



# Spiritan Foundation of Ethiopia



## Misean Cara monitoring visit to Arba Minch (November 6—9, 2011)

The Misean Cara (Mission Support from Ireland) monitoring visit was conducted by Seamus O’Gorman, Deputy CEO, and Zélie McGrath, Projects Officer. It was an opportunity for Misean Cara to see the work they have been supporting through the Gamo Gofa Food Security Project.

The visit comprised of field visits to Gatse and Dega Chengie, inspection of financial documents, meetings with Spiritans, ICDP staff, local government representatives and project beneficiaries. It was also an opportunity for Misean Cara to share about their own experience of working with missionaries.

Last year Misean Cara gave €504,372.00 to Spiritans worldwide. Misean Cara is accountable to the Irish Government for all the money that is allocated to missionaries. The Irish Government wants to see value for money and results that are verifiable.

Misean Cara is looking for missionaries to have professional administrative structures that facilitate the smooth implementation of projects in a clear and transparent manner. There is no doubt Misean Cara plays a great role in supporting Spiritan works in Gamo Gofa.



Zélie McGrath, Paddy Moran and Seamus O’Gorman

Hopefully they can also be a key partner for supporting more Spiritan initiatives in different parts of the country.

Misean Cara was set up in 2004 as Irish Missionary Resource Services (IMRS). Initially it had nine members but membership has now grown to 86 missionary organisations. It changed its name to Misean Cara in 2008. Among its main tasks are channeling funds from Irish Aid to its member organisation, capacity building and sharing information. For more information see their website at [www.miseancara.ie](http://www.miseancara.ie)

## Happy Christmas 2011 እንኳን ለብሃነ ልደቱ አደረሳችሁ

We wish you all the blessings of Christmas and every happiness in the New Year



*“He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.”*

**BEYOND THE LANGUAGE**  
**"THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH**  
**ETHIOPIAN LANGUAGES"**

**Dennis Bukenya CSSp**

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, our first class did not involve any intellectual activities but rather social activities, just to put us in a good mood to interact, relate and make a bond together with our nurturer. This helped us to understand that the purpose of learning a new language is to interact with the people we find in the mission. The GPA method is more of social approach than a cognitive approach. It is highly participative, interactive, relational and comprehension-led approach. In this method you do not need another language to learn another new language hence you have to learn Amharic using Amharic.

For the first time it looks strange when the nurturer introduces the new participants to a new language of Amharic and she is using Amharic throughout. Some of us had never learnt even a single word of Amharic in our life time; "How are we going to follow the lesson which is taught in only Amharic as a classroom media of communication? We shall not manage!" That was our first feeling. What happened next? The nurture begins by speaking Amharic and using sign language at the same time. The first instruction "Look at me using your eyes and only listen to what I talk using your ears. Do not attempt to talk or to write. You are a baby you cannot talk or write what you do not understand. Be attentive all the time! You can use your recording device to record my voice. Do not worry, you shall manage" said the nurturer (teacher). Next she continued talking in Amharic using sign language and objects (dolls, dining utensils, pictures etc) while introducing us into learning the first vocabularies in Amharic. It seemed to be like a funny game but by the end of the lesson we had grasped something. Part of the lessons you learn only by doing actions without talking or writing. Only after seven weeks we discovered that we are making some progress in learning Amharic.

Then later we moved to another level of talking by repeating what the nurturer says and gradually one starts struggling to express oneself in Amharic using simple words and phrases. The wordless and busy pictures have been really good tools for us in learning a new language. As the journey continues it will lead you to reading of the alphabet (ፊደል *Fidel*) and gradually you start writing them. At this level I found that one understands just a few Amharic phrases but is very rich in vocabulary.

From writing the nurturer will gradually introduce you to reading having been drilled well in pronouncing the *Fidel*. You shall just find yourself gradually moving from phrases and words to construction of sentences. At this stage one starts gradually to comprehend some simple sentences and feel slowly growing into the new language. The grammar is never taught directly but it comes in by itself gradually. Slowly one discovers that although the journey of learning Amharic is tough it is possible to make it. Just learning how to greet in Amharic makes you proud that you can communicate and interact with the people. The true picture inside a growing participant is only what it is because of the place it has in that person's joint life with others. Being social, listening and talking is the primary way humans relate together socially. Thus social interaction plays a central role as a language learner learns to listen with understanding and learns to talk so as to be understood. Hence learning a new language is defined as growth in participation in an ethno-linguistic community.



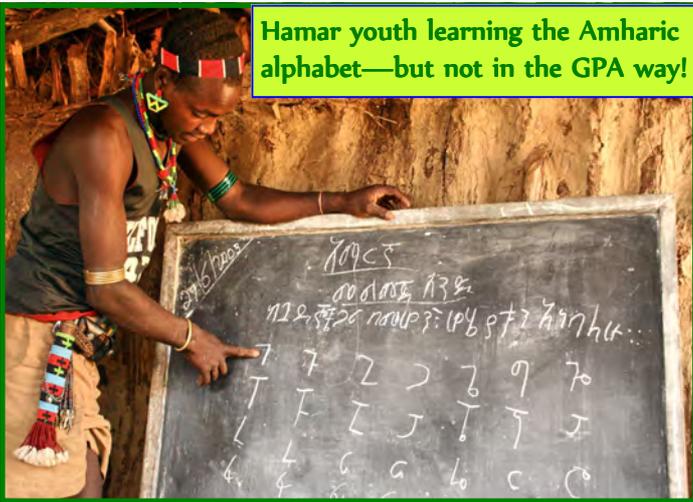
Dennis Bukenya

Nevertheless this process takes time and requires patience. In this process, learning a new language is not a mental activity but fundamentally a social activity. The process of learning a new language make meaning in terms of growing participation in which the hosting community nurtures a growing participator (a foreigner) into ever fuller levels of participation in their world view and lives. This journey of learning a new language is a single road that takes many years. That is what as well our elder confreres have been telling us that we should be patient, it will take us more than 3 years for us to be able to communicate effectively in Amharic. According to GPA method the growing participant must go through six phases which covers 1500 hours of class work in order to reach a level of deep sharing and native -to-native discourse which actually takes 3 years.

**Growing in a new language is a hard process but possible.**

Learning to speak the local language is not necessarily an essential skill for crossing cultures but, all other things being equal, it can be a tremendous asset which can influence the process of crossing cultures. Thus Craig Storti concludes that everyone who lives and works abroad must be able to get along with the local people irrespective of one's mission abroad. It is difficult to

imagine how one can succeed if one can't interact effectively with the people from the local culture. It becomes easier to learn a lot of valuable things and get used to them in a new country if one can talk to and understand the local people. Despite that, it is a hard process to learn a new language, missionaries need to learn the languages of the people hosting them. For Sarah Howard mentions that Amharic is a grammatically complex and subtle language, and is hard for outsiders to learn really well, but the effort to learn just a few words will be useful and widely appreciated. Nevertheless she advises that to make a serious attempt to master this language, it is probably best to combine the formal classes in grammar with the informal conversations and a great deal of rote learning.



Hamar youth learning the Amharic alphabet—but not in the GPA way!

A graduate from the Joint School of Languages said on graduation day: አማርኛ በጣም ከባድ ነው። ድንጋይ ነው። አስቸጋሪ ነው - *Amharic is very hard, it is hard as a stone, very problematic!* She expressed how tough it is to learn these new Ethiopian languages. What she said is true because in my experience among all the African languages which I have learnt both in East and West Africa I find Amharic the most difficult. There is almost no comparison or relationship between Amharic and other African languages hence even us Africans, we find it tough to understand this language. I have found that I put in a lot in terms of time, effort and devotion but the output is very slow and little. In the beginning it was very discouraging that despite all our efforts still we cannot freely speak or interact with local people in Amharic. I agree with the advice of Abba Emmanuel Fritch that one has to be patient it will take me of minimum three years or more to start appreciating the output of my effort in learning Amharic. The great courage is from our elder confreres who have stayed in the mission here in Ethiopia for more than ten years; when we see them speaking this hard language we as well get the courage that one time we shall speak it. ቀስ በቀስ እቁላል በእግሩ ትሔዳለች literally, 'slowly the egg shall walk by its legs'.

Sharing with Abba Martin Kelly, as an old missionary, he tells the truth that “I regret that when we arrived in Ethiopia for the first time we had the impression that Amharic was so hard no foreigner could master it. Hence we neglected it. After two years a Dutch Vincen-tian visited—he later worked with us for 8 years. He had spent 12 hours every day for a year learning Amharic and for the next two years, three hours a day, and he mastered it. Thereafter we as well got the courage that a ‘Farenji’, a foreigner, can learn Amharic. We joined the school of language and started learning Amharic. Later we discovered that there was no need of fear that despite it is difficult language one can learn it. We are not experts but we can now understand and speak this hard language.”

We really appreciate missionaries like Abba Emmanuel Fritsch, Abba Brendan with whom we have stayed together in the Spiritan community Addis Ababa, while learning the new language. We not only admire their speeches in Amharic but their daily encouragement and care has been a great resource in our struggles to get the new language. All of us have now reported to our places of mission but the journey of learning the new language continues so that we can grow in the new community, interact with the local people, cross the culture and be effective in the apostolate. This is a continuous multi-year journey that leads us into ever fuller participation in the life of the host community of Ethiopia.

Martin Kelly visits the Novitiate

After the UCEAF superiors' meeting in Nairobi October 26-27 I visited the Novitiate in Magamba, particularly to visit our Ethiopian novice, Hagos Hailu. It was wonderful to find the 12 novices (1 Ethiopia, 1 India, 2 Kenya, 4 Tanzania, 4 Uganda) in such wonderful form. The day I arrived they were taking part in a day for the religious of the deanery at the Rosminian novitiate in Lushoto. About 150 religious were present. Fr Frederic Musunji, Assistant Novice Master, is their current chairman. Fr Nicetas Kyara, Novice Master, was in Uganda, attending the meeting of UCEAF formators which took place in Namugongo, Kampala.

As you enter the novitiate you are struck by the monument to Poul-lart des Places and his chimney sweeps, the work of Jude Kiggala CSSp from Uganda, now on PEP in Dhadiim, where he is putting his talents to equally good use.



**DARE2GO & SPIRITAN MISSIONARY TEAM  
VISIT ETHIOPIA**

The last week of July and the first week of August we had a delightful group of visitors. For many years the Spiritan Missionary Team in the Netherlands has organized a month-long journey to a country in Africa or South America for youth from the Netherlands allowing them to experience different ways of life, cultures and peoples.

This year Ethiopia was chosen. The Spiritan team was not able to handle it alone and joined the *Dare2Go* group, formerly *Mission and Youth*. The leaders this time were Mr Hans Trienekens, representing *Dare2Go* and Fr Marcel CSSp representing the Spiritan Missionary Team. The participants were nine girls.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July they came to Borana. As their time was short we decided to keep the whole group together to give them a common impression of what life in Borana is like. They based themselves in Dhadiim. From there they visited Dhoqqolle and the famous "Singing Wells" of Dubluq. They visited Yabello town and the big camel and cattle market in Haro Baki.

They had the good fortune of coming during the *Gadamoji* ceremony. Every eight years this ceremony transfers power from father to son. All those eligible move to the *Árdha jilaat* where they remain for about three months, at the end of which the *Gadamoji* have their heads shaved, and after that they move into "retirement". Our group visited the *Gadamoji* village and took part in

the coffee ceremony.

I think it was a good visit and it gave them sufficient time to experience our role in Borana society and our relationship with the Borana.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August we travelled to Arba Minch where we were given a great welcome by Paddy Moran. In the afternoon we visited the prison where Paddy gave an excellent tour, explaining the system and showing all that had been done with his help. He is held in great esteem.

Next day it was time to go to Lake Chamo and visit the "Crocodile Market". It was fascinating to see all these big crocodiles laying there in the sun with the birds picking their teeth and the hippos watching from a distance.

That afternoon we went to Dorze, famous for its weaving and tall bamboo houses. We were invited into a Dorze compound, specially set up to show those interested the Dorze way of life: their weaving, their way of life, their housing and diet, etc. It was a most informative and enjoyable experience.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of August we brought them to Addis Ababa where they had another week of experiencing the life in an urban setting.

Part of their journey was to get an impression of what life is like for the people in the rural and urban settings, and talk about their impressions once back in the Netherlands. It was great.

Iede de Lange



Our visitors with the Dhadiim Community

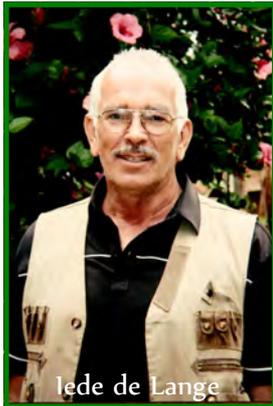
**Birthdays**

February 21: Dennis Bukenya

April 14 Dida Wario

**Transfer**

At the end of September, our Dutch confrère, Iede de Lange, moved from Dhadiim to Yabello to join our Ugandan student, Denis Mugalula. Iede is the longest-serving member of our Foundation, having come to Ethiopia in 1973 after working in the diocese of Same in Tanzania for six years. His first year in Ethiopia was spent on famine relief in the north of the country, after which he moved to Boranaland. He has worked in Dhadiim (1974-90), Dhoqqolle (1990-99) and again back in Dhadiim (1999-2011). We wish Iede every blessing and many years in his new mission, to which he brings a great variety of gifts.



Iede de Lange

**Beat this!**

A recent clean-up of the computers in Yabello, Dhadiim and Dhoqqolle found almost 3,000 viruses. Our computer school in Yabello led the way, having over 1,000, with Dhadiim and Dhoqqolle almost 900 each.

Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted but I think there's something in there somewhere...



**Food for thought**

May I be no one's enemy, and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides.

May I never quarrel with those nearest me, and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly.

May I wish for all people's happiness and envy none.

May I never rejoice in the ill fortune of one who has wronged me.

When I have done or said what is wrong, may I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always rebuke myself until I make amends.

May I win no victory that harms either me or my opponent.

May I reconcile friends who are angry with one another.

May I, to the extent of my power, give all needful help to my friends and to all who are in want.

May I never fail a friend in danger.

When visiting those in grief may I be able, by gentle and healing words, to soften their pain.

May I accustom myself to be gentle and never be angry with people because of circumstances.

Amen.

Eusebius of Caesarea, 4<sup>th</sup> Century

**Move to Dubluq**

After our Chapter in July our two confreres, Dida Wario (Ethiopia) and Gerald Kimata (Kenya), moved from Dhoqqolle to Dubluq, 40 kms away, but on the main road. Its location is more central. Dhoqqolle (opened in 1981) has a mission



Gerald Kimata

school up to 6th Grade. Dubluq has two hostels, with 30 boys and 11 girls studying in the government 8th Grade school this year. There is a new church in Dubluq and a residence which was opened in 2003. So the two missions switch roles, with Dhoqqolle now the out-station. See the accompanying map for the location of our missions, past and present.



Dida Wario

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