

## THE RESEARCH CENTRE

by Haile Gabriel Dagne

The idea of establishing a Research Co-ordinating Unit or Centre was conceived as far back as 1966. The research objectives were somewhat ambitious for the then existing facilities. It was proposed to "advance our knowledge of education in developing countries with particular reference to Ethiopia by undertaking research projects and disseminating our findings in as meaningful a way as possible." Accordingly, "priority should be given to topics that could contribute immediately to alleviating or solving the pressing problems of education in Ethiopia." This research objective could not be implemented and the discussion on research was delayed till 1968.

In 1968 Dean Mulugeta Wodajo found it important to reactivate the discussion on new and more modest lines, namely, to establish a small research unit that should co-ordinate and concentrate on projects to improve and Ethiopianize the teaching material of the Education Faculty, and, in the second place, should attempt to contribute to educational theory and practice in Ethiopia.

With this intention in mind the Faculty of Education established a modest Research Centre in October 1968. The physical plant of the Centre is situated in one of the Laboratory School buildings. The Centre has nine rooms. Five of the rooms are reserved as "study cells". The purpose of these study cells is to provide faculty members with an area for conducting productive activity in research, experimentation, report writing, preparation of papers for conferences, etc., but not simply for classroom preparation, correction of papers and the like. The rooms are designed for completely uninterrupted study. No conversation is to be permitted in the rooms. Students and guests are not permitted entry to the rooms. The facility is not open to students but only to full-time members of the Faculty of Education. Use of the rooms will be available not only during school hours but also during lunch periods, evenings and week-ends. The Research Centre has invited instructors to make use of these rooms again and again.

The Centre is run by a committee. Dean Mulugeta Wodajo authorized the committee on November 12, 1968, to consider applications for research assistance from staff of the Faculty of Education and to decide on the form and kind of assistance the project should get on the basis of criteria and priorities set forth by the committee in consultation with the Dean. The committee can organise seminars and workshops on topics of immediate importance in the field of Ethiopian education.

The Centre is new, and its scope and means are very limited. The facilities available at present do not allow us to indulge in complicated and ambitious research projects. The Centre functions rather as a research co-ordinating unit. It is a kind of self-help project established by the Faculty of Education, which is the biggest faculty of HSIU. The idea is not to establish a bureaucratized and

independent research institute with full-time staff. The members of the committee and the Chairman are full-time workers in the Faculty. The whole idea is to improve the teaching material for the Faculty of Education, particularly in professional education, educational administration, methods, etc. Therefore, the Centre gives priority to all works of research dealing with the preparation and publication of textbooks, teaching materials, student handbooks and the like. Other research projects on professional education which may not directly be related to teaching Faculty students can be assisted, in the second place, if the project is considered a contribution to Ethiopian educational theory or practice.

The Centre tries also to collect and record teaching material, schedules, reports, recommendations and the like produced by educational institutions throughout Ethiopia. The main purpose of this attempt is not to compete with the existing libraries, but to make some rare and scattered materials available to those engaged in educational research. A bibliography of education works on Ethiopia will be circulated soon.

The other function of the Centre is to organise seminars on actual educational problems in Ethiopia. The idea is to give a platform for the exchange of experience and views among those engaged in educational activities.