

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED



International Women's Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at the Expo Compound in Asmara, at the regional level, under the theme "Equality: Our Core Principle." The celebration was attended by senior government and PFDJ officials, and other distinguished guests.

Ms. Alem Belai, the head of the regional union branch,

highlighted the significance of International Women's Day for Eritrean women, emphasizing their commitment to achieving full emancipation and preserving their accomplishments to date. She pointed out the strides made in gender equality and opportunities, considering them integral to Eritrea's political, cultural, and historical achievements. Ms. Alem also stressed the importance

of a unified effort to impart these values to younger generations and to ensure the creation of fair and equal opportunities.

During the event, awards were presented to the winners of a debate competition among 22 high school students and a general knowledge contest among employees from various government institutions. Additionally, outstanding female students who scored above 96

points in the eighth-grade national examination were recognized.

In related news, International Women's Day was also commemorated in the port city of Assab, Southern Red Sea Region, under the same theme. The event was graced by the presence of Ambassador Mohammed-Seid Mantai, the Regional Governor, and Brig. Gen. Abraham Andom, Commander of the Eastern Command.

The celebration in Assab included statements from the National Union of Eritrean Women and its partners, as well as cultural and artistic performances reflecting the theme of the day.

Awards were distributed to winners of various competitions and to outstanding female students who excelled in the eighth-grade national examination.

MONETARY SUPPORT EXTENDED TO DISADVANTAGED CITIZENS

Monetary support has been provided to 130 disadvantaged citizens in the Adi-Kontsi-Adi Yakob administrative area of the Berik sub-zone.

During the ceremony held on 2 March, which was attended by the sub-zone administrator, Mr. Tesfu Feshatsion, and the administrator of the Kontsi-Adi Yakob administrative area, Ms. Tsega Mateos reported that the financial assistance was generously contributed by Eritrean nationals residing in Germany.

Ms. Tsega further explained that the beneficiary families were identified through a committee established to ensure that the assistance reaches those most in need.

She emphasized that supporting disadvantaged citizens should not solely rely on the government and called upon all citizens to strengthen their contributions to sustain such programs.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES BY DIASPORA NATIONALS

Nationals residing in Italy, Germany, and the United Arab Emirates conducted public diplomacy activities.

Mr. Fesehatsion Petros, Eritrea's Ambassador to Italy, held seminars for nationals in Rome and Milan, while Mr. Girmay Habtemicael, head of Public and Community Affairs at the Eritrean Embassy, conducted seminars for nationals in Abruzzi and Florence.

During the seminars, they provided extensive briefings on the current situation in the homeland and regional developments. They also emphasized the commitment of the people and Government of Eritrea to embark on developmental activities after ensuring the safety and stability of the country.

Ambassador Fesehatsion and Mr. Girmay urged Diaspora nationals to equip themselves with necessary education and skills and to actively participate in the nation-building process. They also emphasized the importance of strengthening organizational capacity and passing on noble societal values to the younger generation.

Similarly, the YPFDJ organization in Germany held an activity assessment meeting in Frankfurt. During the meeting, Mr. Yohannes Woldu, Charge d'Affaires at the



Eritrean Embassy, encouraged nationals to seize the opportunities provided and to contribute actively to national affairs.

Mr. Yohannes Mebrahtu, chairman of the organization, presented an annual report detailing achievements and challenges encountered.

Additionally, Mr. Kibreab Tekeste, Eritrea's Consul General in Frankfurt, and Mr. Kahsai Tewolde, head of Public and Community Affairs, conducted seminars focusing on strengthening resilience, organization, and outlining future programs.

The National Union of Eritrean Women branch in Abu Dhabi and its environs enthusiastically celebrated International Women's Day. During the event, Ms. Seida Mohammed Taha, chairperson of the union branch, delivered a statement on behalf of the National Union of Eritrean Women to mark the occasion.

SEMINAR ON PRESERVING AND TRANSFERRING SOCIETAL VALUES

President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, Ms. Tekea Tesfamichael, held a seminar for union branch representatives and members of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) in Keren. The seminar, held on March 4 in connection with International Women's Day, focused on the importance of preserving and transferring noble societal values to future generations.

Ms. Tekea highlighted the significant role women have played in Eritrea's history, emphasizing their contributions to reaching the nation's current state. She urged women to further enhance their involvement in development initiatives.

She also underscored how Eritrean women have successfully

overcome numerous challenges by upholding esteemed values. Ms. Tekea encouraged women to boost their organizational capabilities and actively participate in the preservation and dissemination of these values to future generations.

Furthermore, Ms. Tekea urged union leaders at all levels to increase efforts in raising public awareness, particularly among women, to combat practices detrimental to women's mental and physical well-being.

Seminar attendees expressed a desire for more events aimed at young women and suggested recognizing exemplary women to inspire others.

In a related event, a seminar was held in the Barentu sub-zone

on March 8, in connection with International Women's Day. The seminar was aimed to enhance women's understanding of their historical contributions and engage them more fully in national matters.

Ms. Yihdega Yohannes, head of the union branch in the Gash Barka Region, provided a comprehensive overview of the pivotal role Eritrean women have played in the struggle for national independence, the protection of national sovereignty, and their participation in national development programs. She reiterated the call to preserve and pass on cherished values to succeeding generations.

Ms. Yihdega also outlined the union branch's plans for 2024 and called for increased participation in these initiatives.



Development

A Glimpse of Southern Denkalia Subzone

Mussie Efriem

Southern Denkalia subzone, one of four subzones in the Southern Red Sea region, is located in the south-east edge of Eritrea along Bab el Mandeb, a vital waterway that serves as a critical link between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Standing around Ras Dumera, less than 10 kilometers away from Rahayta, an ancient settlement and home to the Afar Sultan, one can watch ships sail across the Red Sea's international maritime route.

Southern Denkalia, which borders the Red Sea to the east, Ethiopia to the west and the south and Djibouti to the south, has a population of over 27,000 that live in 39 villages that are governed by the administrative areas of Rahayta, Debaysima, Kiloma, Ha'rsile, Beylul,

Ber'asole, Suduh' Ila, and Wade.

The majority of the people that live in the subzone make their living by fishing, raising animals and trading while few live on farming. And through initiatives taken by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) both the Ministry and a few local farmers are now engaging in growing dates in the Abo administrative area, which has abundant resources of water.

The government has been investing in the subzone to ensure that everyone has access to basic social services such as water, healthcare, and education. To complement the government's efforts, local communities also engage in on-going campaigns aimed at building and maintaining dirt roads, planting trees and building terraces.

Mr. Berhane Mezgebe, administrator of the subzone, said in an effort to make water accessible 14 wells have been dug and a solar-powered system installed to support the use of pumps for clean water supply in the communities while communities that live in areas that are not endowed with underground water fetch water from water tanks installed in their villages.

Prior to Eritrea's independence, healthcare facilities were limited to cities and, therefore, virtually impossible to access for the absolute majority that lived in rural areas. Over the last 30 years, however, healthcare facilities have been built all over the country, making healthcare services accessible to all communities, including those that live in difficult-to-reach areas. As a result, today, there are six health

stations and one clinic in Southern Denkalia subzone. Many of the facilities mainly provide primary health care services, including immunization, and maternal and child care. Communities that live in hard-to-reach areas get services at home by mobile medical units that travel using ambulances or pack animals. The MoH in the subzone also works diligently to monitor the state of communicable diseases at border crossings and take preventive measures.

Like healthcare services, education is another social service on which the government has been heavily investing since Eritrea's independence. There are 25 schools in Southern Denkalia subzone that serve students from preschool to high school. Mr. Abdelqadir Riedu, head of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) branch in the subzone, says that although female enrollment in schools is increasing, the MoE is always conducting campaigns, in collaboration with the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), local elders, and other stakeholders, to further raise female enrollment by encouraging parents to send their daughters to school. One of their challenges, he says, is shortage of mother-tongue teachers in some elementary schools in the subzone.

In terms of transportation and communication services, Harat Transport Company provides services throughout the subzone. Mr. Berhane notes that the Ministry of Transportation and Communication has already investigated some problems they have been facing in communication due to power outages, which he hopes will be



remedied shortly.

When it comes to energy, compared to the other subzones

raised in the subzone are camels and goats, and they are predominantly found in the Abo



in the Southern Red Sea region, Denkalia subzone is well-known for its great potential of wind energy. Wind turbines have been erected in Rahayta, Berasole, Abo, and other administrative areas of the subzone in an attempt to harness the area's potential of wind energy.

Most of the domestic animals

and Baylul administrative areas. Although the bulk of the subzone is dry, it teems with wild life and vegetation thanks to the presence of subsurface water. A'rkobkobay, large palm trees, have flourished in the subzone mainly because of the culture that doesn't condone the cutting of the palm trees.

Some areas, such as those around Abo and Baylul administrative areas, are covered by the trees, which cool down the heat. In addition to A'rkobkobay, there are around 5000 date palm trees in Abo administrative area. They were planted in 2018 and are expected to bear fruit by the end of this year. Abo administrative area is also home to a variety of wild animals such as ostriches, wolves, baboons, gazelles, birds, and numerous species of large and small snakes. Due to the dedication of the communities to conserving their flora and fauna, wild animals and vegetation are flourishing.



Mr. Berhane Mezgebe

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SpotLight

Celebrating Progress on Gender Equality and Pushing for further Achievements

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8, is a global day celebrating the numerous and diverse social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. In addition, it also offers a valuable opportunity to promote solidarity and strive for greater momentum towards gender equality around the world.

The following article takes a closer look at the issue of gender equality, first briefly describing its general significance, before highlighting gender equality within the context of Eritrea.

The multifaceted importance of gender equality and the continued global struggle

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a powerful moral imperative. Equality and non-discrimination are core principles of the United Nations Charter, which was adopted by world leaders in 1945, and gender-based discrimination is prohibited under almost every regional and international human rights treaty existing in the world today.

Additionally, a large body of empirical work conducted in settings and contexts around the world attests to the fact that gender equality and empowerment go closely hand-in-hand with reducing poverty and income inequality, stimulating economic growth, boosting private and public sector performance, and promoting broad-based development. Not only do women and girls who have agency, are ensured of equal access to opportunities, and are empowered significantly contribute to the overall health, well-being, and productivity of their communities and nations, they also greatly improve the prospects and outlook for future generations.

It is undeniable that over many decades, and particularly in recent years, considerable progress has been made in securing the rights and protecting the dignity of women and girls worldwide. An array of global facts, figures, and anecdotes bear this out. At the same time, however, it is also true, sadly, that millions of women and girls in countries around the globe continue to experience terribly high levels of discrimination, misogyny, and violence, and are still

being denied their equality, dignity, autonomy, and even lives.

Creating national policies and an enabling environment for equality and empowerment

In Eritrea, like much of the rest of the world, it has historically been the tradition, indeed rule, that women and girls are regarded as inferior and considered as having little of tangible substance to contribute to their communities or wider society. Among the most powerful reflections of this is an old, backwards saying which states that "like there is no donkey with horns, there is no woman with brains."

However, since independence, Eritrea has remained committed to advancing gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the promotion and protection of their human rights. Among other regional and global human and gender rights instruments, it has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which sets international standards for eliminating gender discrimination. The country has also actively participated at international conferences and gatherings on women, such as the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which have been key catalysts to move the agenda forward on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and gender rights.

Importantly, Eritrea has established relevant institutional and policy frameworks, as well as detailed gender action plans, for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, with a particular focus on reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized, in line with international, regional, and national gender equality standards and obligations. Women are reserved 30 percent of seats in regional and national parliaments, with the possibility of gaining more through the process of competition. In addition, they are also guaranteed a similar share of representation within the legal system, with reference to community courts.

Recognizing different life conditions, and aiming to redress past inequities and historical disadvantages or discrimination, Eritrea has enacted affirmative action



measures, most notably within the spheres of education, employment, and public life. In a short period of time these have helped to increase equal opportunity and women's participation and representation in civil, cultural, economic, political, and social life. Strong national proclamations on labour, citizenship, and land reform have been enacted and enforced to guarantee women equal access to citizenship and allow them the opportunity to access and utilize land without discrimination. Moreover, national laws and firm enforcement measures exist to protect women from violence and also prohibit harmful, traditional practices. Collectively, these measures are having a far-reaching impact and positively transforming lives.

In addition, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare extends various forms of support to women engaged in commercial sex work, including essential health, housing, and family services, counselling, peer support, and skills training or development to offer opportunities for alternative employment. With the full backing and across the board cooperation of the government, a number of organizations, including the National Union of Eritrean Women and the Eritrean Women's Agribusiness Association, also conduct nationwide programs and initiatives to assist poor or disadvantaged women's economic activities, strengthen livelihoods, improve access to finance and basic services, such as education, housing, and health, mobilize against violence and harmful, traditional practices, and help ensure that women's specific needs, concerns, and perspectives are taken into account and addressed.

Eritrea's women and girls remain a crucial pillar

Beyond the legal and policy

quickly come to recognize is that females remain at or near the top of the rankings.

Meanwhile, women are playing an active, important role within numerous sectors, such as agriculture, engineering, and various others, while within Eritrea's nascent mining industry, which today represents one of the nation's most important and productive, they perform a variety of construction, driving, administrative, technical, and managerial functions.

Another showcase of young Eritrean women's talent, resilience, and substantive progress is their sporting participation and excellence. Although sports, like education and many employment sectors, have historically been regarded as inappropriate or unfitting for girls and women in the country – beliefs deeply rooted in centuries of backwards traditions and norms – Eritrea's women continue to smash those barriers. In athletics and cycling especially, the country's young female stars are blazing a trail of success and putting the country on the global sporting map. Hardly a week goes by without coming across a new report about them setting some new record or winning some competitive race.

And, of course, alongside everything else that they have accomplished and contributed to the nation, women in Eritrea have remained at the forefront of defending the country's territorial integrity and protecting its hard-won sovereignty. Following in the footsteps of past generations of Eritrean women who played a critical role in helping to win freedom, today's generation of Eritrean women have remained doggedly committed to their sense of patriotic duty. They have stood up proudly, heroically foiling years of external aggression and various efforts that aim to roll back the country's independence.

Overall, across the past three decades, Eritrea's women and girls have come a long way. Reflecting agency, empowerment, and initiative, they have been tangibly contributing within all areas of society and in many diverse, important ways. Breaking historical barriers and shattering regressive, outdated norms and beliefs, they have played a crucial role in their communities, the country's socio-economic improvement, and the nation's general development.

framework traced above, tangible changes can be seen on the ground, with Eritrean women and girls being a fundamental pillar of the country's nation-building and development efforts. For example, as Eritrea has registered a number of impressive achievements within the health sector, young Eritrean women of all backgrounds have stood tall on the frontlines as medical and health professionals and community healthcare workers. Of course, during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which brought the country, like the international community, to a literal and extended standstill, Eritrea's female health professionals were again positioned front and center, daily serving as a crucial plank within the nation's multifaceted response and general success.

Additionally, in their roles as educators, peer mentors, and counselors, serving in institutions that are now located across the length and breadth of the nation, Eritrean women have been providing others, especially young people, not only with practical lessons, vital support, and an abundance of wisdom and knowledge, but also with the inspiration, encouragement, and confidence needed to take their destiny into their own hands and fulfill their potential.

As students, Eritrean women and girls continue to shine and excel, in the process serving as a powerful demonstration that education truly has no gender. In this, they quietly send a strong riposte to the restrictive, regressive beliefs of bygone decades. Now, when you go into any educational institution in any community within any of the regions in Eritrea, you will invariably find that a large percentage of the students that are enrolled are female. What is more, scroll through the cumulative reports of regional and national academic achievements or performances and what you will



All Hail the African Queen

By Delina Yemane Dawit

Neuroscience student, fashion model, Montessori teacher, and now Miss Africa USA 2023, Snit Tewoldemedhin has a clear life mission – to help her sister and other children with special needs thrive



It's 1 a.m. Eastern African Time. I'm sitting in my kitchen with my phone perched up on the table, calling Snit Tewoldemedhin, who is in Virginia, seven thousand miles from my location in Asmara, Eritrea.

As soon as she picks up the phone, our animated chatter fills the quiet room, where the loudest sound is the humming of the refrigerator nearby. In Virginia, it's still only 6 p.m.; the daylight outside her window visible through the video call. Though tired from her endless responsibilities, she appears fresh-faced and upbeat and asks how her hometown is doing. Her younger sister Milka stands behind her, affectionately playing with her long hair as we speak.

Snit looks up at her with

life's mission is tied to this cheerful young woman she calls her "beautiful jewel". Because Milka is no ordinary 17-year-old, she was born with Down syndrome.

Tewoldemedhin's résumé is hard to believe: born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea, she only moved to the United States in 2019, where she's evidently been thriving since.

A senior Neuroscience student at George Mason University, she also works part-time as a fashion model, landing promotional video shoots for the likes of Bentley Motors Limited (yes, *the* Bentley). As if that's not enough, she also works as a part-time teacher in a Montessori school, where she is training to become a certified instructor with the necessary skills to teach

profit organization, *Designing for Diversity*, aimed at destigmatizing special needs in Africa by demystifying intellectual and developmental disabilities and providing educational tools to help improve math and literacy skills among those children.

Oh, and did I mention that she speaks five languages?

Like I said, it's hard to believe.

Snit laughs bashfully, her husky voice ringing in the room, when I list her achievements. "I guess I've been busy," she says with a modest shrug. When I ask about her decision to compete in Miss Africa USA, she recalls, "When a friend first told me about the beauty pageant, I said I wouldn't do it because, like almost all other beauty pageants,

to make their visions a reality. That was really important to me", she continues firmly.

In recent years, more and more women have criticized the bikini contests that have long been a tradition in Western beauty pageants, stating that they exacerbate female sexual objectification. But for Tewoldemedhin, it was more than that: it was a matter of principle, tied to her faith and her upbringing in Eritrea's conservative and modest culture, where even your neighbors and strangers have the prerogative to chastise you if they feel the need.

This was a principle she applied to her modeling career

and yes, I was willing to do the hard work to become established, but not at the detriment of my personal values."

This prompted me to ask whether her ultimate goal in competing in Miss Africa USA was to boost her modeling career. She shook her head, considering her words before she spoke.

"My modeling career is more of a means for a bigger picture. I love modeling and fashion, but I wanted to be more than just a model. I wanted to represent something. And I recognized that



a smile and makes quick introductions. Milka waves at me enthusiastically, like we've always known each other, and she's happy to see me. I watch the two of them interact for a few minutes, and even in that moment, the sisters' bond is enviable.

After all, as Snit puts it, her

children with special needs.

And as for her latest success? She is Miss Africa USA 2023 (the first Eritrean to hold the title). This achievement put her in the spotlight among the Eritrean diaspora worldwide.

As the reigning queen, she recently launched a non-

I thought Miss Africa USA would have a bikini contest, which I was simply not comfortable with," she says, referencing her experience before joining (and winning) the Miss Africa USA pageantry. "But my friend assured me that this pageant was different, that it didn't have a bikini contest, and that it genuinely strived to empower women and give them the platform and support needed

as well. "I was always aware of the dark side of the modeling industry, so as much as I enjoyed the work, I decided early on that I was only willing to accept contracts that aligned with my values, to only collaborate with people and brands that respected the boundaries I set for myself.

"Yes, I wanted to be a model,

as a model, and subsequently as Miss Africa USA, I can create a platform to leverage to discuss the bigger issues I have in mind."

I waited for her to elaborate on those more significant issues, and she did so with zest.

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All Hail the African . . .

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“My sister is my bigger picture. She is at the heart of many things I do, like studying neuroscience and learning to become a Montessori teacher. My purpose in life is to be an advocate for her and other people like her. That is my guiding North Star. Everything else follows suit.”

As for her decision to study neuroscience, it took a stroke of inspiration. Snit, now 24, was in her first year in college, taking various Applied Science courses, still undecided about her major, when one morning, driving from her home, she saw a Montessori school so close to where she lived. It was the first time she really paid attention to it. So she decided to teach there part-time to learn about the Montessori pedagogy system, all for her sister’s sake.

“When we first moved to the States, what with all the available resources, we thought my sister would make drastic improvements. But it wasn’t long before I noticed that she wasn’t really learning numeracy or reading skills. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands. As I started teaching her at home, I realized that trying to decipher how my sister learns invigorated me. I simply loved doing it. That’s why I chose to study Neuroscience: to get a deeper biological understanding of how the brain works and receives information, and then apply that knowledge to teach her, and ultimately, other kids like her.”

I point out how passionate she sounds when she speaks about Milka. Snit smiles fondly and replies, “How can I not? She is a gentle, loving soul.”

With a chuckle, she reveals, “Just the other day, a friend of mine said to me, ‘If I dealt with people the way Milka does, I wouldn’t have problems in my love life.’ She has such a special way of touching people’s hearts; it’s uncanny.”

Intrigued by the friend’s statement, I asked what sort of things she did. “For example, when we go to the store together, she would smile widely and say genuinely sweet things like ‘Hi! I like your shoes!’ or ‘I like your outfit!’ to complete strangers – something I could never do”, Snit admitted. “I would go a long way in my social life if I were more like her.”

If I were more like her:

I was pleasantly surprised to hear her say those words. How often do

you hear people say such a thing about someone with an intellectual and developmental disability? More often than not, our societies look at these children and focus on what they cannot do, the things they “lack.” Rarely do we take the time to appreciate their qualities, and rarer still to look up to them for it.

This is something Snit speaks about fervently. According to her, most folks are taken aback by people with special needs simply because they haven’t been exposed to them enough. “I firmly believe these kids should be included in classrooms, not just enrolled in separate “special” classes. Regular students need to come into contact with them much more. They need to know them, play with them, and befriend them for there to be real change.”

The benefits go both ways, Snit reckons: the children with special needs are in a supportive environment where they can learn (albeit with more attention from teachers) while the regular students grow up cultivating vital qualities like empathy, compassion, patience, and cooperation.

“Imagine for a second,” she says, setting a hypothetical scene, “what it would be like to have a person with special needs in your elementary classroom. You would be growing up with that kid, getting to know them, playing with them. What would happen once you grew up, got a job, and maybe even started running your own company? If you were to encounter a prospective employee with IDD, your attitude would be completely different to that of a person who maybe never spent time with someone with special needs.”

It’s all about exposure, she asserts. And that exposure leads to normalization.

This is, in part, what her non-profit *Designing for Diversity* aims to promote. Her project, backed by the Miss Africa USA team, raises funds and organizes practical seminars targeted at school teachers and parents in various African countries. The workshops are intended to share knowledge of the Montessori pedagogy system and the materials used to better teach children with learning disabilities.

“Part of *Designing for Diversity* is teaching about the different toys that help teach kids with special needs more effectively. For instance, there’s this one tool called the Binomial Cube. While it looks just like a toy, it’s designed in a way that prepares their minds for complex

arithmetic operations. I was able to teach my sister to use it effectively, and I plan to test it on other children with special needs soon. If all goes well, we will be able to promote its use in African countries as part of the non-profit’s seminars.”

It’s well past 2 a.m., but the conversation continues to gain momentum.

Her Instagram account (@snitt_missafricaus23) displays pictures of the various events where she’s been invited to speak. In the months since her win, she’s gone on *Voice of America*, traveled to Seattle to speak at the Annual Eritrean Festival, where hundreds of Eritrean diaspora come together; she was invited as a guest of honor to speak at the “*Experience Africa*” conference at American University, Washington College of Law (in partnership with the Embassy of Eritrea) and was invited to give keynote speeches at Adal School (an Eritrean language and culture learning center) and the Holy Spirit Catholic Church, both of which are located in Virginia.

Snit seems to have boomed in the diaspora community, becoming a role model for young African diaspora, particularly Eritreans. I ask her how she feels about that.

“Seeing the joy and excitement on those kids’ faces when I walked onstage,” she sighs, remembering her experience at the Eritrean festival in Seattle, “it was just surreal.”

“That’s when it hit me that I’m not doing this alone anymore. I have young people in my community looking up to me, a whole country cheering me on, so I feel a strong sense of responsibility that comes with being a role model. I worry about making missteps in a way I never did before. Yet I also feel a stronger determination to move forward, make an impact, and represent.”

And what about her role models? Who does she look up to?

Turns out her inspiration comes from none other than Maria Montessori herself.

“I grew up knowing her name because the Italian kindergarten I attended in Asmara was named after her, but I didn’t know her backstory until a few years ago.”

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator who founded (you guessed it) the widely spread Montessori pedagogy

system. She was also the co-director of an orthophrenic school, a medico-pedagogical institute for training teachers in educating children with cognitive disabilities. As a young woman, she attended medical school at the Sapienza University of Rome (one of the most prestigious universities in Italy) when women didn’t have a viable opportunity to pursue fields like medicine. Because it was deemed “inappropriate” by her professors, Montessori was forbidden from attending classes with the rest of her male peers when they were examining naked cadavers. But Montessori wasn’t the least bit deterred: she resorted to analyzing the naked corpses in the middle of the night with a candle.

With an infectious enthusiasm, Snit exclaimed, “Can you imagine being a young woman, going into a deserted building in the middle of the night, armed with only a candle, to examine *corpses* no less?! It takes a lot of courage and tenacity and speaks volumes of the kind of woman she was.”

Throughout the conversation, my mind kept returning to the fact that Snit is a first-generation immigrant in the States and has only been a US resident for four years but managed to accomplish so much. When there’s a natural pause in the discussion, I voice out my observation.

She smiles but points out that it hasn’t been an easy journey. “Being an immigrant means having to restart your life from scratch. I was lucky because I had the privilege of moving here with my family. And I could already speak the language fluently, so I was spared much pain. But I did still experience culture shock. I needed time to understand the culture, the social life, even the jokes. It was an isolating experience at first, but as tough as it was, I was able to use that time to work on myself and my dreams.”

I could only imagine how much work she put in to be able to study neuroscience, work as a model, teach in a Montessori school, run for Miss Africa USA, and now work on her non-profit while also having all the other day-to-day responsibilities. There seem to be many balls up in the air, and I wonder aloud how she manages to juggle all of them at once.

“I do get overwhelmed sometimes. When I successfully complete a project in one area of my life, I don’t often celebrate wholeheartedly because I know that the next day, I will be working on all the other areas that I haven’t given

my full attention to. But I keep going because I feel a strong sense of purpose. And on the days when I reap the benefits of my hard work, when I look back and see how far I’ve come...that joy and pride I feel makes the journey worth it.”

Snit’s candor about the realities of her relentless schedule and her work to champion her cause begs the question: who supports *her*?

“My wonderful family, for whom I am grateful. My friends, the Miss Africa USA pageantry. There are so many people that I’m thankful for, but the Eritrean community as a whole deserves a special mention.

“When I got in the Miss Africa USA pageant, a friend suggested I contact one of the Eritrean YouTube channels based in the US to promote my participation and my vision. So I contacted one particular channel, *Alena Walta Hager*, and they posted a video of me.”

Once her interview was posted online, Eritreans all over the US caught wind of it and almost immediately started voting. For context, Snit explains how she was among the last contestants to join the pageantry. Yet, she was not only able to surpass every other contestant’s votes, she actually had double the votes of the runner-up. And it all seemed to happen overnight.

“My community was excited that I was representing Eritrea in an international competition. They all got out of their way to support me. Some people even bought tickets to Miss Africa USA just to see me, a fellow Eritrean diaspora, compete!”

She pauses in reflection before continuing, “I believe I had the desired qualities to be Miss Africa, but so did all the other contestants in the pageantry. Ultimately, the tight-knit community I had supporting me set me apart. So it’s no exaggeration to say that I won because of them.”

Shortly after, the clock on my kitchen wall strikes three, and we bid each other a good night. As I’m getting ready to sleep, my mind can’t help but connect the two-hour-long conversation to a Nguni Bantu term.

Ubuntu. I am because we are. And since we are, therefore, I am.

Snit’s story epitomizes African Ubuntu philosophy: a person is a person through other people. With all her talents that ensured her success, she recognizes the roles of those closest to her, who help shape her, and the community that supports her. Through them, she has become the person she is: a powerful young woman driven by love for her sister, compassion for children with special needs, and connection with her community - her home away from home.



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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

1. Position: Shift Supervisor
Department: Mining
Number required: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- To organize and supervise the shift operations concerning mechanized drilling, lashing, and tramming of ore to ensure safe attainment of set targets.
- Accountable for delivering individual and team production targets and coaching/mentoring of team.
- Contribute as a member of a committed, high-performance team.
- Provide visible leadership of the underground mine production operations and all other related.

TASK DESCRIPTION Expanded TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

To ensure that set targets are achieved

- Organize and supervise blasting, lashing, and tramming of ore/waste underground.
- Instruct Section Boss on work to be carried out to meet production targets

To prevent injury to personnel and safeguard company property.

- Ensure that subordinates/self-observe established safety regulations and procedures during work.

To enhance their performance

- Train and develop subordinates engaged in blasting, lashing and tramming operations underground.

To meet statutory requirements

- Log shift operations

To ensure effective and efficient completion of task

- Supervise rock breaking crews on continuous shift operations
- Enforce discipline on employees.

To provide information for attention/decision making

- Frequently inform superior concerning irregularities encountered during the shift

Health, Safety and Environment

- Drive the health, safety and environment standards/policy awareness and practice in the Department to ensure compliance.
- Facilitate Stop look assess and manage (SLAM), Visible felt leadership (VFL), Planned task observation (PTO), training.

UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS/OTHER INFORMATION

- The candidate must be Physically and Medically fit.

Qualifications:	Knowledge and Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Diploma in mining or equivalent o Valid Blasting License o Valid First Aid Certificate o Experience in underground hard rock mining is essential. o Shift Boss certificate of competency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 3 years progression through lower ranks. o 7 years typical underground mining experience following qualification. o Knowledge of blasting operation techniques o Knowledge of Mine layouts o Knowledge of use underground equipment and machinery as well as explosive regulations.
Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Supervisory skills-ability to organize and coordinate including good liaison with other departments. Ability to lead a team. o Basic Computer Literacy o Good English written, verbal and organisational skills. o Excellent hazard awareness o Strong Supervisory Skill and ability to lead a team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Highly organized with the ability to work independently and under pressure. o Organizational skill with Ability to work under pressure. o Problem solving and analytical skills. o Interpersonal skills. o Strong communication skills o Commitment to safe work practices o Self-motivated, Acting in sense of urgency o Accountable personality

1. Position: Ventilation Engineer
Department: Mining
Number required: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- To maintain good ventilation standards and firefighting installations underground and on surface plants.

TASK DESCRIPTION Expanded TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

Mine Ventilation Designs

- Design, Implement and interpret technical ventilation circuit diagrams, graphs, and plans,
- Schedule ventilation tasks for the section to establish systematic work process in all underground workings
- Carry out routine ventilation inspection of ventilation and mine environment conditions and implement controls to check for defects and suggest corrective measures to always maintain effective and reliable ventilation system underground
- Conduct dust, gas, temperature, and pressure surveys to check for compliance with established ventilation standards and statutory regulations
- Liaise with operating officials on ventilation plans and controls to improve environmental condition in the section to uphold good moral and hence improve productivity
- Organize installation and maintenance of ventilation controls and fire fighting in strategic locations to provide conducive atmospheric conditions for personnel working underground

Administrations

- Drive the health, safety and environment standards/policy awareness and practice in the Department
- Compilation of Project reports, attend meetings as required.
- Provide other duties as requested.
- Ensure ethical behavior at all times and maintain good communication within the department.

Budgeting

- Prepare annual budget for respective department
- Control of operation expenditure within approved budget for respective department

Mine Engineering

- Development, evaluation and reviewing of mine designs and production scheduling with other service departments
- Development, review, monitoring and management of the execution plan with other service departments
- Technical audits and evaluation of all mine ventilation projects
- Provide mentoring to the mining engineers and graduate mining engineers.
- Provide other duties as required.
- Assist with design and integration of underground related safety protocols, mining standards and SoPs into the BMSC system

Report Writing

- Generate weekly and monthly reports as required by production officials.
- Compile ventilation and dust reports as required by Mining Regulations for subsequent monitoring and control of air pollution.

UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS/OTHER INFORMATION

- The candidate must be Physically and Medically fit.

Qualifications:	Knowledge and Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Diploma in Mine Ventilation or Degree in Mining Engineering o Qualification in Business Administration/Project Management is an added advantage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Diploma with Minimum of 10 years' working experience in hard rock underground mining. o Degree with Minimum of 6 years' working experience in hard rock underground mining. o Experience in zinc or other base metal mining is essential. o International experience is desirable particularly in Africa.
Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Computer Literacy, MS Office – Intermediate, Excel – Advanced; MS project – Advanced). o Competent in mining and scheduling software, i.e., Surpac, Deswik, VentSim, VumA-3D o Strategic planning. Project planning. Budgeting. o Plan, organise, and execution. o Risk management & assessment. o Analytical and Problem solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Communications o Ability to work in multi-disciplinary environment. o Ability to conduct Engineering matters to various levels. o Interpersonal skills. o Ability to work under pressure and achieve project milestones. o Good leadership skills



Continued from page 6

1. Position: Underground Electrical Supervisor
Department: Mining
Number required: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- To maintain, repair, and install electrical equipment's for both surface infrastructure and underground mine operation in order to guarantee the safe and effective operation of electrical systems at Asheli underground mine.

TASK DESCRIPTION Expanded TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

Responsible for the operation of the diesel power plant

- Ensure optimum availability of the plant equipment.
- Ensure compliance to maintenance schedule.
- Ensure on time purchase of maintenance parts and critical spares.

Observe established safety regulations and procedures during work.

- Prevent injury to personnel and safeguard company property.
- Responsible for supervision and development of electrical maintenance procedures.

Plan, coordinate and organize tools/equipment required for electrical installations/maintenance.

- Coordinated the examination of electrical installations and determine faults and state of repair required including the parts and materials required for repair tasks.
- Direct and control the planning and coordination of workload and resources for the electrical section.
- Implement projects aimed at improving equipment performance and monitor compliances to company quality standard.

Health, Safety and Environment.

- Drive the health, safety and environment standards/policy awareness and practice in the Department to ensure compliance.
- Facilitate Stop look assess and manage (SLAM), Visible felt leadership (VFL), Planned task observation (PTO), and safety training on the power plant.

Additional duties

- Train, develop and motivate subordinates to ensure that acceptable performance standards are maintained.

UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS/OTHER INFORMATION

- The candidate must be Physically and Medically fit.

Qualifications:	Knowledge and Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma in Electrical Engineering or equivalent. Valid First Aid Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 years' experience in installation, maintenance and repair of electrical equipment's and system in underground mining operations Knowledge of Diesel plant operations will be advantageous. Proven work experience as electrical supervisor in underground hard rock mining In-depth knowledge of commercial and industrial electrical systems Advance troubleshooting skills International experience is desirable.
Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Literacy -MS Office – Intermediate, Excel – Plan, organize, and execution. Risk management & assessment. Analytical and Problem solving. Technical Report writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good oral and written communication skills and Teamwork. Ability to work in multi-disciplinary environment. Ability to conduct Engineering matters to various levels. Ability to work under pressure and achieve project milestones. Self-starter, drive, and enthusiasm. Development orientated, passion for accuracy and perfection in delivery. Good leadership skills.

General Information and other requirements:

- Place of Work:** Bisha.
- Salary:** As per Company salary scale.
- Type of Contract:** Indefinite

Additional requirement for Nationals:

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provide evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.
- Present clearance paper from current/last employer.
- Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card etc.).
- Only shortlisted applicants will be considered as potential candidates for an interview.
- Application documents will not be returned to sender.
- All applications should be sent through the post office.
- Deadline for application: 10 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.

Address: Please mail your applications to:-
 Bisha Mining Share Company,

P. O. Box 4276 Asmara, Eritrea

Note to Eritrean applicants:

Please send a copy of your application to:

- Aliens Employment permits Affairs,
 P. O. Box 7940
 Asmara, Eritrea.
- Mineral Resources Management
 P. O. Box 272
 Asmara, Eritrea

Notice

Notice hereby given to the public that “OPEN GATE Private Limited Company” has been formed among the following members.

A. Members

Name	Nationality	Shares	Value in Nakfa
1. Mathios Tesfamichael Teklemichael	Eritrean	75	750,000.00
2. Kibra Michael Ghebresslassie	Eritrean	25	250,000.00
100			1,000,000.00.

B. The head office of the company is in Asmara and branch offices may be opened within the Eritrea and outside of Eritrea

C. Business purpose of the company

- To engage in import and export activities
- To engage in whole sale and retail trade activities
- To engage manufacturing activities
- To engage in clearing and forwarding activities
- To engage in travel agent and tour operate service.

D. The capital of the company is Nakfa 1,000,000.00 (one million Nakfa) divided in to 100 nominal shares. All subscribed and fully paid up in cash. The par value of each share is Nakfa 10,000.00 (Ten Thousand nkf).

E. Mr. Mathios Tesfamikeal is appointed to be the manager of the company for unlimited period of time.

F. The company is established for unlimited period of time.

Open Gate Private Limited Company.



Q and A

“Being Part of the Eritrean people is What Satisfies me Most.” Genet

Luwam Kahsay H.

Ghenet Beyene, the last child in her family of 15 siblings, was born in 1956 in Mendefera. She joined the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1974 as a member of the clandestine movement. In 1977 she was arrested and put in Alem Bekagn, a maximum security prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she languished for nine years. She continued her struggle after she fled the country and went first to Kenya and then to Canada. She came back from Canada in 1990 to join the EPLF in the Eritrean fields. Following independence, she has served in different capacities, including as a chairwoman of the Nairobi National Union of Eritrean Women. After all the ups and downs she faced she got married in 1992 and is now a mother of two. She studied Travel and Tourism at Ayata University. She is now living in Canada with her family. Her book on her journey in life, “Ita Zeythlel” (the Tenacious), was launched on February 16.

I wish you a happy Women’s Day and congratulate you on the publication of your first book “Ita Zeythlel.”

I’ve heard it took several years and people to convince you to write about your journey. Why was that?

Honestly speaking, my journey in the history of the Eritrean people is no different from that of the others. I did what was expected of me at what I thought was the right time. After watching and reading books on all the Eritrean heroic events and stories, I couldn’t find myself in them. And I always refused whenever people asked me to write my story. But when Ghirmay Weldegiorgis (menkenino), the writer of my book, made efforts to convince me and said that my story is the people’s story not mine, I couldn’t ignore that.

When the book came into its final stage and you read it, how did you feel?

To be frank, I was surprised! I didn’t expect that it would be that great. I loved it! It wouldn’t have come to an end without the endless motivation of Ms. Askalu Menkorios, Minister of Tourism and Menkenino. I thank Menkenino for all his efforts and his writing. I salute him for that.

How do you think can patriotism be cultivated?

I believe that ignorance is the root of perdition. I am sure that Eritrean patriotism is installed within everyone’s genes. But, on top of that what is more cardinal is growing what you have with education, starting from the very beginning. It could be by reading books or asking well-informed



people. I believe that teaching kids starting from preschool would play a crucial role.

As mentioned in your book you used to come to Eritrea to give birth to your children. Why?

My country is very precious to me, and I want it to be the same for my kids. We have a tradition in the Tigrigna ethnic group that you are from wherever your itibti, umbilical cord is buried. When I was due to give birth to my first child, Samuel, in 1998, I came to my country and delivered.

What was the book launching ceremony like?

It was amazing! I didn’t expect that many people would show up. On top of that, for me the word “tegalalit” (freedom fighter) is a venerable title and I have never considered myself as one. Hearing all the event organizers and participants address me using that title was a moment of confirmation.

What excited me most was having my book launched on the

same day the 35th anniversary of the liberation of Massawa was celebrated.

How would you define Eritrean women?

They are prestigious pearls found nowhere but in Eritrea. Eritrean women are principled, authoritative and committed. They never stopped giving all they had, including their lives, during the armed struggle, on the battlefield and off the field. And they still are doing it by giving their children for their country’s protection. I don’t even have words to define them; they are unbelievable.

In life, what satisfies you most?

This country is not an easily obtainable one. All our principles, systems, and everything that it has is founded by those who have sacrificed their lives for its prosperity and those who are still fighting to take their objective to its final destination. And what makes you happy is watching the new generation inherit the

courage. My book’s title is one of our people’s definitions; they are truly tenacious and that’s where I got the idea for the title from. Being part of the Eritrean people is what satisfies me most. Being an Eritrean is my pride!



Who is the kid on the cover of your book?

It is my beautiful grandson, Hiyab, Samuel’s son. He is eight years old now, very patriotic. Though he has never been here, he always says “When I grow up, I will sing for my country.”

Any final thoughts ...

All Eritrean people living abroad and within the country should realize that every strike we face as a nation brings us closer to the next home run. Therefore, rather than living by looking at what we miss or lack, let’s focus on making what we

already have worthwhile.

And I would love to encourage the young generation to know their foundation, hold fast to it and stay strong in all circumstances.

At last, I want express my gratitude to all the people who have contributed in making this project come to an end.

Thank you and happy Women’s Day once again.

