led by Professor Dr. Annette Leonhardt who is Chairperson of the Department of Children with Hearing Impairment at LMU. The Networking Session was convened in the final day of the Conference before the Closing Session where representatives of public universities and international participants were able to discuss and exchange views about future areas of collaboration in teaching and research as well as modalities of cooperation.

Grand Open Air Social Event was also organized for the participants of the International Conference on Thursday, May 15, 2009 evening. The event which was, spearheaded by one of the popular Youth Cultural Bands of Ethiopia took place in a relaxed friendly atmosphere with excellent service of the Akaki Campus Restaurant. It was a colorful occasion accompanied by traditional songs and dances of different nationalities of Ethiopia. It has successfully engaged both young and senior international participants of the Conference. The event created an exciting, enjoyable and interactive moment and left a memorable spirit in the minds of the participants of the Conference.

The final moment of the Conference right before the closing remark was colorfully celebrated by handing over certificates of recognition and appreciation for representatives of the various universities who have a longstanding cooperation as well as those who have entered agreement to collaborate with the College of Education in the years to come. These distinguished scholars include:

- Professor Emeritus David Bridges, Director St. Edmund's Institute, University of Cambridge, UK;
- Professor Dr. Annette Leonhardt, University of Ludwig Maximilian University, Germany;
- Dr. Barbara Ridley, University of East Anglia, UK;
- Dr. Matti Kuorelahti, University of Jyväskylä, Finland;
- Professor Dennis Maki, University of Iowa, USA; and
- Professor Tadesse W/Giorgis, Chicago State University, USA.

The certificates were delivered by Dr. Tekalegn Wolde Maraim, A/Academic Vice President of Addis Ababa University who also made the Official Closing Remark of the Conference. The A/Academic Vice President appreciated the active engagement of the Conference participants as well as the organizers of the Conference, and underscored that this event should be the beginning of the academic discourse but not the end.

Finally, let me conclude by extending my gratitude and appreciation for German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Development Partners for Higher Education (DePHE) of the British Council for providing the necessary financial assistance for publishing these invaluable and historical Proceedings.

With regards,

Tirussew Teferra (Laureate Professor)  
Dean, College of Education  
Addis Ababa University  
August 2009

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