Higher Education Institutions as Pavilions of Diversity: Opportunities and Challenges –The Case of Bahir Dar University

Abebaw Yirga[*] and Tilahun Bejitual[**]

Abstract: *This study looks into the opportunities and challenges experienced at higher education institutions. A qualitative instrumental case study design was employed. To generate data from the purposefully selected research participants, interview and focus group discussion were used. The study revealed that the diversity that exists in Bahir Dar University is more of a challenge than an opportunity. Even though the University has experienced many diversity challenges and some ethnic-based conflicts, it has no planned strategies to better manage on-campus conflicts and diversity. The research also revealed that though the educational challenges of diversity are on a much smaller scale in Bahir Dar University compared to some universities in America and Europe, where diversity is a serious problem of education. There are clues to show that the educational challenges of diversity are increasing considerably.*

Key terms: diversity; opportunities and challenges; higher education institutions

Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the multicultural countries which strive to address the needs of all ethnic, language, religion, cultural, etc groups. One of the best strategies to address any kind of society's needs is education. Those deprived of education are increasingly deprived of opportunity, opportunity to effectively exercise other rights (Gurin, 2000). For this reason, education is

---

[*] Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Bahir Dar University, currently studying European Master of Arts in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management.

[**] Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Bahir Dar University, currently studying Master of Arts in European Literary Cultures.

supposed to be for all citizens regardless of sex, age, ethnic, language, culture, disability, etc. As far as education is for all people (UNESCO, 2000) is concerned, individuals within diverse culture should be given equal opportunity to learn. Equal opportunity is fundamental in any human society, and it is more fundamental in the existence of culturally plural society - like Ethiopia.

When we look into Ethiopian schools and universities, diversity increases as one goes from Kindergartens to higher education institutions. This implies that higher education institutions (HEIs) are the most highly diversified place of schooling. This may come to pass because of a lack of adequate number of HEIs across regions. Since the number of HEIs in the nearby area of different cultural, ethnic, language, and religious groups/societies are not sufficient, students from these groups/societies are obliged to come to the limited number of the existing universities. Because of this, a high rate of students' diversity is quite common in all Ethiopian HEIs.

The government HEIs ones are pavilions of diversity, where students from different ethnic, language, religion, cultural, etc groups are found. That is why they should be constructive in establishing the rights of all students irrespective of their religion, ethnic, politics and social affiliation. In HEIs, students should have the right to education which will enable them to develop their innate abilities and qualities, both for their personal and institutional fulfillment and for meeting the very varied needs of the society.

Many students come to universities at a critical stage of their development - a time during which they define themselves in relation to others and exercise different social roles before making permanent commitment to occupations, social groups, and intimate personal relationships. Whenever people with different ethnic, language, religion, culture, etc come together for a certain objective, there are certain opportunities and challenges they face. This study is, therefore, intended to deal with the opportunities and challenges of diversity in HEIs and answer the following basic questions:

- What are the challenges of diversity in Ethiopian higher education institutions?
- What are the opportunities of diversity in Ethiopian higher education institutions?
- How can the challenges be better handled in order to maximize the benefits of diversity in Ethiopian higher education institutions?

Purpose of the Study

The major objective of this study was to investigate the challenges and opportunities of diversity in Ethiopian HEIs. The study basically attempted to describe the challenges and opportunities of diversity in higher education institutions and introduce a multicultural way of managing diversity.

Significance of the Study

To achieve their objectives, HEIs should look for all factors that are related to the general learning outcome. Diversity is one of the features that have a great role in the intended learning outcomes of HEIs. Accordingly, this study will be significant in the following regards:

- It helps students learn better in diverse environment and get better prepared to become active participants in a pluralistic and democratic society.
- It gives higher institutions an insight into how to foster and benefit from diversity.
- It enables stakeholders of HEIs to re-examine their trend of viewing and managing diversity.
- It helps instructors to evaluate their teaching methodology.

Review of Related Literature

Diversity in Higher Education Institutions

Diversity is described as the wide range of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious variation that exist within and across groups that live in multicultural countries (Banks et al, 2005). According to Cross, 2004 diversity is the presence of peoples with different racial, ethnic, language, religion, age, sex, culture, ability, and social status. From this point of view the major dimensions of diversity in Ethiopian HEIs are culture, ethnic, language, religion, age, sex, physical ability, and social status.

It is believed that universities can make a difference in the lives of students. They are key players in producing and maintaining a free and democratic society (Hesch, 1999). To achieve such big missions, Ethiopia is currently engaged in the expansion of higher institutions.

Diversity in HEIs is basically necessary for many reasons. As Gurin (2000) points out, diversity is especially influential when its social environment is different from the environment from which the students come and when it is diverse and all-round enough to encourage intellectual experimentation. Since diversity in HEIs helps students to learn more and think in deeper and more complex ways, excluding higher institutions from access to a diverse student population denies them a surprisingly important tool for preparing them for their own future and for the future of their society (American Council on Education (ACE) and American Association of University Professors (AAUP), 2000).

Benefits of Diversity

According to Gurin (2000), when higher education institutions encourage the admission of students from diverse background and provide a climate in which the students frequently interact with each other, the social diversity is likely to increase in generating citizens who can think actively and diversely.

As Johnson and Johnson (2000) fittingly state pluralism and diversity among individuals create an opportunity, but like all opportunities, there are potentially either positive or negative outcomes. According to them, whether the diversity result is positive or negative depends largely on whether learning situations are structured competitively, individualistically, or cooperatively.   Each of these structures teaches values, and creates patterns of interaction that will result in diversity being valued or rejected. In their research, they indicate that from the three interdependence structures, cooperative learning promotes greater effort to achieve more positive relationships, and greater psychological health than do competitive and individualistic learning. Their study outcome also indicates that when cooperative learning is used in schools, diversity among students can be a potential source of creativity and productivity.

Many researchers also affirm there is a positive relationship between diversity and educational outcomes. Regarding this ACE and AAUP (2000) state that diversity has both direct and indirect positive effects and influences on the educational outcomes and experiences of university students. The overall satisfaction with universities is higher at more diverse colleges and universities. This is because diversity has a direct and positive influence on students' outcomes and their beliefs about the quality of education they receive.

Numerous research studies have also examined the impact of diversity on students and educational outcomes. These studies provide extensive evidence that diversity has a positive impact on all students (Smith et al, 1997). Referring to a national longitudinal study conducted by the Higher Educational Research Institute, Astin (1993), cited in Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI), (2004), states that diversity in the classroom and in extracurricular settings had uniformly positive effects on students' cognitive development, satisfaction with the college experience, and leadership abilities.

Research conducted in 1990 and 1994 at the University of Michigan showed that students who interacted with racially and ethnically diverse peers both informally and within the classroom showed the greatest "engagement in active thinking, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills" (Gurin et al, 2002).

Gurin (2000) indicates there is a consistent pattern of positive relationships between diversity in HEIs in both learning and democracy outcomes. In his research he concluded that this consistency is "unusual" in his experience and that a university composed of diverse students is essential not only to the intellectual well-being of individual students but also to the long-term health of the nation. Hammer (1995), cited in Douglas (2000), further indicates that the effect of diversity continued after the students left the university setting. He claims that diversity experiences during university had impressive effects on the life of students' post-university world. ACE and AAUP (2000) also indicate that diversity in the classroom and on campus is essential to the continuation of the touchstones of a civilized nation. In his research, Gurin (2000) also proved that students with the most diversity experiences during university had the most cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions five years after leaving university.

In a survey research on university students' attitudes toward and experiences with ethnic, language and racial diversity on campus, researchers found that all students benefited from learning in racially, linguistically and ethnically diverse environments. Moreover, respondents believed that diversity fostered interactions that helped develop critical thinking and leadership skills (Maruyama and Moreno, 2000).

Challenges of diversity

Increasing diversity in higher education institutions can lead to less cohesiveness, less effective communication, increased anxiety, and greater discomfort for many students from different background (Cox, 1993). This suggests that according to ACE and AAUP (2000), unless we properly manage diversity in higher education institutions, there will be a backlash

that diversity brings about and that leads, for example, to unwanted conflict which may obviously adversely affect the teaching learning process. According to Abebaw (2007), if teachers are not aware of diversity, they may aggravate and play their part in blocking the way to positive cross-cultural relations.

Managing cultural diversity

Research results (Cox, 1993; ACE and AAUP, 2000) show that the affirmative action that most universities apply as a starting point will not work on its own unless the diversity that affirmative action created has effectively been managed. Thus, the management of this kind of diversity can only be properly executed if it forms part of an organization's strategic management process. As diversity increases in universities, teachers, administrators and other education personnel will be challenged increasingly to become more knowledgeable about the assumptions, attributes, and norms of a range of cultures (Taylor, 1990). These challenges will occur in every dimension of university's life, from the curriculum to the communication that occurs in classrooms or in campus in general. The issue of diversity has, by necessity, to be taken into account if effective education is to be a reality in any university.

The Research Design and Methodology

The methodology used in this research is qualitative. This research was intended to deal with diversity which is basically a social and cultural issue of HEIs. The study was conducted in a natural setting by: communicating with the research participants, reflecting what we understood, interpreting cases, and constructing meanings. And this sees eye to eye with some features of qualitative research. To understand a particular case (i.e., Bahir Dar University), in depth an instrumental case study design was employed. That is, BDU was selected, for it illuminates the problem, which obviously is experienced by other institutions in Ethiopia.

Data Sources and Sample Selection

Students' diversity in HEIs is exhibited much more in government universities than in the private and government-regional colleges. That is why this study was conducted on a government university. All the research participants were from Bahir Dar University. This University was selected, because it is assumed that it represents the other universities in Ethiopia in terms of the challenges and opportunities of diversity experienced by HEIs. The university is also easily accessible to the researchers. In order to generate information from pertinent individuals, this study took purposive sampling to select all research participants by maintaining their diversity. The major data sources for this research were a member of the students' council, coordinator of the University's cultural center, higher officials of Bahir Dar University, and students who are from different ethnic, language, religion, sex, age and cultural background.

Instruments and Methods of Data Generation

To obtain information from research participants, interview and focus group discussion (FGD) were used. Interviews were conducted with five students and all other research participants on one-to-one basis. FGDs were also used with students to understand issues with possible consensuses and variations among members of the discussion. FGD were held five times with different groups. In each group there were seven to eight participants, who were composed of different ethnic, language, religion, sex, age, and cultural background. And finally, the data collected using interview and FGD were coded and categorized thematically and analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

Discussion

Awareness of Diversity

The University

Needless to state the fact that the country has a diversified society. The diversity found in the larger society is found in the universities as well. Sadly, however, the University does not seem to give due regard to diversity. One of the higher officials of the university clearly stated that the university actually recognizes that students with multicultural background come to the institution. However, he agreed that little or no attempt worth mentioning has so far been made to address the various needs of these diversified student community. Limited awareness of diversity is clearly reflected on various academic and social life of the University community, mainly students and instructors.

The students

Bahir Dar University receives its annual quota of fresh students from all parts of the country. That is, students from all cultural and societal backgrounds come to the institution every year. However, students who were born and brought up in Bahir Dar bitterly dislike learning at this university due to various reasons. For example, a few of them claimed that they are sick of getting confined to the same place from birth to college. They feel they could not get exposed to a society and culture other than their own. A higher official of the university, however, argued that these students can enjoy the diversity of students who come to the university from various different cultures and societies.

On the other hand, students who came from other areas and regions do not seem to be comfortable with the number of students from around the University area. The measure in the number of students from Bahir Dar seems to have induced some psychological threat to students who came from other regions. According to the former ones, the latter feel triumphant and are puffed up with being from the college area. They feel that the

University belongs to them. The former ones feel alien to the institution. Here, both sides do not seem to understand what diversity is. The first group thinks that multicultural exposure can only be achieved by leaving one's native town or area. The second group, on the other hand, seems to be besieged by fear of living in a new area which they regarded as others'.

However, what is worth noting here is that the presence of linguistically, religiously, culturally, and ethnically diverse students (structural diversity) is a necessary but insufficient condition for maximal educational benefit from diversity. Therefore, in order to get a high educational benefit from diversity, universities need to establish positive intergroup interaction among students of diverse background (Informal Interactional Diversity). They need to teach students about diverse people and give them an opportunity to gain experience with diverse peers in the classroom (Maruyama and Moreno, 2000).

Staff Diversity: Past and Present

Again, as a government university, like the diversified nature of students, there had been a diversified staff composition in the university until recently. This time, however, the staff diversity is dwindling from year to year. One of the higher officials had the opinion that if such a trend continued, the institution could definitely get jeopardized. Indeed, we argue that the lesser the diversity of the academic staff, the greater will be the loss of the benefits of diversity. What is more, universities will tend to be "regional" rather than national, and *diversified* students will definitely miss the "blessings" from the diversity of their instructors. They will be taught by homogeneous instructors, while scholars like Wardle (1998) say students would be culturally rich if they are taught by culturally different teachers. Since diverse working groups are more productive, creative, and innovative than homogeneous groups universities need to positively welcome diverse groups to get maximum benefit (Maruyama and Moreno, 2000).

Unfortunately, according to a higher official of the University, veteran and highly qualified instructors are leaving BDU to join an institution of "their region". He said teachers who leave BDU are under the impression that better places (position in the university are usually filled by people from other regions. Because of this they felt discriminated and decided to leave). This is partly due to lack of effective staff diversity management. Gurin (2000) says, "Patterns of ethnic and cultural segregation and separation which are historically rooted can be broken by diversity experiences in higher education", not by shying away from and reducing or avoiding diversity.

Another important point here is staff recruitment, the composition of the academic staff at Bahir Dar University. There is a tendency of homogeneity in the newly recruited staff members, especially among the second degree holders. Most of the applicants who came to BDU are from the same region –Amhara. The only possible way that one thinks of getting a diversified body of staff is through recruiting outstanding novice graduates as graduate assistants. However, this still is possible only if and when we "nurture" the diversity of students and when we strive to work on diversity issues.

Campus Conflict Management

It is not surprising if we often observe conflict among students in university campuses. The questions are, when we fail to manage them and when the influences result in irreparable damage on education and on students' social life. Asked whether there is any multiculturally sensitive conflict management mechanism that the University employs during conflicts, a higher official responded that there is no adequate mechanism. A study conducted on on-campus conflict management of the University in the past indicates that the BDU is not working in its fullest potential to manage diversity and conflict (Tilahun, 2007). Tilahun also noted that ethnic epithets and political differences during election period were the causes for the on-campus inter-ethnic conflicts. The conflicts were manifested in forming in-group and out-group demarcations, mainly on the basis of ethnic identity.

This study also reveals that there are still some ethnic-based conflicts around students' residential areas. Even though these conflicts are not serious enough to affect the teaching-learning process and challenge the University at large, it is crystal clear that they undoubtedly have an effect on students' social and academic life. The University is responding to the conflicts as they come. In other words, the University does not seem to have taken lessons from previous conflicts to design a multicultural-sensitive diversity and conflict management strategy.

Awareness Creation: From Seminars to Course Inclusion

As mentioned earlier, the overall level of awareness of diversity in the University is very low. It seems, therefore, foolhardy to expect well organized and adequate awareness creation activities. Happily, the University has carried out activities in creating awareness about diversity. Those worth mentioning could be, according to our informant, seminars have been conducted a couple of times by a multicultural student and one renowned figure. This could really play a role, though it seems a bit late compared to the urgency of the problem. Better late than never, however! As studies (Hesch, 1999; Cross, 2004) disclose, the implementation of diversity workshops in colleges and universities, helps in creating common understanding and appreciation of diversity. This suggests that with a minimum costly program it is possible to raise the level of awareness of diversity in the campus community. Cultural centers and various other clubs can play a great role in this regard. Happily, the activities that the BDU Cultural Center has been doing are quite commendable. For example, on several occasions and holidays, we, have observed fashion shows of cultural dressings, music, and literature of various ethnic groups in the university.

Challenges and Opportunities

So far we attempted to show areas which require multicultural sensitivity in order to better manage diversity at higher education institutions. Following is chiefly the discussion of the challenges faced and the opportunities enjoyed in the context of diversity.

Challenges of Diversity

On-campus conflicts

When people of diverse background come to a common place like educational arena, it is not uncommon that their culture is likely to clash. What happens at Bahir Dar University is not an exception. That is, according to our informants and our own experiences, inter-group conflict has been observed at different times in the institution. The possible causes of this conflict range from a seemingly trivial and personal falling out among and between students to identity and "politically sensitive matters".

Literature actually asserts that cultural diversity may bring us great values, a richness of life, unexpected views and perspectives and an encounter with other lifestyles. It can also create a better understanding of our own culture, and a respect for other people's cultures. But cultural diversity may also confront us with a dilemma, a matter of great concern to politicians, political parties, governments, and the majority of population in a society (Hammer, 1995 cited in Douglas, 2000). According to the participants, such factors as rejection (based on in-group and out-group demarcation identity lines of chiefly ethnic, religious and linguistic), stereotypes, prejudices and ethnocentrism are behind the recurring inter-group conflicts at BDU. One of our respondents said "…*nowadays many of us prefer to study, live and enjoy with students from our own ethnic group. Even in the classroom, we prefer to sit near a student from our ethnic group; we form an ethnic-based group to do assignments and term papers.*" These all could be reduced, if not

eliminated, only through awareness creation programs about diversity. This, however, does not mean that we can avoid conflict. The attempt should not be to avoid which actually is impossible, but to manage diversity in general and conflict in particular, "Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions" (Miller, 2004: 8). Optimistically seen, contrary to the traditional view of conflict, these days conflict can, as long as it is managed properly potentially, be good (Habtamu, 1998). Failure to properly mage it, would obviously jeopardize the teaching-learning process and affect the social life of students. After all, "in the midst of conflict, insecurity and instability, how can education be kept alive…?"(UNESCO, 2002: 123). Therefore, it is all about determination and effort that is required to develop students' multicultural competence to grow seeds of tolerance and empathy in the minds of students. Daniel (2007) succinctly puts, since wars are made in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace should be constructed.

"Politicizing" diversity

Another great challenge to managing diversity at BDU, according to a higher official informant, is "politicizing" diversity. He said that "politicizing" diversity has become a great impediment in the institution. It has kept people shying away even from, for example, discussing matters of ethnicity and diversity in general. However, even in small towns and schools, diversity is a reality. Thus, the university needs to do a lot in shifting the perspective of its.

How universities respond to the increase in diversity will be a challenge for many members of the university community. Once we recognize that diversity is our future, and not a passing fad, then we can begin to make the adjustments that will make changes possible (Noguera, 1999). Of course, we should be aware of the hidden implications and political motives that are sometimes used by different groups in the name of history, ethnicity, culture, identity, and diversity. It should be noted that we can not escape the inescapable choice-accepting, recognizing and managing diversity. To do

otherwise means to deny the reality in our institutions and in our country at large. Furthermore, it must be left up to the individual student to affiliate and recognize his or her own cultural identity because this is a personal choice which can not be made or imposed by others.

Opportunities

Obviously, one big opportunity of diversity at Universities can be that a student can be exposed to cultures other than his/her own. Moreover, according to Douglas (2000), cultural diversity can be a pedagogical resource through mutual tolerance, understanding, respect and acceptance of ideologies in education and the society; a resource that must acknowledge and openly discuss the differing ideologies behind cultural concept and their multitude of definitions. When we see such aspects of diversity at Bahir Dar University, challenges seem to outweigh opportunities, and diversity, therefore, seems to be a curse than otherwise. One respondent succinctly put, "In an institution where there is little or no awareness of diversity, how can you expect that opportunities be enjoyed?" Surprisingly, and evidently indeed, another respondent said, "diversity is more of a problem than a wealth [an opportunity]". Of course, in both claims there is one truth - diversity is a curse for those who are unaware of and ill-prepared for and is a blessing for those who duly understand diversity and wholeheartedly try to manage it. Research suggests that ethnically diverse university student body has far-ranging and significant benefits for all students to learn better and to get better prepared to become active participants in a pluralistic society once they leave school (Gurin et al., 2002). Student who came relatively from a homogeneous environment can get exposed to diverse student body in campus. The campus represents the larger society that a novice graduate would soon join for his future career. For this reason campuses can be called real pavilions of diversity where any student can present his/her culture in the showroom of diversity and exchange with those who bring cultures different from his/her.

On the part of instructors, it is believed that they can benefit from the diversity of their students and of their own colleagues. That is, they get both academic and social benefit from their students' diversity as much as students benefit from their teachers' diversity. For instance, students' diversity, though seemingly challenging, can help teachers to enrich their classes and their profession in general. They would be more prepared to accommodate diverse outlooks and values about the world than they would be when they teach homogeneous group of students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

- Hosting students who have various cultures, languages, religions, etc. makes BDU a pavilion of diversity, where its members enjoy the resources of diversity. However, not making the best use of such a resource at times has become a disrupting "collection" that challenges both the academic and social aspects of the institutions. Therefore, the University should strive to create awareness among its community and to consciously use diversity as a resource for every aspect of its activities.
- Although the educational challenges of diversity are on a much smaller scale in Bahir Dar University compared to some universities in America and Europe where diversity is a serious problem of education, there are clues that indicate the educational challenges of diversity are increasing considerably. Thus, the University needs to pay more attention and act immediately.
- Students benefit more from their diverse instructors and possibly lose the benefits when this diversity decreases. Thus, maintaining the staff diversity is an important issue that can not be left for tomorrow. In this case, taking diversity as a criterion during recruitment will be a possible strategy worth buying.

References

Abebaw, Y. (2007). **The Cross-cultural Experience of the Awra Amaba Community Children at Primary School: Implication for Multicultural Education**. Unpublished MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University.

ACE & AAUP. (2000). **Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms**. Washington, DC: ACE and AAUP.

Banks, J., et al. (2005). **Democracy and Diversity: Principles and Concepts for Educating Citizens in a Global Age**. Center for Multicultural Education, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle.

Cox, T. (1993). **Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research and Practice.** San Francisco: Berrette-Koehhler Publishers.

Cross, M. (2004). *Institutionalizing Campus Diversity in South African Higher Education: Review of Diversity Scholarship and Diversity Education.* **Higher Education**, 47, 387-410.

Daniel, J. (2007). *Peace and Conflict Resolution in a Globalised World: Issues of culturalism: Can Higher Education Make a Difference?* Presented on International Conference: Commonwealth of Learning, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, 6 January 2007. Retrieved on November 27, 2007 from http://www.col.org/colweb/site/pid/4305.

Douglas, K. (2000). *Cultural Diversity: Concepts and Ideology as a Pedagogical Resource.* In: Leicester, M., Modgil, C. and Modgil, S. (Eds.). **Classroom Issues: Practice, Pedagogy and Curriculum**. Vol. III. London: Flamer Press.

Gurin, P. (2000). **New Research on the Benefits of Diversity in College and Beyond: An Empirical Analysis.** University of Michigan: USA.

Gurin, et al. (2002). *Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Higher Educational Outcomes.* **Harvard Educational Review**, Vol. 72, No. 3, 330-366.

Hesch, R. (1999). *Culturally Relevant Teacher Education: A Canadian Inner-city Case.* **Canadian Journal of Education**, Vol. 24, No. 4, 369-382.

Habtamu, W. (1998). *Conflict Resolution in the Families of Nine Ethnic Groups in Ethiopia.* **The Ethiopian Journal of Education,** XVIII (2), 1-17.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (2000). *Cooperative Learning, Values, and Culturally Plural Classrooms.* In: Leicester, Mal; Modgil Celia; Modgil, Sohan (Eds.). **Education, Culture and Values: Classroom Issues: Practice, Pedagogy and Curriculum.** Vol. III, London: Falmer Press, 15-28.

Maruyama, G. & Moreno, F. (2000). *University Faculty Views about the Value of Diversity on Campus and in the Classroom.* **Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms**. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education (ACE) and American Association of University Professors (AAUP), pp. 9-35.

Miller, C. (2004). **A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies** (2nd Ed.) King, Mary E. Geneva: University for Peace.

Noguera, P. (1999). *Confronting the Challenge of Diversity in Education.* In **Motion Magazine**, April 10, 1999. Retrieved on November 15, 2007 from http:// www. inmotionmagazine.com/pndivers.html.

Sarantakos, S. (1998). **Social Research**. London: Macmillan press limited.

Smith, D. et al. (1997). **Diversity Works: The Emerging Picture of How Students Benefit**. Washington D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).

Taylor, O. (1990). **Cross-cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education.** Revised Edition. The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.

Tilahun, B. (2007). **Management of On-campus Conflict among Students of Diverse Background: A Multicultural Perspective – the Case of Bahir Dar University.** Unpublished MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University.

UNESCO. (2000). **Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments**. Adopted by the World Education Forum. Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000.

UNESCO. (2002). **EFA: Global Monitoring Report. Education For All: Is The World on Track?** Paris: UNESCO.

Wardle, F. (1998). Meeting the Needs of Multiracial and Multiethnic Children in Early Childhood Settings. **Early Childhood Education Journal,** 26, (1), 7-11.

WISELI. (2004). **Benefits and Challenges of Diversity**. The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin system. Retrieved on August 25, 2006 from http://wiseli.engr. wisc.edu/initiatives/climate/Benefits_Challenges.pdf.