

Relevance And Effectiveness: The Need To Address The Youth's Question

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 20 November 2010 19:59 -



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By *Daniel Semere*

It is in our nature to live in association, whether it is in the smallest family to the highest nation. Our interests can better be served when we are organized in such association. In this stage of time we are living, there are many levels of unions and associations encompassing the above two forms of associations. These associations evolve across time increasing in scope and function. They are also very essential. However, their effectiveness has always been determined by their relevance to the group they claim to represent and serve.

Nowadays one of the most important associations which has come to be universal is the association of youth. Youth associations all over the world play an important role in the lives of the youth and indeed the nation's as well. They have also a reputation and are known for being an engine for many movements in the socio- economic and political arena of a given country. As such they have been playing a big role in the transformation of nations for better or worse.

What made these associations perhaps powerful and it can be argued that the most powerful aspect of them is that they draw their power and support from the most energetic part of the society. However, their power is also to a large extent determined by their ability to organize and direct this section of the society. And the ability to do this in one way or the other depends upon the perception and understanding their members have on them, or the associations' ability to keep themselves relevant. This is what is translated to a meaningful support they get from from the youth.

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When we say these associations have to be relevant, we are saying that they have to positively affect the lives of the youth. Therefore, it is very imperative for them to identify the fundamental issues revolving the youth's life. These issues can have universal nature, but they also differ from country to country based on their given circumstances. The world is divided between poor and the rich countries, developed and underdeveloped, and there are many countries between these two extremes. Hence, the youth in these different countries have different priorities, opportunities and therefore challenges. So the association must be tuned to address the issues of these youth accordingly for them to be considered relevant and to amass the support of the youth.

To come to our case in Eritrea, it is needless to state the unequivocal essentiality of the contribution of the youth in every sector and activities of the nation. This is how it has always been. And it is in the culture of the Eritrean people that any task especially in the socio-economic arena is bestowed upon the youth that put them at the forefront. And in the 40's and 50's our youth has ensured and proved that their contribution in the political arena was indeed a determining factor. And what transpired afterwards was a nation led and directed by the youth as was witnessed in our struggle for independence. But all along this experience the role of organization was proved to be of indispensability. And associations were at the forefront of this organization, which was to lead the nation in to independence and hence proving its essentiality. It can be argued that the associations starting from the Front to the different movements and unions both within and out side the country were to the most part effective. If we tried to trace the reason for their effectiveness, we would invariably find that their power lies in their ability to answer the issues concerning the youth the most. In this respect, therefore, we could conclude that they were relevant and efficient. It was to this relevance and efficiency that the youth rallied around, participated with no equivocation and toil relentlessly and selflessly.

And in this time of independence where the challenge of building a nation, first and foremost is bestowed upon the shoulder of the youth, the role of an organization and an association is all the more imperative. In this time of great endeavor therefore the relevance of these associations is crucial and its need is self-evident. We all know that the challenges facing our youth, is multifaceted and daunting. But it is a matter of necessity to deal and address this issue. Big concerns like health issues, notably the issue of HIV/AIDS, the issue of unemployment, our concern in the ever-fast growing areas of technology and education, and the healthy participation of the youth in the political life of nations, and the likes can be considered a global phenomenon. And there is no doubt that they are also of great concern here in Eritrea as well. And no development aspiring society would leave these concerns unchecked. And our experience has taught us clearly that such monumental challenges can only be effectively dealt with when we address them organized.

That's why and where the crucial role of associations and unions comes.

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The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Student (NUEYS) has been one of the major associations dealing with the issues of our youth for a long time. Since its inception it has contributed its level best in organizing the youth and make them participate in the struggle for independence. And now, more than ever, its service is heeded as we have embarked upon the task of rebuilding a nation. This is for the simple reason that the nation is bound to depend on the youth to carry out this huge task. As a union representing and working for the youth, therefore the NUEYS should reach out to the youth and toil to make them partners in its endeavor. It is when we do that, that we can best be suited to understand the issues of concern to the youth and that we can best address them. This is what relevance mean in the end. And it needs a conscious, unrelenting and concerted effort from all those concerned to forward the nation in the right direction.