
A History of Addis Ababa University's Faculty of Education from Inception to 1974

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Abstract

This paper attempts at reconstructing the history of the Faculty of Education of Addis Ababa University until 1974. It records the development of the faculty since its inception in careful detail, with due attention to major events, organizational adjustments, and educational reforms that marked its path. The analysis explores how the Faculty of Education adapted to Ethiopia's changing social and political landscape, illustrating its crucial role in influencing the nation's educational system. Key contributions of the faculty to teacher training, curriculum development, and educational policy form a core component of this study. It also reviews the various phases of development, challenges faced in the initial years, strategies adopted to overcome them, and how these moves impacted the greater schema of education. It develops a comprehensive account of how internal and external challenges were responded to by the faculty through the examination of archival documents and primary sources, and how such reactions shaped its evolving role. The narrative also highlights the interplay between the Faculty's development and broader historical trends, such as political shifts, educational reforms, and societal changes. This contextualization underscores how the Faculty's efforts were intertwined with national developments and global educational movements. The study not only offers a detailed historical account but also provides valuable insights into the institution's successes and struggles, offering a foundation for understanding its subsequent evolution. This comprehensive exploration aims to contribute to a deeper appreciation of the Faculty of Education's formative years and its lasting impact on Ethiopia's educational landscape.

Keywords: Faculty of Education, Addis Ababa University, Educational reforms, Teacher training, and Curriculum development.

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Introduction

While the Faculty of Education at Addis Ababa University has played a significant role in setting a path that the Ethiopian educational system has taken, little historical detail has been given about its development up to 1974. The existing literature often speaks piecemeal or superficially with respect to the evolution of this institution and hence leaves major gaps in understanding its contributions, challenges, and transformations during this pivotal period. This has impeded a deep understanding of the Faculty's role in teachers' training, curriculum development, and educational policy of the country. There was an urgent need therefore for in-depth study that accounted for its historical trajectory, placed its achievements and challenges within context, and assessed its role in the broader context of Ethiopian educational reform.

This historical case study research on the history of the Faculty of Education at Addis Ababa University up to 1974 adopts a mix of archival research, oral history, and library research. The major sources were institutional records, government documents, and academic publications; existing histories and newspaper articles were used as secondary sources. Interviews with past Faculty of Education members were made to collect oral histories. Data collected were analyzed by narration and contextualization into the historical theme. Validity was ensured by peer review and triangulation of sources. Informed consent and confidentiality were considered with regards to ethical issues.

Background

"... one of the most pressing and urgent needs is the establishment of the foundation of a university of Ethiopia... the first department of which should be a teachers' training school."

F. Ernest Work, an American advisor for an education system of Ethiopia to the court of Emperor Haile Sellassie I wrote in 1934.

Emperor Haile Sellassie I (1930 – 74) began in earnest the expansion of the state sponsored modern public schools in the Ethiopian empire. It is worth to note, however, that Emperor Minilik II (1889 -1913) had opened the first state sponsored modern primary school in Addis Ababa in 1908. Emperor Haile Sellassie I was noted for encouraging and supporting the expansion of government sponsored modern schools as well as the European and American Christian missionary schools in his empire.¹ He quite rightly identified himself

as the patron of the imperial system of modern education and the intellectual father of the students, who passed through its hierarchy. He did so, nonetheless, without a systematic experimentation and study to find out ways for the adaptation of knowledge from the Western world through the modern schools for use in the modernization process of the Ethiopian empire. The Emperor appointed Ernest Work, formerly of Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio, U.S.A. as an educational advisor (1929 – 31). Work proposed a modern education system with six years of primary, six of secondary, and four of tertiary education, including a teachers' training school.² However, Western educational models, shaped by the Industrial Revolution of the 1780s, did not account for Ethiopia's unique needs.³

After the end of Italian occupation (1935–41), Ethiopia's system of modern education earnestly began its first stage of growth and expansion. In 1942, the Anglo-Ethiopian agreement led to British educational advisors, such as E.R.J. Hussey, who brought British educational models and teachers from the Commonwealth such as Canada, India and the Sudan, etc.⁴ Surprisingly, it was this imperial British education system that had exerted its influence on the imperial system of modern education in the Ethiopian empire with all types of British educational directives, syllabus and inspection measures for schools, which came to be hailed as "the golden age of education."⁵ Yet, the imperial system of modern education of the imperial government of Ethiopia, to all intents and purposes, was for the most part a carbon copy of the imperial British education model intended for the British colonies in the continent of Africa.⁶

By 1952, U.S. influence began to replace British models. Ethiopia signed a cooperative agreement with the U.S. to improve training in various fields. The U.S. Point Four Program provided financial aid, teaching staff, textbooks, and instructional materials, shifting the education system towards American models.⁷ For well over two solid decades in the period (1952 – 74), U.S. influence grew, with significant aid and Peace Corps volunteers shaping the curriculum and structure of Ethiopia's education system.⁸ Despite this, the imported American and British models remained largely irrelevant to Ethiopia's rural context and immediate societal educational needs, as they were designed for highly industrialized nations.⁹

The University College of Addis Ababa

History was made on 20 March 1950, when Emperor Haile Sellassie I established the first institution of higher education called the Trinity the College in the Ethiopian empire. The Emperor appointed Dr. Lucien Matte, a distinguished French-Canadian Educationist, who was formerly director of the Tafari Mekonnen Secondary School as President and the Emperor himself became the first Chancellor. Eight months afterwards on 11 December 1950, the name Trinity College was changed to the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). Classes began on 11 December 1950 at UCAA with nine Canadian, American, British, Polish and Czech instructors and seventy– two male students.¹⁰

The nucleus of the UCAA was housed in the spacious grounds of the Arat Killo campus in front of the buildings that accommodated the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. In the beginning, UCAA had the Faculties of Arts and Science and the Extension Department. By the 1952–53 academic year, it began offering majors in public administration and education, and in 1953 awarded diplomas in science. In August 1954, the college conferred its first B.A. degrees for thirteen successful graduates. Ten graduates received B.A. degrees in public administration and the remaining three received B.A. degrees in general education.¹¹ This last demonstrated the initial interest of the Emperor as well as the interest of the Canadian-Jesuit educationists in the training of teacher educators for the secondary schools on par with training civil servants to the imperial bureaucratic apparatus.

In 1953, the Imperial College of Engineering, later the Faculty of Technology, was established. The Building College, with Swedish support, and the Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (now Haramaya) were founded in 1954. The College of Public Health in Gondar also began its program that year with aid from the UN and U.S. Operations Mission Point Four.¹² By July 1954, UCAA received an Imperial Charter,¹³ granting it autonomy and academic freedom, though Canadian-Jesuits were restricted from proselytizing due to the influence of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.¹⁴ Despite efforts to expand, UCAA struggled to attract students in the natural sciences and conferred its first B.Sc. degrees in Biology in 1959.¹⁵ Generally, the UCAA's main goals were to train skilled civil servants to manage the bureaucracy and to prepare teacher educators for primary and secondary education.¹⁶

On December 18, 1961, the various colleges of the UCAA were coordinated under one unified university system that of Haile Sellassie I University (HSIU 1961 -78). The Emperor bequeathed his *Genete Leul* (Princely Paradise) Palace at the Sidist Killo to the university and he became its chancellor.¹⁷ Perhaps, as a gesture of good will, Emperor Haile Sellassie I appointed Dr. Harold W. Bentley from the University of Utah as the first president of HSIU for a short while in 1961-62. The Emperor showed serious concern about the administrative control of HSIU and appointed *Lij* Kassa Wolde Mariam, his grandson-in-law as the first Ethiopian president in May 1962. Some seven years later in 1969, the emperor appointed Dr. Aklilu Habte also related to the Emperor through marriage, a member and formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education as the second Ethiopian president.¹⁸ Later on, Dr. Mulugeta Wodajo, a member and formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education became Academic Vice President of HSIU.¹⁹ The two accomplished members of the Faculty of Education had succeeded to occupy the top most administrative positions at HSIU.

The Evolution of the Faculty of Education and Its Departments: Structural and Academic Developments from 1962 to 1978

Historically, as has been indicated earlier, the Canadian-Jesuit administrators and the other expatriate teaching staff at the UCAA had envisaged the mission to include the secondary school teacher-training program. The UCAA had begun to offer general studies in education beginning in the 1952-53 academic year to train and prepare teacher educators for the secondary schools and educational professionals for the elementary schools in Ethiopia. Teacher educators and educational professionals were in high demand for the existing schools and expanding ones under the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts of the imperial government. As early as the 1952-53 academic year, the UCAA gave its first entrants the choice to the major fields of general education in public administration or education. As has been cited elsewhere, three of the thirteen graduates among the first entrants to the UCAA received B.A. degrees in education in August, 1954. It could, therefore, be argued that the commencement of general studies in education as a field of specialization in the institution of higher education in Ethiopia began at the initial stage even during the period of the slow process of progress of the UCAA. In this regard, the history of teacher education was intertwined with the early history of the UCAA itself in the period (1950-61).²⁰

Accordingly, the UCAA had a plan to start the secondary school teacher-training program by 1955 and had come to sign a cost-sharing agreement with the U.S. Operations Mission Point Four. As the latter, however, tried to impose what was perceived to be inappropriate concepts into the envisioned secondary school teacher training program, the administration of the UCAA dispensed with the financial support of the U.S. Operations Mission Point Four and continued to depend on the rather inadequate national financial resources for the training of the few number of students in the general studies in education.²¹ In actual fact, the plan to open a secondary school teacher-training program by 1955 did not materialize and the project was postponed for sometime in the future. Four years later in 1959, the Department of Education as a full-fledged Department under the Faculty of Arts started work. Three years afterwards in 1962 the Department of Education became the Faculty of Education with its three Departments:²²

- Elementary Education
- Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling
- Educational Administration, Research and Services

As has been demonstrated earlier, the U.S. AID funded a contract with the University of Utah to supply teachers as well as provide training opportunities for the Ethiopian staff at HSIU in the colleges and universities in the U.S.A. beginning in 1961.²³ The establishment of the Faculty of Education and its three Departments in 1962 was made possible by the U.S. AID financial aid and personnel support of the University of Utah.²⁴ No sooner did the Faculty of Education begin work in 1962 than it did seize the opportune moment to hold a Conference on Secondary Education that same year.²⁵ After a year in 1963, two other Departments of Library Science and Physical Education and Sports were opened.²⁶ Needless to say, however, teacher education in the Faculty of Education as part and parcel of the major fields of general studies in the university wide educational system came to reflect the pluralism of the Canadian, American and European metropolitan traditions, which brought about widespread confusion in the absence of a sharply defined national educational ideology to guide and direct the development efforts of the country in the emergent national university.²⁷ Considering the diverse ideological persuasions on the university educational system, Randi Ronning Balsvik, a noted historian on the intellectual history of university education in Ethiopia in the period 1952-74, wrote on what she termed the earlier distinguishing mark of the Faculty of Education thus: "A conspicuous feature

of the Faculty of Education, however, was its inability to respond adequately to the need for training secondary school teachers.”²⁸

The overall crisis in the education system negatively affected the tertiary, secondary and primary levels.²⁹ As has been argued, the teaching staff of Ethiopian nationals in the emerging national university constituted a few number. These few number Ethiopian nationals served as auxiliary intellectuals to the many professoriate from many nations overseas. It was apparent that the Ethiopian teaching staff in the national university appeared to have accepted their junior partnership vis-a-vis the many professoriate from many nations overseas as the intellectual power elite. They tried to preserve the university education system as an external transplant and they might rightly be considered as an extension of the intellectual power of the expatriate professoriate from many nations overseas³⁰In this context, they showed the general characteristics familiar to the small number of the African teaching staff in most universities in the continent of Africa between the late 1940s and the early 1970s.³¹

The teaching staff of Ethiopian nationals in the primary education system in Ethiopia was far from adequate and the secondary education system was even less so. Arguably, no modern education system in any modern sovereign state in Africa was to be built without the healthy foundation of the primary education system.³² The teachers in the primary schools in Ethiopia did not have either the prestige of the teachers among the priesthood in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church schools, who were members of the ecclesiastical organization of the Orthodox Church, or the power and wealth of their fellow western educated bureaucrats and technocrats, who served as the administrative pillars to the imperial government.³³ Considering the low status and position of teachers in the imperial social hierarchy, it was not that easy to attract many secondary school leavers to the teacher-training institutes, including the teacher education programs of the Faculty of Education at HSIU in order to train them to become teachers in the primary and secondary schools. The low status of teachers exerted serious pressure to the shortage of suitable teachers for the existing schools and created difficulties to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts from opening new schools. The problems that the Ministry of Educational and Fine Arts encountered were not only in recruiting secondary school leavers to the teacher-training institutes, including the teacher education programs of the Faculty of Education at HSIU, but also in retaining them in the profession, after the completion of their training.

Moreover, the perpetual changes in educational plans and the diverse many influences of the expatriate teaching personnel from many nations overseas resulted in the general educational and administrative confusion in the imperial education system of Ethiopia.³⁴

The secondary education system in particular was to a large extent dependent on expatriate teachers. Many Indian teachers for the secondary schools were brought to Ethiopia under the direct contract of the imperial government. Further, the first group of Peace Corps volunteers from the U.S.A. numbering 277 arrived at Addis Ababa in September 1962, the largest group to be sent to any country in any part of the world in that year. Later on, other Peace Corps groups numbering 326,290 and 120 arrived at Addis Ababa in 1963, 1964 and 1965 respectively. The Peace Corps volunteers constituted one-third of the teaching staff in the secondary schools in Ethiopia. Some forty-three Peace Corps volunteers were assigned to teach in the various Departments of the HSIU in 1963. Consequently, they participated in the establishment of three new educational programs of the College of Business Administration, the School of Law and the twelfth grade program of the Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School of the Faculty of Education at HSIU.³⁵

Considering the growth and expansion of the junior secondary schools of grades (7- 8) and senior secondary schools of grades (9-12), the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts presented demand for hundreds of teachers to be trained. Accordingly, the Faculty of Education in the period (1962-74) opened a number of teacher education programs in the major and minor subject areas for the training and preparation of teacher educators under its various Departments.³⁶

- **Department of Elementary Education**

The Department of Elementary Education trained teachers in the major and minor subject areas in the fields of Ethiopian Language and Literature, English, History, Geography and Professional Education. It had a two-year diploma program to train teachers, directors and supervisors for the elementary schools and for the teacher- training institutes. It also had a four year degree program to train teachers and advanced administrators for the junior secondary schools. Moreover, it provided courses in professional education. However, for conducting its teacher-training programs in large numbers, it depended on the experts of the different subject area departments in the Faculties of Arts and Science at HSIU.³⁷

- **Department of Secondary Education**

The Department of Secondary Education catered for students in the major and minor subject areas in the disciplines of Ethiopian Language and Literature, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry. It had a two year diploma program and a four year degree program for the training of teachers for the junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools respectively. For carrying out its secondary school teacher training programs, in large numbers, in the various disciplines mentioned above, it depended on the professionals of the subject area Departments in the Faculties of Arts and Science at HSIU.³⁸

- **Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling**

The Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling offered a number of *educational profession* courses as a minor subject area for students, who tended to select their major subject fields of studies in Mathematics, Geography, History, English and Ethiopian Language and Literature in the period 1962-76. Its educational objectives for general studies were to promote understanding, skills and attitudes, related to human behavior, growth and development as well as knowledge of the general characteristics of the learners in the teaching-learning process. It began a four year degree program in *Educational Psychology* in 1974.³⁹

- **Department of Educational Administration, Research and Services**

The Department of Educational Administration, Research and Services had as its aim to acquaint prospective teachers with the educational administrative process and administrative issues in schools. It later became the Department of Educational Administration and trained educational administrators for schools at a diploma and degree levels.⁴⁰

- **Department of Library Science**

Department of Library Science trained teacher librarians and junior professional librarians in the two year diploma program. In 1963, this Department with the assistance of UNESCO began to offer courses as a minor subject area. In 1978, the Department merged with the wider university libraries and came under the university library system.⁴¹

- **Department of Physical Education and Sports**

The Department of Physical Education and Sports offered a two year diploma program and trained teachers for schools between 1963 and 1968.⁴²

- **Department of Technical Teacher Education**

The Department of Technical Teacher Education embraced educational streams in Business Education, Home Economics and Industrial Education that were inclusive of Automotive, Electricity, Metal-work, Wood-work and Drawing. In 1976, the Home Economics educational stream moved to Alemaya (now Haramaya) University. The Business Education stream commenced a degree level program in September 1986. Some members of the Industrial Education stream moved to the new University on Industrial Education in Nazreth (now Adama) in 1993. The historically single Department of Technical Teacher Education later on made a split up and developed into the Departments of Technical Education and Business Education. In the main, this Department trained teachers under its diploma level programs in the various streams of Automotive Technology, Business Education, Home Economics, Metal Technology and Woodwork Technology for the vocational and technical junior and senior secondary schools. Needless to say, however, the various vocational educational streams had been criticized for poorly equipping their students professionally as well as academically.⁴³

Generally, the various Departments under the Faculty of Education (1962-78) continued to provide training for teacher educators for the junior and senior secondary schools under the middle level diploma programs and the higher level degree programs via the three delivery educational modes namely: regular day classes, evening classes and the in-service program during the summer vacation (Amharic *Kiremt*). This last had begun to operate since 1958, even when there was no a full-fledged Department of Education under the UCAA.⁴⁴ Further, they offered courses in the fundamental and applied sciences in education and conducted conferences and workshops on educational issues and problems for the school teachers and administrators.⁴⁵

For a number of years in the 1960s, the various Departments of the Faculty of Education were only capable of training some twenty percent of the required number of teachers on demand by the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts annually. By way of illustration, while the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts presented its modest demand for some 480 qualified teachers from the

higher level degree programs of the Faculty of Education annually, the latter was able to train only some 90 qualified teachers on the supply side.⁴⁶ Up until 1973, the various Departments of the Faculty of Education trained some 555 qualified teachers with B.A and B.Sc. degrees. Of this figure, many of the graduates took B.A. degrees in the fields of Ethiopian Language and Literature, English, Geography and History in the liberal Arts. A small number of the graduates took B.Sc. degrees in the fields of Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics in the sciences. Hence, there were imbalances in the training of teacher educators for the secondary school subjects in the social studies and languages and the natural sciences.⁴⁷

On the other hand, the various Departments of the Faculty of Education trained some 2, 243 teacher educators under, the middle level diploma programs. Such imbalances in the training of teachers under the middle level diploma and the higher level degree programs informed that the Faculty of Education had developed its capacity to render more service to the elementary level education system than the secondary level education system.⁴⁸ This was still commendable in view of the fact that a sound modern education system in Ethiopia was not to be built without the healthy foundation of an elementary education system.

Of these small numbers of graduates in both the middle level diploma and the higher level degree programs, many lacked the motivation to stay on the job in the profession because of the low social status of the profession as well as the absence of increment in salaries for teachers annually; except those who could move to better paying jobs in the governmental and non-governmental organizations.⁴⁹ In this context, it appears apparent and tantalizingly applicable to quote an old English adage: "Those who can do, do. Those who cannot do, teach and those who cannot teach, teach teachers."

The problems that the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts faced with regard to teachers were not only in training them in large quantity and sufficient quality, but also in retaining them in the profession. Those teachers, who could not move to other high status professions and well paying jobs, remained in the teaching profession. And, indeed, stayed on the profession with feelings of melancholy because of the limited and prescribed promotion in the teaching profession, with the exception of enrollment in the in-service program for those teachers, who sought further educational training. More generally, the

teaching profession with its ascribed low social status in the imperial social hierarchy was not attractive to individuals in their youth.⁵⁰

Obviously, the teacher education programs under the Faculty of Education were not to resolve the chronic shortage of teachers. Such a short supply of qualified teachers especially under the higher level degree programs in the Faculty of Education, among other factors, motivated the authorities of the HSIU to institute the Ethiopian University Service (EUS) for one year. The EUS for one year became a requirement for university students in all degree offering Departments at HSIU. As a result, many university students began to teach in the secondary schools in the fourteen provinces of the Ethiopian empire for one year after the completion of their third year in the various Departments. The EUS began in 1964 and continued up until 1973. The Ministry of Education and Fine Arts was interested in the EUS project in order to help alleviate the shortage of teachers in the secondary schools in the short run. In the long-run, however, it ought to train teachers in large quantity and adequate quality.⁵¹ Statistics had it that some 1,734 EUS students were assigned to teach in the secondary schools between 1964 and 1970.⁵² The EUS students unqualified, as many of them, were in the teaching profession were not to resolve the shortage of teachers in the long-run, but only added to the confusion of the students in the secondary schools.⁵³

The Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School 1965-77

As has already been cited elsewhere, the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers teaching at HSIU were instrumental in initiating the *Be'ede Mariam Library School Twelfth Grade Program* under the Faculty of Education.⁵⁴ The most logical solution to the shortage of qualified teachers in the secondary schools for the HSIU was to expand its educational facilities under the Faculty of Education with the objective of training and preparing more qualified secondary school teachers. Considering the difficulty of most twelfth grade students in the provinces in passing the Ethiopia School Leaving Certificate Examination and, thereby, facing difficulties in getting admission to the most sought Faculties at HSIU, the Faculty of Education was not to encounter difficulties in recruiting students of eleventh grade throughout the Ethiopian empire to enroll in its *Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School Twelfth Grade Program*. The paramount problem ahead was to arise later, on how to retain this person-power in their youth in the teaching profession.⁵⁵

The *Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School Twelfth Grade Program* in the period (1965-77) recruited a substantial segment of the best students at grade eleven throughout the secondary schools in the Ethiopian empire. Historically, the Faculty of Education, most often than not got students, who failed in other subjects in their twelfth grade completion examination, whereas it had got to receive a section of the best talents in the country.⁵⁶ The Laboratory School provided the students from the provinces twelfth grade education by highly competent international scholars as well as scholars of Ethiopian nationals. Students got one year education and board. Upon completion of their twelfth grade education, the students joined the Faculty of Education. These students selected their major subject as well as minor subject areas in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics under the Faculty of Science and Geography, History, English and Ethiopian Language under the Faculty of Arts. By 1974, some students took *Educational Psychology* as a major subject area. Generally, all of the courses in the major subject as well as minor subject areas were offered by the professoriate in the Faculties of Science and Arts. As has been indicated earlier, a few numbers of the students, who selected their minor subject areas in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling and Library Science, took the course offerings of the Departments of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling and Library Science under the Faculty of Education. All the students, who joined the Faculty of Education, however, took the course offerings in the fundamental and applied sciences in education from the professoriate in the various Departments of the Faculty of Education.⁵⁷

A number of factors restrained university graduates of the Laboratory School from joining the teaching corps in the secondary schools. This aggravated, all the more, the problems of supplying qualified teachers and their effectiveness under the higher level degree programs of the Faculty of Education. Secondary school teachers of Ethiopian nationals, estimated to be one-third of the total numbers of the teachers of secondary schools whereas the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers and Indians were estimated to form two-thirds, in the main taught Amharic language and Physical Education and Sports in the 1960s. This one-third of the teachers of the secondary schools of Ethiopian nationals, who remained on the job continued to express more dissatisfaction about the conditions of the teaching profession.⁵⁸ To make matters even worse, in the early months of 1969, the situation with regard to the two-thirds of the teachers of secondary schools of the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers and Indians became all the more uncertain as the rioting and demonstrations of the

students at the HSIU and a good number of the students in the secondary schools, were directed, among other things, against the expulsion of the expatriate teachers.⁵⁹

In addition to its various Departments and the Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School, the Faculty of Education administrated auxiliary programs:

1. The Curriculum Materials Center which later on became the Audio Visual Center
2. The Educational Research Center, a special area program.

Both of these programs were run by Directors with some degree of administrative autonomy from the Faculty of Education, but both had to abide themselves by the overall general rules and regulations of the Faculty.⁶⁰

The Audio Visual Center

Historically, the Curriculum Materials Center, which later on became the Audio Visual Center housed a number of motion picture films, film-strips, educational records, lecture tapes, pictures, hundreds of transparencies on Mathematics and the natural sciences, projectors and magnifying apparatuses. The Center provided service on the proper use of audiovisual material for educational purposes. Members of the Center carried out demonstrations by emphasizing the possible production of teaching materials from inexpensive local materials for use as teaching aids in the classrooms.⁶¹

Some observers on the extra-ordinary possessions of the Audio Visual Center of the Faculty of Education in store were of the opinions that the Center had possessed many expensive auxiliary educational materials, but dubbed these materials as archaic and dysfunctional in the rear warehouse. One of the keen observers of such a development at the Audio Visual Center was a person no less than the late Dr. Azeb Desta, Dean of the Faculty of Education (1994-96). Dr. Azeb expressed her sorrow about the state and condition of the Center and did not restrain herself from suggesting that the Center had simply existed in name.⁶²

The Educational Research Center

The Education Research Center was established as a research arm of the Faculty of Education on educational issues in 1967. Its aims were to foster and coordinate research activities on educational issues as well as to produce

teaching materials in the fundamental and applied sciences in education to the students and the teaching staff in the Faculty of Education. It possessed a large library that was expected to document the different educative traditions of the diverse ethnic and religious groups in the Ethiopian empire and the wider region of the Horn of Africa. Its library quite rightly maintained a leading place as the largest library in the collection of the materials on the applied sciences in education. It organized conferences and seminars on a variety of issues in education.⁶³

Six years afterwards in October 1973, the Educational Research center had expressed its highly ambitious plan to extend its area of research activities on educational issues in other countries in the continent of Africa.⁶⁴ This highly ambitious plan did not come to fruition simply because the actual political realities on the ground in the Ethiopian empire, among other realities in the larger continent of Africa, squarely confronted the plan, a plan of a Center which had no researchers at all, but a director, a librarian and one office boy at the time.⁶⁵

Its unrealistic and non-operative plan aside, the Center began to publish a journal entitled *The Ethiopian Journal of Education* in English in 1967 and *Admas* in Amharic in 1979. Both journals contained a variety of educational issues on the imperial system of modern education as well as on the native educative traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church schools.⁶⁶ There was little or no study at all on the native educative traditions of the adherents to the different traditional religions as well as the *Quranic* schools for Muslim students in the mosques in the Ethiopian empire.⁶⁷

The library of the Educational Research Center, in the main, housed books and articles on educational issues that were carried out by scholars at micro levels in the country. Unfortunately, adequate studies on the state and conditions of the overall native educative traditions as well as the modern education system at all levels of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the educational hierarchy at macro levels in the vast expanse of the wider Ethiopian empire in the Horn of Africa were not obtainable. The available studies on issues related to education at micro levels were obviously limited in scope and prescribed in perspective. It was, therefore, not appropriate to give these studies on educational issues at micro levels an overall nation-wide dimensions and perspectives.⁶⁸

Considering the plurality of the native educative traditions and the diversity of the impacts of the modern education system itself, on the diverse ethnic and religious groups, and considering also the different historical educational experiences of the heterogeneous peoples in Ethiopia, studies on educational issues at macro levels had been in dire need. Moreover, most of the studies on educational issues at micro levels in Ethiopia did not attempt to provide an overall assessment and analysis, thereof, of the different educational policies and their diverse effects on the multi-ethnic and multi religious constituencies of Ethiopia.

Studies on educational issues at micro levels in Ethiopia, like the different attempts at educational reforms by the three regimes with different systems of governance in the period (1942 to the present), appeared to have many of the investigative characteristics of an armchair top-down approaches rather than empirical inquiries from bellow on the different historical educational experiences of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious constituencies of Ethiopia. In this context, the Institute of Educational Research, the successor of the former Educational Research Center, did a praise-worthy job in publishing two articles with two different view points on educational issues and their implications on the public, one by a senior scholar in the Faculty of Education and the other by an establishment no less than the Ministry of Education as the coordinating body of the contemporary regime in the *Ethiopian Journal of Education*. Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1996 and Vol.XVI, No.2, 1996 respectively.⁶⁹ Such accommodating publications on differing view points on educational issues, indeed, set a point of departure from the historic limitations to censor such differing ideas on issues related to education in Ethiopia from reaching the larger public notice as in the period of the *ancien regime*. Accordingly, we could not, but anticipate the hope that many researchers on educational studies would tend to take up research agendas at an all inclusive macro levels and with multi-perspectives in the near future.

In 1973, a year before the outbreak of the revolutionary upheaval in Ethiopia in 1974, the Faculty of Education organized a workshop to conduct an evaluative assessment on the current state and status and the future plan for the development of the Faculty at Ambo town. The workshop set out to examine the different issues and problems in the training of teacher educators under the middle level diploma programs and the higher level degree programs in the three delivery educational modes of regular day classes, evening classes and the in-service program doing the summer vacation (*Amharic Kiremt*). The

participants in the workshop strove to look for ways and means to provide the Faculty of its future direction. They sought out paths to route the course for the creation of the closer integration of the Faculty of Education to work with the relevant sisterly Faculties within the HSIU for the purposes of promoting the teacher education system. Moreover, the workshop helped to strengthen the ongoing collaborative venture on the teacher education system in the intra- and inter-faculty levels in the university.⁷⁰

The workshop at Ambo was of paramount significance that gave the Faculty of Education a practical road map to be able to introduce graduate programs in the future and to identify the important areas for research and intervention on issues related to teacher education at the HSIU.⁷¹ Generally, there was a relative increase in the intake of students by the Faculty of Education from year to year in the early 1970s, with the exception of the intake in the regular program in the 1973 – 74 academic year.⁷²

*Figure: The Enrollment of Students in the Faculty of Education in the early 1970s.*⁷³

Years	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74
Regular Program	744	901	1106	1006
Summer program	1056	1785	1910	2000

Unfortunately, however, these figures did not indicate separately the enrollment of students under the middle level diploma programs and the higher level degree programs. Neither did these figures show the obvious imbalances in gender in the intake of students. Further, these figures did not point out the major and minor subject area Departments in the Faculties of Arts and Science that the students enlisted in. These figures as already cited did not tell the significance of either the selection of the major and minor subject areas by the students or the intake capacity of the various Departments in the major and minor subject areas in the Faculties of Arts and Science and the Faculty of Education itself.

On the other hand, the Faculty of Education in the early 1970s, set out to give noteworthy community services through its Department of Elementary Education for the training of village-level teachers at Addis Ababa. In order to carry out this project, the Department of Elementary Education received financial support from the Goethe German Cultural Institute at Addis Ababa. This project called *Nibab Bet* (Amharic lit. reading house) offered training with improved methods of teaching for teachers at a village-level in six

months. In this rare experiment of training teachers for one-teacher contained school at a village-level in Addis Ababa, some one hundred and thirty teachers completed the program and received certificates.⁷⁴

In addition to organizing the national workshop at Ambo town in 1973, the Faculty of Education had organized and sponsored a special national conference on "Literacy Campaign" in Ethiopia in January 1972, which was a precursor of the workshop at Ambo. In 1972, the Faculty of Education also sponsored an international conference at Addis Ababa of "The African Teacher Education Association Conference." This conference was attended by participants from fourteen countries in the continent of Africa, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. A year later in 1973, it conducted an international seminar at Addis Ababa on "Educational Management" and on the educational systems of the Eastern and Southern countries in Africa.⁷⁵

In spite of the fact that the Faculty of Education had organized and sponsored national and international conferences on educational issues in Ethiopia as well as including other countries in the continent of Africa, and despite also the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts to improve the situation in the teacher education system in the Faculty of Education at the HSIU, the latter as well as the general teacher education system in Ethiopia in the late 1960s and the early 1970s continued to grow worse because of a deterioration of the facilities in the secondary schools and consequently the humble quality of secondary school leavers themselves. Further, the appalling rate of drop-outs in the first year of university education (mainly due to failure), which was as high as 35 percent, made the picture of the teacher education system in the Faculty of Education in particular and the general tertiary level education system at HSIU in general even gloomier.⁷⁶

In addition to the insufficient number of the secondary schools, Ethiopia was also faced with the grave problem of the low standards of teaching in the public secondary schools. Of the twelfth grade students, who did sit for the "Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination" (ESLCE) every year, pitifully a small number of students successfully passed the examination, where the rate of failures or near failures was nearly 50 percent.⁷⁷ Considering such a rate of failures, the Faculty of Education was not to get prospective teachers from a segment of the best students in its teacher education programs to replace even the number of teachers of Ethiopian nationals leaving the

teaching profession, let alone to replace the expatriate teachers in the secondary schools in the Ethiopian empire.⁷⁸

The teacher education diploma level and degree level programs of the Faculty of Education, like the many training programs, in the various Departments throughout HSIU were crisis-laden because:

1. Many of the teaching staff were expatriates from many nations overseas and with diverse ideological persuasions;
2. The teaching staff of Ethiopian nationals were very few; and
3. The general studies of university education lacked a keenly defined national educational ideology to guide and direct the various training programs as well as the national development efforts of the imperial government.⁷⁹

The question that waited for substantial investigation was, how national and inclusive of diversity was the national university of imperial Ethiopia in the period (1950-74)? Whatever explanation could be provided for such a question, the structural distortion in the general education system at HSIU together with the unemployment and underemployment of the nearly 50 percent failures of the students in the ESLCE in the secondary schools was inherited by the military regime, after the Ethiopian revolution of 1974.

Conclusions

The system of education in Ethiopia thus evolved through a continuous process from the early-20th-century proposals right up to the 1960s, reflecting a mixture of external pressure and internal aspirations: F. Ernest Work's 1934 university proposal and Emperor Haile Selassie I's effort in modernizing education led to the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa. Although the country imported the Western model of education, it cannot contextualize those frameworks in its unique context. This shows that there were still some specific difficulties concerning how to make foreign and local needs combine within an educational context. The Faculty of Education had a very exciting but nevertheless turbulent period from 1962 to 1978: it began with a dream mainly influenced by the Canadian-Jesuit ideal, coupled with philosophical underpinnings stemming from many international educational models, and then suddenly found itself grappling with how to introduce an adequate and intelligible teacher training system. While the establishment of the Faculty of Education in 1962 and further expansion of the faculty into several departments, such as Elementary

Education, Secondary Education, and Educational Psychology, was a great achievement, the system still suffered from a number of pressing challenges. Issues such as inadequate resources, conflicting foreign educational models, and low teacher status hampered effectiveness.

Efforts to address teacher shortages, including relying on expatriates and university students, highlighted the need for a more unified and contextually relevant educational strategy. The Be'ede Mariam Laboratory School aimed to address Ethiopia's teacher shortage by training talented students. While it managed to attract the cream of students and train them for higher studies, low job satisfaction, reliance on expatriate teachers, and other systemic problems finally circumscribed its contribution. What was obviously called for was a more sustainable approach—that is, nationally driven—to teacher education.

The Audio-Visual Center and the Educational Research Center attempted to boost education through materials and research, but both were plagued with problems. The Audio-Visual Center did not keep up with the times as related to the nature of materials on file or operational relevance, and the Educational Research Center was narrow in scope, and the research capability was limited. Both were concerned, but the reports brought out that modern resources, wider research perspectives, and the need for workable improvements in the educational system were required.

Endnotes

¹For a description on the foundations of the early modern schools, see the pioneering article of Richard Pankhurst, "The Foundations of Education, Printing, Newspapers, Book Production, Libraries and Literacy in Ethiopia", *Ethiopian Observer*, vol. 6, No. 3, 1962. pp. 241-90.

²F. Ernest Work, "A Plan for Ethiopia's Educational System", *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. III, No 1, January, 1934. p. 68.

³For the emergence and development of the modern schooling system in the Western world and the accompanying modernization, see Edmund J. King, *Education and Social Change*. London: Pergamon Press, Ltd; 1966; Amare Asgedom, "Higher Education in Pre-Revolution Ethiopia: Relevance and Academic Freedom", *The Ethiopian Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 2, No. 2, December 2005, pp. 8-9.

⁴Adane Taye, "A Historical Survey of State Education in Ethiopia". Addis Ababa, 1993. pp.60-62. For the fact that every article in the Anglo –Ethiopian agreement of 1942 underlined the dependency of the Ethiopian empire on Britain, see Bahru Zewde,

History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974. London: James Currey, Athens: Ohio University Press, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1991. p. 179.

⁵ Tekeste Negash, *The Crisis of Ethiopian Education: Some Implications for Nation-Building*, Uppsala, Sweden, 1990. p.53.

⁶ Adane Tyape, p. 45.

⁷ See for details, *The Point 4 Program in Ethiopia: A Cooperative Program of the Ethiopian and United States Governments*, U.S. Operations Mission to Ethiopia, September, 1954; Girma Amare, "Education and Society in Prerevolutionary Ethiopia," *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, 1984, p. 69.

⁸ John Markakis, *Ethiopia Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, Oxford University Press, 1975. p.188; Girma Amare, 1984, p. 69.

⁹ Randi Ronning Balsvik, *Haile Sellassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1974*. Addis Ababa University Press, African Studies Center, Michigan State University in Cooperation with the Norwegian Council of Science and Humanities, Reprinted in 2005. p.9.

¹⁰ Issued by the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Education in Ethiopia: A Survey*. Addis Ababa: 1961. p.26; Girma Amare, 1984, p. 69; See also Tehsome G.Wagaw, *The Development of Higher Education and Social Change: The Ethiopian Experience*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990. p.72.

¹¹ *Ibid*; *Education in Ethiopia: A Survey*. p.26.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ *Ibid*. See the Charter of the University College of Addis Ababa. General Notice No. 185 of July 28, 1954.

¹⁴ Monika Kehoe, "Higher Education in Ethiopia: A Report on Haile Sellassie I University", Washington: Journal of Higher Education. Vol. 33, 1962. p. 475.

¹⁵ J.F. Ade Ajayi, Lamerk K.H. Goma & G. Ampah Johnson, *The African Experience with Higher Education*. The Association of African Universities, Accra, in Association with James Currey, London, Ohio University Press, Athens, 1996. p.65.

¹⁶ *Ibid*. See also Eli Ginzberg and Herbert A. Smith, *Manpower Strategy for Developing Countries: Lessons from Ethiopia*, Columbia University Press, 1967; Aklilu Habte, "Higher Education in Ethiopia in the 1970s and beyond", a Paper Prepared for Bellangio "Education and Development" Conference (Unpublished), October 1973, pp. 2-3; Girma Amare, 1984, p. 71.

¹⁷ Balsvik; p.23. See the "Inaugural Address of His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I on the Occasion of the Founding Ceremony of Haile Sellassie I University, 18th December, 1961" in J. Summerskill, *Haile Sellassie I University: A Blueprint for Development*. Addis Ababa: HSIU, 1970. pp. 12-19. See also Aklilu Habte, Menguesha Gebre Hewit, Monika Kehoe, "Higher Education in Ethiopia", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Jan. 1963. pp. 1, 7.

¹⁸ Balsvik; pp. 25, 29.

- ¹⁹ Anonymous informants interviewed on 19-25 August and 10 September, 2009.
- ²⁰ See note number 14, *Education Ethiopia: A survey*. p.26. See also Aklilu Habte, "A Brief Review of the History of University College of Addis Ababa," in *University College Review*. Addis Ababa: 1961.
- ²¹ Balsvik; p.29.
- ²² Marew Zewdie and Aklilu Dalelo (Editors), *Proceedings of the Workshop on the Future Plan of the Faculty of Education*. Addis Ababa: October 1995. p. 26. They also indicated that the in-service program during the summer vacation (Amharic, *Kiremt*) for the offering of courses for teachers and administrators on the job in schools began in 1958.
- ²³ Balsvik; p. 25.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*; p. 29.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*. taken from a speech by Dr. Aklilu Habte on the Conference on Secondary Education in Ethiopia in 1962. pp. 29-31.
- ²⁶ Marew Zewdie and Aklilu Dalelo (editors), p. 26.
- ²⁷ Donald Levine, "Class Consciousness and Class Solidarity in the New Ethiopian Elite," in P.C. Lloyd (editor), *The New Elites of Tropical Africa*. Oxford: The University Press, 1966. p. 321. See note number 26; Girma Amare, 1967, p.50.
- ²⁸ Balsvik; p. 29. Based on her source, Presidential Commission on Planning, Reorganization and Consolidation of Academic Programs of the University, Appendix D, Interim Report of the Development Committee to the Faculty Council, December 1965; pp. 11-12.
- ²⁹ For a cogent argument of the crisis in the primary education system of Ethiopia, see Aklilu Habte, "Brain Drain in the Elementary School: Why Teachers Leave the Profession," *Ethiopian Journal of Education*. Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1967.
- ³⁰ Assefa Bekele, "The Ethiopian Elite and Intelligentsia," *Dialogue*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 1967. pp. 6-7.
- ³¹ Erik Gilbert & Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Ltd; 2004. p. 277.
- ³² Ministry of Education and Fine Arts of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, *A Ten-Year Plan for the Controlled Expansion of Ethiopian Education*, Addis Ababa, June 1955. p.1.
- ³³ Anonymous informants interviewed on 24-25 August 2009; Amare Asgedom, pp. 6-7.
- ³⁴ Mordechai Abir, "Education and National Unity in Ethiopia", *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 275, January 1976.; pp. 51-54; Perham, p. 57.
- ³⁵ Theodore M. Vestal, "The Peace Corps in Ethiopia: An Overall View," *Ethiopia Observer*. Vol. IX. No. 1, 1965. pp. 15-16, 20. Abir, p. 55.
- ³⁶ Azeb Desta, "Keynote Speech" in Marew Zewdie and Aklilu Dalelo (editors), p.14. *Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, 1950 – 2000*. The Sole Department with 50 years of Teacher Education Program, December, 2000. p.2.

- ³⁷ *Ibid.* Faculty of Education News Bulletin, Haile Sellassie I University, Number 2, December 13, 1973. pp. 13-14. Also Informants.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Marew Zewdie and Aklilu Dalelo (editors), p. 28.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*; pp. 26-27, 29.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*; p. 29.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.* Azeb Desta, cited above, p. 14. Adane Taye, pp. 89-90. See also “The President’s Report, 1971-72, Haile Sellassie I University,” Addis Ababa, September, 1972. p. 63.
- ⁴⁴ Marew Zewdie and Aklilu Dalelo (editors), p. 29.
- ⁴⁵ See note number of 60, *Department Curriculum and Instruction*. p.2.
- ⁴⁶ “Report of the Committee on the Expansion of the Faculty of Education, Haile Sellassie I University”, February 14, 1969-List 2. p. 1.
- ⁴⁷ Worku Geda (compiler), “Directory of the Faculty of Education Graduates 1952-1973”, Addis Ababa, February 25, 1976. p.1.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Informants. See the excellent assessment and analysis of Aklilu Habte, cited above.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* See also Adane Taye, p. 90.
- ⁵¹ Balsvik; pp. 140-42. Mesfin Wolde Mariam , “The Role of Universities in Under-Developed Countries,” *Dialogue*. Vol. I, No. 1, 1968. pp. 15-16. *idem* “The Rural-Urban Split in Ethiopia,” *Dialogue*. Vol.II, No., 1968 p.15; Amare Asgedom, pp. 34-35.
- ⁵² Adane Taye, p. 88.
- ⁵³ Abir, p.55.
- ⁵⁴ Vestal, p. 20.
- ⁵⁵ Abir, p.55.
- ⁵⁶ Balsvik; p. 29. Azeb Desta, cited above, p. 14-15.
- ⁵⁷ Informants as well as the experiences of the authors of this essay.
- ⁵⁸ Abir., p. 55. See also *Department of Curriculum and Instruction*. p. 29. College of Education of Addis Ababa University, *Teacher Education System in Ethiopia: A Need for an Informed Decision*. Addis Ababa: April, 2008. p.8. Addis Ababa University, *Three Decades of University Education 1950-1980*. Addis Ababa : On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary, December, 1980. p. 14. Azeb Desta, cited above, p.16.
- ⁵⁹ Abir; p. 55. Balsvik, pp. 237. 38.
- ⁶⁰ *Faculty of Education News Bulletin*, Haile Sellassie I University, Number 1, October 18, 1973. p.1.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*; p.5. Azeb Desta, cited above, p.15.
- ⁶² Azeb Desta, cited above, p.15.
- ⁶³ “The President’s Report, 1969-70 and 1979-71, Haile Sellassie I University,” Addis Ababa, January, 1972. p.91; Aklilu Habte, October 1973, p. 12; Amare Asgedom, p. 33.

⁶⁴ See note number 84, News Bulletin, Number 1, p.3. For a brief early history of the Center, see *Educational Research Center, Faculty of Education, and Addis Ababa University. Monograph.* AAU Miscellanea 7, 1979.

⁶⁵ Institute of Educational Research (IER), *Historical Development, Mission and Programs.* Addis Ababa, January, 2001. p.1.

⁶⁶ See note number 88, *Educational Research Center*, p.3.

⁶⁷ For a Study on *Qur'anic* Schools, however, see a reflection by Haile Gabriel Dagne, "Non-Government Schools in Ethiopia" in M.L. Bender et al, *Language in Ethiopia.* London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

⁶⁸ See Ayalew Shibeshi, "Policy Implications of the Drop-out Rates in Ethiopian Schools" in Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto, Masayoshi Shigeta (editors), *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective. Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies.* Vol. III, Kyot, 12-17 December 1997. p. 496.

⁶⁹ Seyoum Tefera, "Attempt at Educational Reform in Ethiopia: A Top-down or a Bottom-up Reform?" *The Ethiopian Journal of Education.* Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1996. Ministry of Education, "Attempts at Educational Reform in Ethiopia: A Top-down or a Bottom-up Reform?: Reviewed," *The Ethiopian Journal of Education.* Vol. XVI, No. 2, Dec. 1996.

⁷⁰ "Faculty of Education Report of Ambo Workshop", February 16-18, 1973. p.1. Lakew Mulat, "Brief Summary of the Notable Achievements and Future Plans of the Faculty of Education During the Last Three Years", 1974. p.8.

⁷¹ *Ibid*; Ambo Workshop, p. 12.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Lakew Mulat, p. 8.

⁷⁴ "The President's Report, 1973-74, Haile Sellassie I University," Addis Ababa: No date. See note number 84, News Bulletin, p.2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 113. "The President's Report, 1971-72," *cited supra.* pp. 61-68.

⁷⁶ Abir; p. 50. The information for this paragraph came as it did from Dr. Mordechai Abir, as an eyewitness account of his experience as Assistant Dean and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts of HSIU and on information received from his colleagues in the Faculty of Education of HSIU.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*; pp. 49-50.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*; p.52.

⁷⁹ Girma Amare, "Current Trends in Higher Education in Ethiopia," pp. 48, 50.

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Informants

An anonymous informant interviewed in Addis Ababa from 19 August 2009 to 10 September, 2009.

Informants holding important offices in the administration of the College of Education.

