

Girls' Motivation – a Means for Success



Current education policy in Eritrea encourages girls' participation in Education.

Enrolment ratios of girls for primary schools in Eritrea averaging about 44%, about 33.1% for secondary schools and less than 5% for tertiary institutions.

Economic and social factors are the major causes for girls' low enrolment ratios, retention and achievement in education.

The majority of girls have few options open for them to continue their education. Many are burdened with work at home such as taking care of children, cooking and cleaning. In rural areas distances to the nearest available secondary school – sometimes two hours walk in each direction-hamper their participation. This marginalizes girls in particular, many of whom are not permitted to walk long distances for fear of attack.

LWF/WS-Eritrea Program in collaboration with the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) and Ministry of Education has been facilitating the participation and performance of girls in education by providing support for the education of some 2200 vulnerable/academic weak students through the provision of tutorial classes and other incentives.

Senait Afeworki is a student in Adulis Junior School in Asmara, the capital. She is 17 years old and 8th grade student. "I should have been in 11th grade like most of my age mates. But I stayed behind because of my poor performance", said Senait.

Senait lives with her grandmother. Her grandmother raised her by working as a daily laborer. Senait enrolled at school at the age of 8. Since her age of 10, Senait was exposed to household chores and could hardly follow her education. Her problem got worse when she was 15; her grandmother became sick and stayed home. They have no close relatives to support them and thus she was obliged to look for work. Although the entire burden was on her she did not give-up her education. With the help of some neighbors she was able to get a job in a beauty saloon. Senait attends her class in the morning and works half day after class.

"Life was really a struggle. I repeated in three grades. I was almost losing hope by the time I was selected to get tutorial classes and financial assistance to cover my school uniforms and books last year. The assistance and encouragement I received from my teachers has renewed my hope and thus I could pass to grade 8 without problem. This year I am doing better. In the first semester I scored 90% and 85% in Math and English respectively. These two subjects were more difficult for me. I am now very much motivated to work hard."

The project has also contributed in reducing the number of girl drop-outs.