

AFRICUS ERITREA



N. 12

Periodico Culturale dell'Associazione Onlus Italia Eritrea

dicembre 2012



Foto Lusci



PERIODICO CULTURALE DELL'ASSOCIAZIONE
ITALIA ERITREA ONLUS
Trimestrale - Reg. Trib. di Roma 87/2005 del 9/03/2005
Piazza dell'Unità 13 - 00192 Roma
Segreteria Lun./Giov. 15.00-18.00
Tel. 06 32 44 055 - Fax 06 32 43 823
www.assiter.org - e.mail: assiteronlus@yahoo.it

Direttore responsabile: Lidia Corbezzolo
Redazione: Lidia Corbezzolo, Nahom Haile, Michelangelo Ciminale
In collaborazione:



**Ambasciata dello Stato
di Eritrea**



eritreairitrea.com



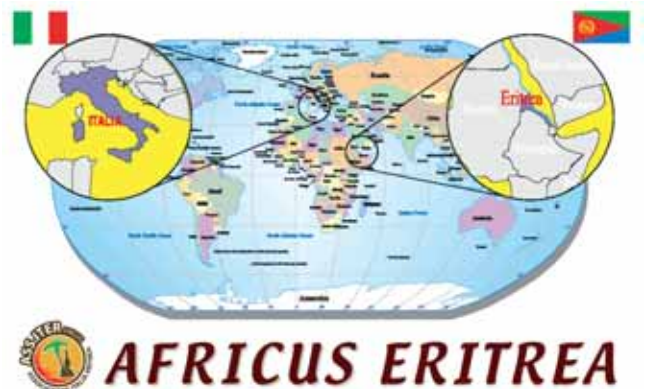
Istituto di Cultura Eritrea



SOMMARIO

	pag.
<i>Iter</i>	
Editoriale	3
<i>Lidia Corbezzolo</i>	
L'ultima campanella	4
<i>la Redazione</i>	
<i>Eritrea</i>	
Tourism: through and for rekindling our cultural heritage	5
<i>Daniel Semere</i>	
A Day at the Cattle Market	8
<i>Meron Abraha</i>	
The Role of Research in Agriculture	9
<i>Daniel Semere</i>	
Me'adi: One for all, All in one	11
<i>Sirak Kbrom</i>	
A Leap Ahead	13
<i>Daniel Semere</i>	

Archivio fotografico: Antioco Lusci, Michelangelo Ciminale
Progetto grafico e Stampa: Arti Grafiche San Marcello S.r.l.
Viale Regina Margherita, 176 - 00198 Roma
Abbonamento annuale euro 25,00
Ass.Iter Onlus c/c postale n. 84275023
Finito di stampare: dicembre 2012
In copertina: ragazzi Saho (foto Lusci)
Hanno collaborato a questo numero: Lidia Corbezzolo,
Antioco Lusci, Nahom Haile, Daniel Semere, Meron Abraha,
Sirak Kbrom



EDITORIALE

di Lidia Corbezzolo

Carissimi Amici e carissime Amiche, anche il 2012 volge al termine ed onestamente è stato un anno pesantissimo, la vita è diventata sempre più faticosa: per molti è difficile arrivare alla fine del mese, tanti hanno perso il lavoro per non parlare dei terremotati che hanno perso in pochi istanti affetti e casa!


SPERIAMO CHE IL 2013 PORTI SERENITÀ, LAVORO e PACE NEL MONDO.

Per la nostra Associazione auguriamoci di poter usufruire di contributi per la realizzazione dei nostri progetti, da parte Nostra ci impegneremo sempre di più, da parte Vostra aiutateci con il Vostro affetto, con la condivisione dei nostri progetti, con la Vostra adesione a tener fede alle nostre promesse verso i poveri dell'Eritrea.

Uniti abbracciamo l'Eritrea e il Nuovo Anno che giunge!

BUON ANNO AI BAMBINI DEL DEN-DEN!

BUON ANNO AI BAMBINI DI TUTTO IL MONDO!



ASSITER ONLUS
Associazione Italia Eritrea
C.F. 96 10 45 30 587
tel. e fax: 06 / 32 44 055
Piazza dell'Unità, 13 - 00192 Roma
www.assiter.org - assitercomitalia@yahoo.it

5X MILLE

Hai uno strumento unico per promuovere il diritto all'educazione e alla salute per i bambini e i giovani dell'Eritrea destina il 5 x mille dell'IRPEF alla nostra Associazione.

Il 5 x mille non sostituisce l'8 x mille (destinato alle confessioni religiose) e non è un costo aggiuntivo per il contribuente.

E' una quota di imposte a cui lo Stato rinuncia per destinarla alle organizzazioni no-profit per sostenere le loro attività.

Trasforma la denuncia dei redditi in una dichiarazione di solidarietà per i bambini e i giovani dell'Eritrea

Ecco come fare: Firma nel riquadro della dichiarazione dedicato alle organizzazioni Non Lucrative, riporta sotto la firma il codice fiscale dell'ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIA ERITREA ONLUS C.F. 96 10 45 30 587




Foto: by David Bellamy - Riprodotto su www.assitercomitalia.org e RESOLUTION



L'ULTIMA CAMPANELLA

la Redazione

Una lacrima per i defunti evapora

Un fiore sulla tomba appassisce

Una preghiera invece

Arriva fino al cuore dell'Altissimo

Sant'Agostino

Vogliamo condividere il dolore con le famiglie che nel 2012 hanno perso i loro cari: Fana Ghebrab, Laura Cantiani, Renato Geraci, Marcello Melani, Licio Cappelletti, Dott. Woldu e porgere affettuose condoglianze.



TOURISM: THROUGH AND FOR REKINDLING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

by *Daniel Semere*



Over the years tourism has become one of the very important factors which promotes a country's economy, its linkage with the world and builds cross-cultural relations as a vital force for peace. And within a given country it is considered to be the most powerful tool to promote national integration and unify people from all over the country. As it stands tourism is the world's largest generator of jobs that can provide immediate employment which is labor intensive. It has also a high tendency of bringing development in rural areas. However, what made this sector reliable is the fact that demand is continuous and it provides a ready market.

In Eritrea tourism is a recent phenomenon which is just in its infancy. But Eritrea's resource base for tourism can be considered phenomenal. The country's tourism attractiveness lies in its diversity. Some of the features which make Eritrea an attractive tourism proposition include: varied and impressive scenery, unspoiled wilderness areas, diverse



cultures in particular the tradition of our ethnic groups, the beautiful buildings and art deco of Asmara and other cities, sunny and hot climate, the mesmerizing beaches, the general prevailing peace and security of the country to mention few among many other factors. And all these have a big potential of making Eritrea a major tourist destination in the region. However, in today's world tourism has become a fiercely competitive business. For tourism



destinations around the world competitive advantage is no longer natural. Rather it has become to be increasingly determined by man-made factors like technology, information and innovation. As such, it is not simply the stock of natural resources of Eritrea that will determine its competitiveness in tourism, but rather, how these resources are managed and to what extent they are complemented with human effort.

Developing countries like Eritrea are faced with many hindrances that deterred them from exploiting the sector to the maximum. A number of factors limit the effectiveness of the tourism industry to play a more meaningful role in the national economy. This can be in the

form of lack of infrastructure particularly in rural areas, limited integration of local communities, inadequate tourism education, training and awareness. However, unless tourism is seen as strategically important to the nation and unless these things are addressed, tourism will continue to be a missed opportunity.

But in this endeavor, the basic and greatest deficiency in the tourism industry is the absence of adequate education and information, training and awareness opportunities. Like any business or industry, tourism needs the moral and financial support of the entire community. In this respect the key vehicle is raising awareness. No task in the sector can be completed without this fundamental ingredient especially in the part of the youth. To this end our people and especially youth should be exposed to the various resources our nation is endowed with. It is the people inside who first and foremost has to appreciate its own culture, history, and beautiful places and practices before we could attract others to come and do the same. Beside all of this we should know the worth of what we have, if we are going to preserve it. That is why the homework first has to start with the people inside and the first target should be the youth.

In trying to accomplish this our youth can be given an opportunity for authentic and educational travel experiences, the sharing of culture and a sense of adventure, which are all severely lacking. However, there had been attempt to organize trips in especially high schools, but it

was not consistent. This should be reinvigorated by curriculum driven School-based youth travel. In fact education and tourism are extremely complimentary. Education provides the true advantages of tourism. Knowledge of a place can best be acquired if that region is properly seen and understood. Students eagerly look forward for such opportunities when they are taken out of the four walls of class-



rooms to distant places. Geography can for instance become interesting if students are taken out of their books to see the scenes depicted in pictures or in their books with their own eyes. When students actually visit and witness the wonders of the world, they tend to learn more and remember for a longer time. History can also be made very interesting as well if students are allowed to visit historical monuments, architectural structures, battle fields and all similar historical cities. Such initiative should be organized by the Ministry of Education and other concerned bodies who can



contribute to this end.

One of such but best suited body is the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) and one of its famous campaign has been the Zura Nhagerka Program. This program is an initiative aimed at involving the youths in matters of appreciating Eritrea's history, tourism, promote ethics, safeguarding of our historical and natural heritage. At the moment this program is being organized regularly and is becoming more and more appealing to youth travelers especially from the Diaspora. That is why the number of participants of the program has been steadily increasing with the highest number registered in this year's program. Although it is clear that the NUEYS's role is instrumental, other stake holders should take part in it to make it more developed and more inclusive. This is because at the moment the program primarily targets the Diaspora.

The outcome of this program is self evident not only because the number of participants is increasing but also people are often making repeat visits. The challenge now is keeping the momentum and expanding the program.

We, Eritreans, have a history that radiate pride, a rich diversified culture, a country of beauty, historical sites of antiquity, our majestic sea, and etc. If only we had a slight knowledge of our country, we would find that its depth is unreachable. Only then can we be more suited to show the world of what we have and also preserve and give it its real worth. Unless tourism starts from the inside its potential cannot be realized. But most importantly it has to be employed to empower youth, foster pride in the community, reduce social ills and revitalize as well as rekindle interest in our cultural heritage.



Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.

A DAY AT THE CATTLE MARKET

by Meron Abraha



Several days before any religious holiday there is much activity in the city markets, people buying and selling things for the feast. Especially a day or two ahead of the grand day the

streets are crowded with people who want to buy animals such as sheep, goat, cow or hen.

The morning of Monday, Geez New Year's Eve, thus saw me at the cattle market to buy a goat or sheep for the holiday. I haven't been to the place for a very long time and I felt someone out of place as the market buzzed with sellers and buyers negotiating for a good deal on the animals.

I remember I was only 13 when I went to the cattle market for the very first time. Up until then I never thought of buying a sheep or goat was such a hectic practice. But when I saw both buyers and sellers negotiate until they reached to what they thought was a fair price. Apparently, it took a long and somewhat surprisingly funny to make a deal.

People usually check an animal before purchasing to ensure it provides enough meat. There is no fixed price for the animals; hence:

"How much is this goat?" a buyer asks.

"7,000," is the swift response by the seller.

"No, that's too much..." says the buyer and starts to go away but is quickly held back by the seller, who shots the common "give us your price then."

The buyers, usually the ones who have an experience in such matters, shoot back with almost half of the said price, in this case 3,500 Nakfa; those less inexperienced offer only a slightly less price than 7,000.

And amazingly enough, many do go home with a fine animal and at a much cheaper price as well.

But, I must say it takes a lot of skill to identify a good animal and its real worth.

There is also a special Eritrean custom where a group of people buy a cow or an ox, slaughter it and share the flesh. Referred to as *guzzi* (fraction), it is an Eritrean tradition that shows the cohesion or cooperative nature of the society against individualism.

Its concept is: as it may not be affordable for one family to buy and a whole cow, a feasible way would be to form a group, buy a cow and share it so that everybody can happily celebrate the holiday.

Fathers (or hired hands) slaughter a sheep a goat or at least a hen. Most people prefer a sheep to a goat but some argue a goat is much cheaper and has much more meat. But meat will always be meat...

Meron Abraha, is journalist and web chief editor for Shaebia.org.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

by *Daniel Semere*



If the world had believed in capital and physical wealth as a main source of development well it doesn't anymore. The evolution of science and its sophistication has enabled the use of resources to yield a multiple produce. Hence the game

has become focusing on the ways of maximizing benefits without increasing resources. In other word it's about gaining 10 from the same resource we used to get 1 or 2. The magic is what we call knowledge and the system is what's known as knowledge based economy, which has become the center of today's development in the world. Knowledge based economy is the integration of knowledge in the economy of a certain country. Economy comprises various sectors that constitute pillars of the overall activities in a given country.

Due to the understandable reasons the economy of the developing countries and especially Africans has been restricted to the export of raw materials like minerals and agricultural products. Hence Africans have an agriculture-based economy and it will continue to be a major contributor to the economies of most developing nations. In most of the less industrialized countries for example, 75 percent of the population lives and works in the rural (agricultural) areas, which make up 70% of the total population in Africa and South Asia. It also represents about 30% of GDP in those countries. Therefore, as a sector that employs much of the population, that constitutes much of their exports and that in which the economy of a country is build upon, agriculture must be given a priority above others. This is especially true in this era, where food security and sustainable agricultural production and rural development have become matters of concern for developing countries and for the international community. However, this has not been the case particularly in the third worlds that ironically needed it the most. As a result they have been suffering from unemployment and perpetual

dependence on aids and grants.

Learning from the above experience, it seems Eritrea is advocating and endeavoring with the guideline of self-reliance and Food Security for long now. And one way, among many others, has been the development of higher educational and research institutions in the field. It is generally understood that while there are many complex factors that influence sustainable development and food security, education in agriculture plays an important role in preparing farmers, researchers, educators, and others to make productive contributions. Reports have also shown that poor quality training of agricultural professionals has been identified as part of the global food security problem. Unfortunately, the training of human resources (the development of human capital) in agriculture is often not a high priority in the overall development plans of countries. The consequence by and large is the aforementioned dependence and the self-evident situation of developing and especially African nations. All these call for changes in the current systems of education in agriculture in many countries and the need for an inter-disciplinary, systems approach to education in agriculture.

Although it is a humble beginning, we have been witnessing the accomplishments of the agricultural education institution of Eritrea lately, apparently suggesting the hopeful prospects of the endeavor in the sector. This confirms the traditional truth that investment in agricultural edu-



cation brings a high return as was seen in the green revolution. It also shows that the new educational strategies in the field have been prudent. These agricultural colleges train students with theory and technical and practical skills of agriculture, and is becoming a proof and contributing for the national policy of food security. As they are located in agriculturally conducive environment and thereby creating a favorable setting for students in which they can practically employ their learning in ground, it is by all means going to have a tremendous impact in the field. This is a much better teaching and learning processes that take into account the current trends and factors that influence the production, processing and marketing of products.

It was also true that agriculture graduates and diploma holders were finding it more difficult to become gainfully employed and education in agriculture has not kept up with labour demands as in other sectors. But the plan ahead suggest that this won't be so for long as there is a real effort from the government bodies concerned and the agricultural institutions to enable graduates to establish their own agricultural fields. This hopefully will abolish the tradition of academic isolation and help graduates become active contributors to agricultural development as it provides a real and tangible chance to improve them in the field.

The institution, which is engaged in researches to improve production and find breakthrough in agriculture, is the institute of Agricultural Research and Human Resource Development of Halhale, Dbarwa. This institution has been introducing new types of seeds that can give

more yields and distributing it to farmer across the country. An activity we've been lacking though highly in need of. The impact is showing off, as farmers are becoming the beneficiaries of this effort already. It is also good to remember that their deep effect is yet to be seen in the future for they are in their infant stage right now. The fact however is that the trends so far seems to suggest the future holds so much for these institutions to reserve a major spot in the overall policy of food security and development of the country in general.



Needless to say agriculture has special place in the society, economy and political security and independence of the nation, and Eritrea's development should have it at its heart. Food production should be boosted through strengthening the present agricultural development tasks. Towards this end, the work of these institutions which is research in the area of agriculture is bound to have a decisive role.

In this century, where agricultural education and rural development institutions will need to address not only immediate production needs, but also long-term food security and sustainable development needs; the effort Eritrea has been making to promote the agricultural institution is a right course in the road of development. Moreover they have set a good example that colleges, universities and research institutions need to determine their unique functions and the special attributes that they can offer students and their community.



Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.

ME'ADI: ONE FOR ALL, ALL IN ONE

by Sirak Kbrom



Eritrea is home to various humble customs and values. Despite its voyage of its people through a thick fog of conflicts and colonialism, the

Eritrean people succeeded to emerge with a trophy of morality and decency.

From a people that have been afflicted with the dooms of conflict prompted by various warriors, one would probably expect a society characterized by hostility, bestiality and crime. But one would be astonished to find that it's actually the opposite.

I think using the *Me'adi* as a token for the spirit of unity, peace and apportionment would be quite enough to depict the humility of the Eritrean society.

If we delve deep into Eritrean customs, it is easy to find out that there is a habitual notification of beliefs with circular formations. The circular form remains to be evident in most major cultural or social manifestations of Eritreans. When they dance, when they eat and even what they eat ... all is in a round form.

Me'adi is the prompter for round gatherings. This circular system symbolizes unity. Eaters around Me'adi enjoy the food with a taste of unity as it is done with looking at each other and sitting side by side. Even from the chemical point of view, atoms show the congested form of unity in a round formation. Geographically, the people around Me'adi remind you the very planets around the sun. In this case, Me'adi is the prototype nucleus that attracts every member around it.

The peculiarity of Me'adi in itself stands for a

reason. When most societies show their customs of ingestion, not always does it happen in a collective and united manner. And if it does, it is individually collective.

Me'adi is champion for the energy it generates to attract its belonging people. According to the customs of Me'adi, one doesn't simply come and start helping himself. Once seated, a member of Me'adi must consider the presence of other partners. Usually the full fledged number of Me'adi is eight, which is more or less the number of a simple Eritrean family. Therefore, each counts on the presence of one another, as if they share a part of their stomach.

The Mesob is there to perform as a tabletop where everybody gathers around. As everyone extends his hand to take his share from the food, it's as if some sort of gravitational force draws everybody to integrate.

Now the whole family is seated around for their meal. The youngest one takes the responsibility of bringing water to wash hands, while the mother moves around the kitchen to bring the food.

Eating is to be started, but just before, the most beautiful and sensible part of the custom takes place. The eldest member, usually father, takes the honor of saying grace. He prays for a blessed meal and continued prosperity. Having completed his prayers, he takes a piece of injera from the Me'adi and shares pieces of it among the members. This is done as a sign of blessing. At this time, the mother pours the stew over the injera and the members begin eating calmly and in a mannered fashion.

However, Me'adi is not simply an asset of traditional meal hovered by a number of people, or it is not a mere plate that contains food to be eaten. In fact, what is more interesting is the deep philosophy that is served on it. Me'adi reveals the notion of sharing. When members

of a family gather around Me'adi it is with the sacred intention to share what they have at the realms of Me'adi. No matter how plenty or scarce the resource is, everyone is there to share what is just served. And may be, because hands are extended with spirit of apportion, the stomach always leaves with sense of gratitude. Overall, the Me'adi is the ideal place where love and harmony look forward to coexist.

The ground breaking power of Me'adi is visible in the Tigrinya traditional wedding ceremony. Striding into the wedding hall, a guest observes that the seats are not designed for individual

servitude. Usually, the master of ceremonies in the hall leads the guest to its place, where, upon the completion of eight people, the Me'adi promptly comes. The guest is then instantly found joining in conversations with people he or she has barely seen before.

In this little solar system where a variety of people, youngsters and elders, mothers and fathers are gathered, the bonding generated is so strong that one hardly desires to part company.

And when you leave, not only is your stomach full but also your spirit is content.



Sirak Kbrom, is a program producer for EriTv and regularly contributes articles to Shaebia.org.

A LEAP AHEAD

by *Daniel Semere*



On the right side as you enter through the south western gate of the Denden Camp, commonly known as Kagnew, there lies a spectacular new building. A disturbance of

children could be heard from far off. But it is a delighting disturbance, reflection of innocent and spontaneous fun. It is the new Denden kindergarten built by the collaboration of Zoba maekel and the Italian Eritrean Association. This is a proof that coordination of all the factors that are needed to the improvement of education in the country is essential if we are to get the maximum result from it. The nation's success ultimately depends on the training and provision of human power to strengthen the country's vision of development. This requires the raising of children who should become socially responsible and conscious of their role in contribution to our social transformation as well.

In May 1995 the kindergarten was started in the same place as the new building is erected now. But back then it was started in a couple of clustered containers which continued till 2010. The school was meant to alleviate the acute shortage of kindergarten in Asmara and especially the surrounding areas. But with all sincerity it was a humble beginning, one that lacked many of the essential criteria for a proper school and much less for kindergarten where students need special treatment. As can be suspected and not surprisingly the school was inundated with numerous challenges as it is not purposely built to accommodate the needs of the students. To add to the challenge the number of children who awaits service from the school was a big problem in and of itself since

it was the only kindergarten in the area at that time. But life goes on no matter how uncomfortable things understandably were. But it was everyone's conviction that the kindergarten needed a critical intervention if it was going to serve the neighborhood well and good.

The new building that was established to alleviate this pressing issue therefore, couldn't have come at better time and juncture. And that is what it proved to everyone since its inauguration in 2011. Instantaneously the number of students the school could accommodate has risen sharply from 90 to 254 students. The children friendliness of the school could instantly be seen as soon as one sets foot on the school.

➤ Two custom made classrooms that are spacious and attuned to the children's mood. Playing tools and numerous dolls and toys fill the classroom which must be a total delight for the children. The nicely and neatly arranged chairs and the number of pictures with English and Tigigna captions gives the necessary impetus and touch to creating a conducive environment for kids to learn and have fun.



➤ A room just for children who are mentally challenged and couldn't cope up with the other children. Special techniques are used

and attentions are given to make these children benefit as much as possible from the school. Reserving a place just for this purpose therefore is indeed crucial that will allow the children freedom and protects them from low self-esteem by exposing them to environment they lack the advantage of competing.

- An office with computer and file cabinets. Hanging on one side of the wall of the room, there is certificates of participation acknowledging the school's role in the celebrations of Eritrean Independence in the years of 2011 and 2012. On the other side of the wall hang work plan for the years 2012-2013 and programs of the school activity for the children.



- In the spacious corridors the children can sing and dance with their teachers. They dance with different Eritrean ethnic groups' song. It is never too late to instill in their receptive mind the idea of a nation. Seeing the children having fun is indeed a sight to be hold.



- Hygiene is obviously important in such institutions. Hence, a custom made bathroom for the children with numerous mini-sized shower sets, sinks, sits and clean toilets. A bathroom for the teachers found adjacent to the children'.

- As one look across the corridor in to the play ground, there lie 4 areas where shades are being installed to protect the children from

the sun. These shades could also serve to alleviate the pressure of increasing number of students. So it will serve as a playground as well as areas where some extra class activities could be given to the children. The play houses are erected there where the children can play in their break time.

- The Eritrea map that lies majestically in the middle ground is filled and surrounded by flowers giving is a nice touch to the overall composition of the play ground. It lies as a reminder to what the children parents have sacrificed much for.
- Fun! Fun! And still time for more Fun! – exercising their tiny legs with football. -it is my turn to swing. – let’s build a house. – would you like to sing and dance with me? – ride with me. – playing in the sand. – shooting a 3 pointer.

When the bell rings everyone rushed to their classroom. Some stay behind to collect their playing kits and tools. Soon the students cheer in the classroom and sing songs along with their teacher. On the right side of the new school stand two old clustered containers, standing in stark difference to the majestic appearance of the new building. It becomes so clear why they were just a temporary solution that ultimately should lead to lasting one. In the class room the children sing “*I am a musician of Denden kindergarten....bam ba ba bam...bam ba ba bam....*” In yet again another sharp difference there lies a remnant of the ugly past symbolized by the tank cemetery facing the new building of the kindergarten; the ugly past facing the promising future of the nation. And the children sings more “*Eritrea has nine ethnic groups... Afar, Blien.....*”.



Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.



Foto Lusci