

## Director's Note

**IER Flambeau** disseminates research reports, which are of course, moderately rigorous, always aiming at educationally relevant materials. The current issue carries four articles addressing pertinent educational problems, which might also stimulate further research on the same issues. These four articles are of diverse nature again addressing different dimensions of the same area-- education.

The First article is an empirical study concerned with assessing responsibilities and authorities of Wereda Education officials in the Region of Tigrai. The results suggest that those officials have as much authorities as their responsibilities. They, however, failed to report activities related to the New Educational and Training Polic, implying less familiarity with it.

The Second article is an advocacy of the Explanation Technique of study, contending that the technique, although teacher-centered, is different from the teacher-talk method in that both teacher and student involvement's are implied. A list of both teacher and student activities is provided during the encounter. Student imaginative involvement and answering the question of why are the two important attributes of this approach.

The Third Article is a critical analysis of education and its link with development and labour market. It shows that how the high numbers of unemployed young people who have a good education but who are frustrated in their life situation wake up the decision-makers and researchers of education. It also suggests that the quantitative increase in education alone is a guarantee of nothing in itself, but must be connected to other factors and conditions of development of the society.

The Fourth article critically reviews several test types aiming at predicting cognitive tempos of students at different levels. These are standardized tests that measure the amount of time taken by a student in information processing -- decoding, interpreting and encoding. Such indexes are also used to classify students into different ability-groups.

Amare Asgedom

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# Reported Responsibilities and Authorities of Educational Wereda Heads In the Region of Tigrai

*Amare Asgedom\**

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## Introduction

This study was part of **Beso Decentralization of Education Study** conducted in the Region of Tigrai in summer 1995. The author had presented this paper in one of the series of workshops conducted in Tigrai in the same year.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to point out what responsibilities (tasks) and decision-making authorities Wereda Education officials had in the system.

### 2. Questions (method)

In a questionnaire Wereda Education officials were asked to report all what they did the previous year, 1994/95 (September to August). They were requested in the questionnaire (with personal interviewer) to recall activities they accomplished in each month of the year.

### 3. Data

Out of the 30 wereda officials reached out by all research teams, half of them (15) were used to fill out the question. All 15 were almost evenly distributed in all four zones except the Eastern Zone where only two wereda officials were considered for reasons of time constraint.

## 4. Findings.

Out of the 15 questionnaires, one was discarded for incompleteness. Fourteen questionnaires were, therefore, used for the analysis of these data.

### 4.1. Description of Data

4.11 The 14 Wereda Education Heads had an average age of 40.6 years ranging from a minimum of 29 years to a maximum of 50 years.

4.12 All wereda heads were males.

4.13 Their year-of-service varied from a minimum of 9 years to a maximum of 30 years in different places and areas of work.

4.14 Six of them had a qualification of what they call 12+TTI (graduates of Teacher Training Institutes after completion of grade 12).

4.15 One of them had a diploma in School Administration from Haile-Selassie University (Now called Addis Ababa University).

4.16 One has said he has taken three summer courses in the TTI of Adwa.

\* Author was project researcher in the Decentralization study of Beso Project Commissioned by The ABEL 2 Consortium Academy for Educational Development with Creative Associates International, Inc., Educational Development Center, Florida State University. Harvard Institute for International Development, and Research Triangle Institute.

## 4.2 Analysis of Data

4.21. A total of 174 responses were obtained from the 15 wereda heads to the question. The average number of responses by one person was 12.

4.22. These 174 responses were then classified into nine categories as indicated in table I.

Table I. Reported Responsibilities of Wereda heads in the Four Zones of Tigray.

TYPE OF TASK	WEST	CENTER	EAST	SOUTH	TOTAL
	(4)	(5)	(1)*	(4)	(14)
Inspections (auditing, property, instruction)	13	6	4	8	31**
Adult & community education	13	4		2	32
Performance evaluation	6	7	4	3	17
Distribution of books and instructional materials	5	6	3	1	12
Teacher placement, transfer, recommendations	6	5	1		12
Examinations	5	3		2	12**
Downward communication	2	6	1		8*
School/classroom/"Das" construction	5		2	2	7
Training (woreda, directors, teachers)	3	2			7
Statistics	2	1		2	6**
Meeting with community		5	1	1	6
Sports, cultural activities		2		3	6
Upward communication	5		1		5**
Distribution of supplies, equipment and building materials	3	1		1	5
Planning	2	1		1	4
Conduct meetings with schools directors		1		1	3
Teacher housing	1	2	1	1	5***
Academic competitions		1			3
Others (handling complains; liaising with external projects, organizations; kindergarten; giving awards; implementing decisions)	1	2	1	1	5***
TOTAL	72	54	2	29	174

\* Note that one additional questionnaire was discarded for incompleteness.

\*\* Classified as tasks of accountability.

\*\*\* Unclassified.

4.23. The six most important points performed by most wereda heads were:

a. Inspection which includes auditing, property inspections, instructional inspections (31 responses).

b. Adult and community education - that were mostly non-formal activities

conducted outside the formal educational system. They are mainly aimed at literacy campaigns.

c. Performance evaluations-these are evaluations of performance of schools, school directors, the wereda staff itself, etc. These evaluations are conducted on

d. Distribution of books and teaching materials --- these are materials sent from the respective zones.

e. Teacher placement, transfer, discipline problems, promotions, recommendations, etc.

f. Examinations --- these are regional or national examinations which required coordination's by wereda education's administrators.

4.24. These six reported important activities constitute 60.9 percent of the tasks accomplished during the year. Of these six activities, inspection appears to stand out followed by adult education and performance evaluations.

Inspection is the number one activity for all zones except for the Central Zone whose reported highest activity was performance evaluation.

6. The Eastern Zone is different from other zones as the respondent (in his 18 responses) did not make any mention concerning distribution of books and teaching materials during the whole year.

4. 27. The tasks of teacher placement, discipline, promotions and recommendations were not observed in the Southern Zone.

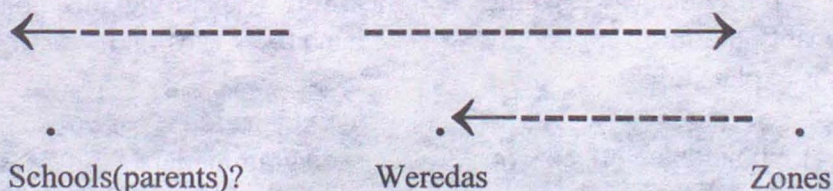
4.28. The Western Zone had the largest reported responses of adult education, 13 responses, three times as much as the Central Zone or even more than six times of that of the Southern Zone.

### 5. Accountability and Authority

5.1. The reported 174 tasks were categorized into tasks of accountability and authority (see table I). The results suggest slight bias toward authority (90 responses authority and 79 responses accountability)--which is often more aimed at capacity building than administering the schools.

5.2. Communication patterns are reported both downward and upward. It is, however, observed that wereda heads failed to report information flows from bottom-up; i.e. from the schools or parents to the wereda offices (see figure I).

Figure I: Reported Communication Patterns by Wereda Heads.



### 5.3. Important tasks that were not reported by wereda heads:

- Wereda Education Heads in Tigray did not mention educational policy.
- Wereda Education Heads in Tigray did not complain about training.