



# NUEYS Global

## Message from the Editor

Dear Readers!

NUEYS, in all aspects of its work, aims at building and enhancing youth leadership in all of the issues that pertain to the youth. NUEYS' mission is to build strong youth that participate in all national affairs with responsibility, enlightenment and dedication. One major national issue, which is also a major youth issue, is that of HIV/AIDS. This issue of NUEYS Global puts much emphasis on this epidemic that it is killing millions around the world, especially in Sub-Sahara Africa. World AIDS Day, celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December every year, is an international day that is highly recognized in Eritrea. As this year's theme is leadership, NUEYS works to encourage young Eritreans to play a leading role in fighting this deadly epidemic. In this issue of NUEYS Global, we've included statements for World AIDS Day issued by NUEYS and the Eritrean government.

NUEYS vigilantly works together with youth around the world. Besides working to organize and provide services to Eritrean youth in the Diaspora, NUEYS also enjoys bilateral relations with youth of other nationalities. NUEYS is also a member of several international youth unions and networks. This month, NUEYS signed a protocol agreement with the Egyptian National Youth Council. Also featured in this edition of NUEYS Global is a brief description of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of its constitution. NUEYS is a member of WFDY and works vigilantly against neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism with many of the youth organizations including those who are members of WFDY.

Although NUEYS works at a national level, its principle motivation for it's foreign relations is the ethical responsibility it has towards the imperatives of national development processes carried out in the context of highly interdependent networks of regional and international relations. If it is HIV/AIDS or anti-imperialism, NUEYS stands for issues that matter to many youth around the world. Moreover, NUEYS achievements contribute to the achievements of the global youth movement and similar achievements from other youth organizations contribute to our own achievements. We're all in this together!

NUEYS Foreign Affairs Department

## NUEYS Central Council holds 6th regular meeting

The Central Council of the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) held its 6th regular meeting in the town of Agordat on November 3.

Following an assessment of the activities carried out in 2008, the council reviewed work accomplishments over the past two years vis-a-vis strategic planning, and decided to work diligently for greater achievements in the next 2 years through applying the experiences already acquired.

The meeting adopted a number of resolutions and recommendations, including the need to promote the creative and innovative skills of youth; nurture a reading habit among youth; organize programs aimed at inculcating the culture of work in their minds; strengthening the coordination of governmental institutions, the PFDJ and associations regarding the issue of the youth, and the like.

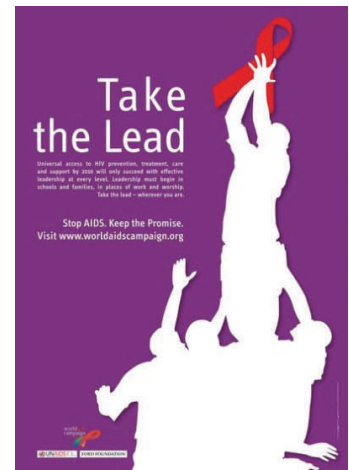
The Chairman of the NUEYS, Mr. Sultan Saeed, stressed the need for youth to demonstrate dedication in their educational pursuit and work so as to effectively meet challenges and emerge victorious.

Meanwhile, NUEYS held an annual work assessment meeting in Agordat from November 1 to 3.

National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS)

This newsletter aims at:

- > Updating you on NUEYS' activities and achievements
- > Consolidating the global Eritrean youth movement
- > Demonstrating NUEYS' contribution to the general global youth movement
- > Enhancing Eritrean youth solidarity worldwide!



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## World AIDS Day marked nationwide

World AIDS Day was marked nationwide under the theme “Enhancing Community Role in preventing HIV/AIDS”.

Speaking at a gathering held at a regional level in Asmara , the Administrator of the Central region, Mr. Tewolde Kelati, noted that the Government is giving top priority to the task of preventing the spread of the virus and stressed the major contribution religious institutions are making to this end.

Indicating that the number of voluntary testing centers and persons visiting them has increased and that premarital HIV/AIDS checkup is gaining momentum, Mr. Tewolde also pointed out that the regional administration is doing its level best to improve the living standard of people living with the disease.

Mr. Tewolde further stressed the significance of emulating the experience of other countries in preventing the epidemic in a manner that conforms to the culture and tradition of the society. He explained that new programs have been mapped out to supply the public with adequate information and knowledge so as to put the spread of HIV/AIDS under full control. To this end, the Administrator called on every citizen to exert unremitting effort.

Different programs, including a general knowledge contest, sports activities and cultural shows were staged on the occasion to highlight the event.

Meanwhile, in a statement it issued in connection with the day observed at a national level in the town of Ghindae, the Ministry of Health indicated that World AIDS Day reminds us all to renew our commitment in preventing the spread of the virus and supporting and caring for people living with HIV/AIDS. It also outlined the encouraging achievements registered in providing counseling and testing service, raising the awareness of the society, prevention of the infection transmitted from mother to child, quickly identifying sexually transmitted diseases, ensuring safe blood transfusion, and effective distribution and usage of condom, among others.



## Training on gender, FGM and reproductive health was given in Ghindae

About 60 gender equality promoters of four sub zones of the Northern Red Sea Zone (Massawa, Ghindae Afabet and Nakfa) were given training on gender, female genital mutilation (FGM) and reproductive health in Ghindae from 25- 31 November 2008.

The training, which was aimed at building youth capacity to conduct gender awareness programs in that zone, included topics like gender, reproductive health, FGM, counseling and communication skills.

During the training, the trainees revised the action plan with the coordinators and have reached to an agreement that each trainee will train and influence 12 young families on the topics of the training so that 640-720 young families will be targeted.

In parallel to this, an awareness raising campaign will be conducted in the year 2009 reported Michael Woldu from the Project Department Gender team.

### Did you know?

*Eritrea is the only country in the Horn of Africa where FGM is illegal by legislation*

## Cultural night conducted in “Hafash Hall” Zagr

A cultural night, which was organized by the NUEYS Culture and Media Department and NUEYS Zoba Maekel (Central Zone), was held at the “Hafash Hall” in Zagr on 8 November 2008.

Speaking on that occasion the administrator of the Serejeka sub zone, Colonel Tesfahiwet Meresie, after welcoming the participants expressed his joy in seeing a gathering of youth, students and inhabitants in that historical hall again. He further explained the historical construction of the hall briefly.

Performances by cultural groups, poets and singers were staged on the occasion. The legendary singer Tekle Kiflemariam (Wedi Tikul) also participated.



## NUEYS and Egyptian National Youth Council sign protocol agreement to foster cooperation

NUEYS and the Egyptian National Youth Council signed a protocol agreement in Asmara on 13 November to foster cooperation.

The agreement, which aims at strengthening relations between the two organizations comprises of a number of issues pertaining to youth, including promoting peace; exchange of information and experience, publications and researches; sports; infrastructure of youth centers; health issues and human resource development, among others.

The 10-point agreement was signed by the Chairman of the NUEYS, Mr. Sultan Saeed, on the side of NUEYS and the Egyptian Ambassador to Eritrea, Mr. Ihab Hamuda, on the side of the Egyptian National Youth Council.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Sultan Saeed indicated that the agreement was inspired by the desire to strengthen and promote ties of friendship and cooperation in the field of youth of both countries. He also stated that this agreement will open other doors of cooperation and expressed his appreciation to the Ambassador and the National Council for Youth in Egypt for this agreement.

Ambassador Ihab on his part, after explaining that the agreement had been processed for almost a year, further called on both parties to show their readiness and create conducive grounds to work on the agreement. Ambassador Ihab assured that cooperation and partnership will carry on in diverse fields, especially in media, health, education and sports. He further underlined that the agreement would provide added impetus to enhanced relations between the two organizations.



In brief, the articles of the cooperation are as follows:

- ◆ The two sides shall encourage the exchange of visits for youth representatives and experts in both countries.
- ◆ The two sides shall encourage the participation of youth in international work camps held in both countries.
- ◆ The two sides shall encourage the participation of groups of scouts in camps to be held in both countries
- ◆ The two sides shall encourage mutual visits of youth to participate in national and international events held in both countries (festivals, seminars, meetings, workshops, etc.)
- ◆ The two sides shall exchange information, publications, and researches in the fields of the youth, including sports, health, youth empowerment, gender issues, peace building etc. on a regular basis.
- ◆ The two sides shall encourage talks and cooperation in regards to the development of infrastructure for youth development, including that of youth hostels, youth centers, etc.
- ◆ The two sides shall encourage the exchange of experience and information regarding capacity building and institution management for youth development. Details shall be agreed upon the two sides through diplomatic channels and through other appointed representatives.
- ◆ The sending party will bear the cost travel to and from the capital of the recipient country. The receiving party bears the costs of lodging and accommodation as well as local transportation relating to the program.

## Sub zones and department leaders of all zones given training

About 76 trainees, including 10 females, of sub zones and department leaders of all zones were given a training on politics and ideology in Nefasit from 28-30 November 2008.

In the opening speech, the administrator of the Northern Red Sea zone, Mrs. Tsgereda Weldegiorgis, pointed out that the youth are principles and leaders of work. She reminded them to be role models for other youth for change and growth and assured them that the government, especially the Administration of the Northern Red Sea Zone, will always be at their side.

The head of the Department of Research and Development of NUEYS, Mr. Mohammed Adem, explained that the aim of the training was to enhance the participants' awareness on politics and ideology and its importance in their work. He further pointed out that the department has been working very hard to develop the human resource capacities of the workers of the union and assured that it will continue chiefly in the future.

The trainees showed excellent participation in all sessions and exchanged their experiences with each other in different issues.

## NUEYS Continues to Keep the Promise

With this year's theme as "Leadership" for World AIDS Day 2008, it reminds us that we must take a stand in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Leadership is determined by actions, visions, persistence, and the ability to overcome challenges. As a leader, one must face the reality and the reality is that there is an epidemic. We shall no longer merely follow those who lead us in the fight but must take a lead as individuals. The theme for World AIDS Day 2008 was mainly chosen to ensure that leaders and decision makers deliver their promises on HIV/AIDS, including the provision of universal access to treatment, care, support, and prevention services by 2010.

Eritrea is a country in a highly vulnerable continent with regards to HIV/AIDS. Since its independence seventeen years ago, these years are not too long in the lives of nations. But Eritrea continued to set itself as an example for facing challenges bravely and realistically through the participation of all the ranges of its people. Health is the ultimate challenge for the survival of any country especially new countries like ours. HIV/AIDS became the nightmare disease for any hope of decent life in many developing countries. We, the Eritrean people, accepted the challenge, stood as responsible people against the deadly virus and set the example that other countries should follow. As this disease is mainly affecting young people, who are the future of this newborn country, the NUEYS took on its responsibility to play its leadership role in the long fight against HIV/AIDS in every corner of the country.

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) is well aware that HIV/AIDS is attacking our youth and is ready to lead them in the battle until HIV/AIDS is no longer a threat to our nation, as well as the world. Together with all the concerned bodies, NUEYS became an important key player and stakeholder in the national programs and



strategic plans designed by the Ministry of Health including the 5-Year National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plans for the years 1998- 2002, 2002- 2006 and 2006-2010, and took the lead in the youth sector in these plans as well as other ambitious programs designed by the government of the State of Eritrea such as HAMSET I and II projects and the Global Fund Projects. NUEYS also created valuable partnerships with international organizations to ensure that the youth are given the needed attention they deserve as the future of our nation.

Utilizing the innovative energy of the youth of Eritrea, NUEYS had and still is designing innovative and creative programs that can defeat the disease. The organization took the responsibility and broke the traditional barriers, the stigma and silence towards HIV/AIDS and adopted the awareness-raising strategy of ABC (Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condom Distribution). After it established the Eritrean Social Marketing Group (ESMG), NUEYS through ESGM established a huge and effective network that can reach to the young person living in the most remote village, it communicated and touched him/her through impressive communication tools like one-to-one talks, group discussions, interactive theatre methodologies, puppetry and circus shows, mobile video units, HIV/AIDS positive persons testimonials and worked since 1998 in distributing condoms as an important method for self-protection in every corner of the country at an affordable price young people. Every young person in the country now feels NUEYS besides them and that it is their organization that can provide the care and support he/she needs regarding HIV/AIDS.

*(Continues on page 6)*

## A Future Free From AIDS: One of the Crucial National Security Goals Editorial from the Ministry of Information

Ever since its emergence in 1981, HIV/AIDS has so far claimed the lives of 25 million people worldwide. At present there are 33 million people living with HIV and the highest prevalence of the disease is the sub-Saharan Africa. Within sub-Saharan Africa, the disease is more widely spread in the Eastern and Southern parts of Africa.

Although the rate of infection of the HIV virus is comparatively low in Eritrea, we live in an area with the highest incidence of the virus. Thus reducing and controlling the rate of HIV infection is a crucial national task that will have a determinant role on our existence and continuity as a people.

Since there is no vaccine or drug that can cure AIDS, the only way to tackle this epidemic is through persistent endeavors focusing on prevention. Realizing this fact, the Government of Eritrea has through the mass media and adult education programs conducted extensive awareness creation campaigns so that people can have ample knowledge about the disease and make life-style changes to avoid infection. Owing to these continuous endeavors, the public's awareness on the disease has increased and according to records from the Ministry of Health a considerable reduction was scored in the infection rate of the disease. Still, as we live in an area with high HIV incidence, the aforementioned outcome is far from satisfactory. We should be aware that in dealing with this disease, there is always a risk. Hence,

continuous awareness creating programs are necessary so as to enable nationals to take the necessary precautions.

Yet, awareness of the prevention mechanisms alone is not enough; the people's attitude towards infected individuals and the care given to HIV patients is another important aspect of the prevention mechanism. A society that is aware of the several ways that an individual can be infected with HIV will not equate HIV infection with lack of morals, and thus make it will be easier to openly discuss about the disease and its implications. HIV patients living among such a society should be able to talk about their problems with their families and health professionals free from any mental stress and find the encouragement they need to live a normal life. Humbled by the caring attitude of the people around them, HIV patients will on their part act responsibly towards their society.

Therefore, if people gain enough knowledge about the disease and the prevention mechanisms, as well as provide proper care for HIV patients, then they can easily halt the spread of the disease. The Eritrean people have an advantage in this case; the community participation witnessed in eradicating polio is a clear indication of the people's level of awareness. Just as we have been able to free ourselves from polio and measles, we will need to maintain the already reached level of awareness and strengthen it further so as to secure a future free from AIDS.

## “Coming back home is my ultimate need,” Ruth Negash



She attended known universities for her first degree and post graduate programs. She prepared a number of research papers in different countries that earned her credibility and good reputation. An exemplary girl, Ruth Negash is an Eritrean youth who has benefited from the educational opportunities in the Diaspora. Ruth was last here in Eritrea during the 30th anniversary of NUEYS and the 3rd Eri-Youth festival. Following are excerpts of her interview with Menesey (Youth) Magazine:

### **What attracts you about being a youth?**

Knowledge! The youth have to work hard to reach the highest level of education. The effort the youth exert towards that end attracts me. Knowledge is endless. The way you go to reach the top, improves your level of thinking and your understanding. Thanks to modernization, knowledge is now easily accessible. The youth now have better education opportunities compared to former generations. We are at a stage where you could teach yourself by yourself. The development in information technology has opened a wider gate for the development of education.

### **Some people have a negative understanding on the sophistication of information technology? What do you say?**

Development is of two characteristics: the positive and negative aspects. In order to choose its good side, you should have both ambition and personal interest. Through information technology (IT), you can easily and quickly get access to scientific knowledge. Similarly, there is also ample unnecessary information that costs you time and energy. The best option here is to be selective. Technology has changed the teaching and learning process considerably, enabling students to conduct significant research works and bring interesting ideas.

### **What do you do exactly?**

I'm teaching. I am the only black mathematics teacher in the area where I live. When I applied the IT solutions that I learned in my teachings, even the students with weak performance showed improvement in the subject. American students are weak in mathematics and most of them reach higher levels of education while still scoring low in that subject. When I tried to teach them with the help of the internet, the outcome became encouraging and we expanded it at a school level. That boosted my reputation and I was encouraged by the school staff. I then made sure that IT got included in the subject curriculum.

### **What did you study?**

I got my first degree in Physiology. I love medical studies. There were a lot of challenges when I joined the university. Many Americans and Eritreans told me that I couldn't do it. But despite discouraging remarks, even from my teacher, I didn't give up. I worked hard to successfully complete my studies. When I passed my first year, my teacher had a change of mind and began to encourage and help me. She helped me a lot during my senior paper research.

### **What was the topic of your research paper?**

It was about the relation between the heart and the mind, an interesting subject. When I would see people with brain damage due to accidents or other reasons still alive, I used to wonder. You see some people with dead brain, but still breathing. "What is the mystery?" I used to think about it. But if the heart is attacked, people stop breathing. The difference inspired me to study physiology and of course I found it interesting. When I started to work, however, another profession attracted my attention.

It was amazing. In 1998, I participated in a workshop. I was interested in

and influenced by the research papers presented. I understood the personal satisfaction one can get from helping needy people so I joined the Peace Corps. Following a short course, I was assigned to Asian countries. My first assignment was in Jordan where I served in remote areas of the country. I benefited so much from that country. I even mastered Arabic.

### **What was your job in Jordan?**

I worked in a children's orphanage. This orphanage is for children who lost their families due to different reasons. I learned the culture and the people's way of living. It was a good experience. And it was there that I came across a unique incident in my life.

### **What was it?**

It's an unforgettable incident. One day the King of the country invited us. When we arrived at the Palace, his wife, the first lady, asked me where my country of origin was. When I told her that I was from Eritrea, she said: "that is why you are so much caring and interested. Eritreans are unique. I heard the love and care you are providing to the children is as if they were Eritreans."

I was very delighted to hear this from her. The King died while we were there and a 45-grievance-day was declared. During my two years service there, I always kept in mind what Mrs. Nur had said to me. I returned back to the US with a substantial experience from that country.

### **Where were you born?**

I was born in Asmara. My dad was a teacher, so we had his good support and follow-ups in our studies. We were able to be successful in school and score good marks. I was a prize winner until I finished junior level and I scored high marks in the general examinations. At that time, only students who scored above 90 were allowed to join the now Semaetat Secondary School and I was one of them, though for only two months.

### **Why?**

My mom was in the US and we went to join her. My dad sent me, along with my three siblings, to Sudan and my mom came there to take us. Life in Sudan was miserable for us, but of course we overcame the challenges because Eritreans there helped us a lot.

In the US, we immediately continued our studies. Since I scored high results in the entrance examinations we took, I was allowed to attend high school. This all was before Eritrea's independence.

### **Which grade were you in at the time of Independence?**

I was in high school. One day I met our neighbor, Maria, on the way to school. She said: "Congratulation Ruth; ell beli (ululate)."

"What's up, Maria?" I was confused.

"Eritrea is free, Eritrea is free," she couldn't control her emotions.

A lot of joy and jumping! We were in grief prior to that because we saw the video cassette of the Derg regime's atrocities towards innocent civilians in Massawa. White people asked us what that joy was all about and when we told them that we were free, our country was liberated, they would say that we were late.

Independence Day was so special. After that, our parents began advising us that we needed to succeed in our studies if we were to contribute in nation building endeavors. I joined the university with the help of my parents.

(Continues on page 7)

## Dehai Diaspora

## YFPDJ hosts "iRep Eritrea" event in Toronto



The Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YFPDJ) organized an event titled "iRep Eritrea" in the city of Toronto in line with the movement's efforts to build a sense of identity among Eritrean-Canadians. Under the banner of "cultural revival", one of the six pillars of the organization, the group displayed cultural clothing and artifacts to strike interest among the youth in Eritrean culture and traditions. It is to be noted that the YFPDJ conference in August of 2008 in Washington DC concluded by encouraging the respective delegations to create programs that focus on identity for the coming year.

The executive members of the organization conducted presentations on the movement's goals and principles and encouraged the attendees to be informed and engaged. After the presentations were completed a traditional Eritrean coffee ceremony was observed followed by music from local talented Eritrean youth Alex Isaac and Henok Kidane.

Adam Martincak, a former division president of the Young Liberals of Canada and Czech-Canadian, expressed his appreciation for the liberation struggle of the Eritrean people and related it to the experiences faced by his own home country of the Czech Republic. Adam encouraged the attendees to remain vigilant and proud that they had fought so long to have a sovereign nation.

Attendees and members of the YFPDJ were provided specific instructions on how to contact their local members of parliament to protest the decision of the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi in the denial of the visa request of Osman Saleh, Foreign Minister of the State of Eritrea, to visit Canada this year. Furthermore, the YFPDJ equipped the attendees with a final letter crafted by the YFPDJ which is to be handed to the members of the Canadian House of Commons in relation to the issue.



### NUEYS Continues to Keep the Promise (continued from page 4)

Not only this, but understanding the problem of the absence of a conducive environment for the youth to discuss their own problems, especially in relation to taboos towards sex and sexuality, NUEYS established in each region of Eritrea a number of youth friendly centers and clubs that have youth friendly clinics that are providing clinical and referral services, counseling and information provision about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Moreover, NUEYS introduced a recent program in some of the centers that provide Voluntary Counseling and Testing Services (VCT). NUEYS' innovative approaches doesn't stop at this point, but it continues to introduce a new approach to the Eritrean society including the hotline service where youth from every part of the country can call and ask about HIV/AIDS and other issues related to their own reproductive health. NUEYS also recognizes the importance of information provision and media in teaching youth and the general public. Educating our youth allows them to live their lives in a more cautious matter. The organization prepares brochures and distributes them to the youth on different occasions and

makes it available in its different centers. In addition, NUEYS releases information and presents educational programs through the mass media as another important method of informing and educating the youth, in particular, and the society in general.

NUEYS not only leads the youth but teaches the youth to lead as well. As we know, the youth are the future and it is up to them to take a stand. Health is life and we can no longer put our lives on hold, the time to make a change is now. A general assumption that is made is that the leaders/fighters of this fatal disease are usually the ones infected but we as an organization hope to inspire the youth across our nation, continent, and world to join in on this battle. It is our duty to spread the knowledge and it the youth's duty to learn. Let us continue to keep the promise.

**National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS)**

## From NUEYS' Seminar Series...

### Three lectures were organized by the NUEYS Culture and Media Department

In continuation of the seminar series where lectures are given on researched papers, organized by the NUEYS of Culture and Media Department, three sessions were organized this past month. The lectures were on intellectual property rights and cultural heritage.

The first two lecture sessions on intellectual property copyrights were conducted by Mr. Mogos Woldemichael, Director General of Domestic Trade and Intellectual Property at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Mr. Senay Woldeab, lecturer in the Faculty of Law.

In attempting to raise awareness on what intellectual property is and the list of items that are included under such kind of property, Mr. Mogos Woldemichael explained briefly that it is a right given to the creator that prohibits other people from re-creating it for sometime and is a right only given when the idea is changed into a tangible thing(s). He further gave details about the categories of IPR.

In relation to copyright, Mr. Senay clarified that the law in Eritrea protects the rights of the author right away when the idea is fixated in the

medium it's supposed to be distributed. He further listed the literary works, musical compositions, works of the figurative arts, illustrations, maps, plans, sketches, plastic works pertaining to geography, topography, architecture or other sciences and any other work created by the intelligence of their author and presenting an original character as the coded lists of the IPR.

A lecture was organized titled "Cultural Heritage as Viewed from Different Perspectives" by lecturer of archeology at the Eritrean Institute of Technology, Mai Nefhi.

Mr. Rezene explained briefly the topics of cultural heritage, cultural heritage and tourism, cultural heritages viewed as advantages of tourism, and historical colonization as well as it's cultural heritage.

As the lecturers in all sessions were very illuminating and have certainly raised the participants' awareness on those issues, the participants raising different questions and views.



## "Coming back home is my ultimate need," Ruth Negash (continued from pg 5)

### Which university did you attend?

I went to UC Davis, majoring in medical physiology with minors in Human Resources Development. When I worked in management related works in Jordan, I loved the profession so much. There was a management problem in the orphanage, which held 500 children at the time. I conducted a small research on 75 staff members and then I started to teach management development. I enjoyed the teaching profession, too. When I returned back to America, I learned pedagogy for three months and I continued teaching. At the same time, I also studied IT.

Similarly, I attended a teachers' training institute and worked as a teacher trainer. I was also a school director for some time. I participated in many workshops and prepared various research papers. If you efficiently manage your time, nothing prevents you from learning. The only thing you need is to have an ambition to acquire more knowledge. I learned a lot while I was in this university, and particularly I learned about Africa in its broader aspect during the foundation of Pan-Africa.

### How was Pan-Africa established?

In our university, we were about 900 blacks from the total 40,000 students. And only 60 of the blacks were Africans. Living in the Diaspora you miss your home very much—you miss your country, your people, your culture, your relatives... Hence, as Africans, we tried to introduce and help each other. "Who knows? African unity might come tomorrow!" So we tried to come close. Each of us introduced his/her country's culture and the people's way of living. We started to stage fashion shows and cultural activities. Every Friday, we came together and discussed on topics that concerned the continent. In that way we were introduced to African politics. It was in such a caring environment that the Woyane invaded Eritrea. And I graduated that year.

### How was the situation?

The situation is obvious to everyone. It was an obstacle to our nation building endeavors. Eritrean students made substantial contribution during and after the invasion. In the city I live, we collected as much as 300,000 dollars in one day for national defense. The invasion obliged us to think more about our homeland, and influenced us to choose fields of

specialization that could serve our country. Most of us, considering nation building, studied engineering, medicine, information technology, and other similar fields of study. Generally, the invasion strengthened our unity and enabled us to think more about our country.

### What do you say about the youth festival?

I had not much time to see it all. But, the Zobas' sites were interesting. Today, cultures are being spoiled and wiped out in the world, and identity along with it. But what I observed in Sawa was that our youth have inherited their cultural values and are interested in preserving them. Above all, the Zagre and Sawa awards given by His Excellency President Isaias Afwerki was an excitement to me. The interest of the Government and the Union on education development is very encouraging.

### You also participated in the Regional Youth Conference. What were your observations?

I found the conference to be a showcase of the dedication of the government and people of Eritrea, in general, and the youth in particular for peace and stability in the region. We came to understand the role the youth in solving conflicts in the region. What the Kenyan representatives loudly confirmed about us, made me proud to be an Eritrean.

### Your future plans?

I will use every opportunity I have to continue my studies. I think of coming home and work with what I have already learned or I am about to learn. I plan to transfer all I know so far to my compatriots. There are papers that I have prepared for workshops, and I will try to find ways of disseminating those. I will also try to publish my research papers in a book format so that many could benefit from them. If time allows, I will publish a book on management and IT. But, my decisive plan is just to come back home for good.

### Your final comments...

NUEYS has to give equal focus on both the youth at home and the Diaspora. And I would like for the Foreign Relations Department at NUEYS to strengthen its roots and human resources. The Union has to provide a ground for those who want to come to their country and contribute.

## Youth and Health

National Union of Eritrean  
Youth and Students (NUEYS)

BUILDING A VERSATILE YOUTH



### Did you know that:

- ◆ Major health risks for young people include:
  - ◆ Reproductive health risks: unsafe sex, lack of contraception, and teenage pregnancy.
  - ◆ Behavioral risks: accidents, violence, alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
  - ◆ Risk of disease and infection: pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, measles, and HIV.
- ◆ Successful health policies for young people must be interdisciplinary and intersectoral, taking into account not only their physical condition, but also their personal, social and mental development. Participation by young people in all stages of health provision—needs assessment, design, delivery and evaluation—is necessary to ensure that health responses are appropriate, effective and efficient.
- ◆ NUEYS plays an active role in addressing and improving youth health issues in partnership with sector ministries and other organization. The Eritrean Social Marketing Group (ESMG) is the result of this initiative. ESGM's main focus is the promotion of condoms as an option of abstinence from having sex.
- ◆ NUEYS is one of the main stakeholders of the Hamset Project (HIV/AIDS, Malaria, STDs, TB), which is a national project to challenge such diseases.
- ◆ Besides providing free HIV tests in its health centers, NUEYS also provides counseling and has a hotline service for youth to anonymously call in and ask any question regarding reproductive health.

### Next Edition...

- ◆ NUEYS participates in International Youth Forum of Thought and Culture
- ◆ Haykota: Commendable Youth Participation on Development Endeavors
- ◆ NUEYS-North America Youth Leadership Conference 2009

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## Feature: 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of WFDY's Constitution

The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY)—an organization of united youth worldwide which is determined to work for peace, liberty, democracy, independence and equality and for the protection of the rights and interests of youth for the happiness and well being of future generations—celebrated its 63d anniversary of its constitution on November 10, 2008.

WFDY plays a fundamental role in the reinforcement of the anti-imperialist and progressive youth movement, for the dynamic of the struggle, and for political and social conscientiousness of young people. The demands, positions and opinions of WFDY are the result of the action and demands of the youth movement in its totality; and its connection to the reality, problems, aspirations, struggles and conquers of the youth because the dynamic, aspirations and struggle of youth and students movement in each country are closely connected with the action and intervention of each organizations.

NUEYS, as a member of WFDY, joins all member organizations, friends, and progressive youth around the world to celebrate this 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, joining the struggle to build a better world without exploitation, hunger, discrimination, terrible crimes, war atrocities, and predatory wars for theft of natural resources, but instead for brotherhood, access to all services, respect to individual needs, the improvement of life for all human beings and the peaceful coexistence between them.



On November 10, 1945 the World Youth Conference, organized in London, founded the World Federation of Democratic Youth. This historic conference convened at the initiative of the World Youth Council which was formed during World War II to fight against fascism by the youth of the allied countries brought together for the first time in the history of the international youth movement. Representatives of more than 30 million young people of different political ideologies and religious beliefs from 63 nations participated.

