



ABF i Uppsala län

A brief report from the recent ABF and Afar Friend's Seminars and Book Exhibition in Sweden

The Study Workers' Educational Association (ABF) in Uppsala County and Afar Friends in Sweden have invited its partners from the Horn of Africa for consultation and participation in various activities in Sweden.



Lasse Berg, wellknown swedish author and Maalika / Valerie Browning at the international bookfair in Gothenburg, Sweden.

ABF in Uppsala and Afar Friends in Sweden, a Swedish humanitarian organization, are two organizations that cooperate since 1999 within language, health, education and cultural development in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Djibouti and Ethiopia. We also have collaboration with language institution in Eritrea.

At the language seminar in Uppsala, discussions were held on join future development of written Afar language. Further, a training of two study circle leaders, making use of a newly translated educational material from ABF, was conducted. Our delegates also participated in exchange of experience and development conference arranged by the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala focusing on language development. This conference was attended by Project Officers from our respective donors.

We also participated in the Swedish Book Exhibition (Book Fair) held in Gothenburg. Our group contributed to discussions as guest speakers, including at the International Square. Afar books as well as books on the Afar have been sold successfully at the Book Fair, among which were Valerie Browning's book

titled, *Maalika, My life among the Afar nomads on the Horn of Africa* and Dr. Enid Parker's latest contribution to the Afar language, *Afar-English Dictionary*. This event also included signing of books on the spot. A very popular Swedish author Lasse Berg lectured at the Book Fair on the importance of Awash valley for humanity, and Valerie Browning discussed the plight of the Afar people in the Horn of Africa. Valerie was also interviewed by *Svenska Dagbladet*, one of the two major Swedish newspapers.

ABF and Afar Friends in Sweden during the years conducted training and participated in language conferences in Djibouti as well as in Sweden. We have conducted conferences with participants from Africa in 2001, 2005 and by 2007. We have also participated in the development of the written Afar language, and involved in development of Afar dictionary. ABF is now implementing a literacy project in Djibouti with a new literacy materials with environmental and health orientation, and has produced an Afar history book in Afar language.

In Djibouti City, the ABF has its own development agency conducting workshops in all Afar geographical areas in Djibouti. We have, through study circles, trained around 1000 people mainly young Afars in rural areas on reading and writing skills, which are vital.

Afar Friends in Sweden currently implementing two projects in community development and health care: a cooperative project in Ethiopia together with the APDA, and awareness raising against sexually transmitted diseases and HIV / AIDS in Djibouti with the UDC. Thus project also intends to combat the harmful practices that exacerbate the risk of infection, especially female genital mutilation.

Forum Syd, which awards the Swedish government's development aid to NGOs has also approved a third and three-year project which will be implemented together with APDA. The project will start a process leading to the local community and its leaders (including midwives) decide to end female circumcision and forced marriage in selected areas.

Afar Friends in Sweden and ABF in Uppsala County would like to take this opportunity to thank both our visitors from the Horn of Africa and Afars in Sweden and Norway for their cooperation and their contributions to make these events successful. We look forward to see you again (*inshallah*) at next opportunity.

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