

BLC-UK: Pilot Project Report

2002/2003

Chair's Report:

I am pleased to take this opportunity to explain how the Blin Language & Culture came into being and our aims/ objectives and achievements in the year 2002/2003.

Blin language and Culture (BLC) was established in July 2000 in response to the growing number of Eritreans in the UK. Three Volunteers formed the first Management Steering Committee of the Blin Language and Culture. One of its first actions was to elect officers and set up a consultation process to gather information and advice from various community members as well as from notable individuals.

Four methods of consultation were conducted:

- ◆ Proposal letter/and e-mail was circulated to various Blin community members and some other notable individuals.
- ◆ One to one interview was also conducted
- ◆ Group discussion

Towards the end of 2002 and early 2003 the founding management committee of the Blin Language and Culture decided to launch direct service to their service users, such as, education for young children, cultural work shops and citizenship, health, tradition and arts.

First Special General Meeting is being planned for 11th Jan 2004 which will hopefully lead to the election of New Management Committee direct by service users.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank the Founding members?

Mr. Hamd Fadega (Chair 2000 to 2002), Mr. Kalate Raki (Secretary 2000-2002)

Dr. Yemane Semra (Treasurer 2000-2002). I also thank to all our volunteers and staff who worked hard to make this to happen.

Demsas O Eman



➤ Background:

Blin Language and Culture (BLC) is a voluntary organization founded in July 2000. The aims and objectives of the organisation are to advance education, preserve language, cultural heritage and tradition, in particular, and enable children to increase their level of education, self esteem and confidence, reduce isolation, improve communication skill and also to learn mother tongue, preserve the values and identity of the country of origin.

Blin is one of the languages spoken in Eritrea. According to the traditional classification of Eritrean languages into Cushitic, Semetic and Nilotic groups, Blin falls in to the Cushitic groups together with Saho, Hadareb and Afar. Other people in the Horn of Africa speaking languages of Kushitic origin include the Agaws, Oromos, Sidamas and the Somalis... (Michael Ghaber, 1971 p.57).

As a spoken language, Blin is one of the less written languages, like many other Eritrean languages. But we can find some developments towards that goal, especially for the last two decades. The name "Blin" doesn't only refer to the language, but also refers to the people who speak the language.

Blin Language & Culture programmes and activities are directed and overseen by Management committee, whom most of them can speak Blin and at least two other languages spoken in Eritrea.

➤ Current Services and Delivery

❖ Education:



In line with its other wider aims and objectives BLC has set up Blin Language and Culture School. The organisation runs the supplementary school every Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm, at St. Clement's Community Centre, 95 Sirdar Road, London W11 4EQ. The school is a member of Partnership for Supplementary Schools in Kensington & Chelsea.



At present the children are getting help with:

- ◆ English, Maths, Science and Blin language
- ◆ Educational trips, such as Museums, historical sites.
- ◆ Also parents are informed about the National Curriculum.

