

Social Services in Gash-Barka Region



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Education is one of the social services that has been given a lot of attention in the Gash-Barka region. According to Mr. Mohammed Ali, director of the education sector in the region, there are more than 460 schools in the region that cater to the needs of 176,225 students, who make up 20.5 % of the region's total population. In line with the government's policy of mother tongue education, there are two elementary schools that teach in Saho, five in Bidawiet, 21 in Nara, 32 in Kunama, 56 in Arabic, 90 in Tigre and 129 in Tigrinya languages. Like elementary schools, preschools also give services in all ethnic languages except in Saho and Bidawiet. The number of girls' enrollment in schools has been rising steadily over the years. Girls today make up 38% of the student population, which Mohammed said is very encouraging and promising.

Although there is still shortage of computers and other digital equipment, schools are installing digital librariesto make educational materials more accessible. As part of the efforts to make education accessible to all segments of the communities, adult education programs, complementary elementary education (CEE) and evening classes are given. The number of participants enrolled in the adult literacy program in the region has increased by 9.9%, from 15730 in the 2021/22 academic year to 17599 in 2022- 2023. In terms of evening classes in the 2022-2023 academic year, 309 students attended classes in six schools -- two elementary, one middle school and three secondary schools. In the 2022-2023 academic year, improvements have also been made in school

infrastructures and material distribution. Many schools have built classrooms to accommodate the increasing number of students at elementary, middle-school and secondary school levels. The head of social services in the region, Mr. Franko kubaba, said, “The Government has been vigorously investing in various water harnessing schemes in the past fifteen years. Big strategic dams have been constructed in major river basins, and the potential of the catchments has increased the land under irrigation.” He added that the ongoing nationwide soil and water conservation programs have helped revitalize the environment and boost the potential of the agriculture sector. The three big dams along with the flora and fauna, the Elephant Park, and mounts Elite and Fodie, among others, give the region enormous potential for tourism. One of the major tasks of the region’s administration has been the provision of clean water, especially to communities in remote locations.



Although there are still challenges, with the participation of the communities, potable water supply projects have been implemented. Prior to Eritrea’s independence, there were hardly healthcare facilities in the region and people depended mainly on traditional medicine. But through rigorous efforts by national and regional authorities, healthcare services in the region have improved over the years. And through ongoing campaigns, the communities’ awareness about the effectiveness of modern medicine has been raised and people’s trust in the healthcare facilities is demonstrated in their regular visits of the facilities for treatment and consultation. There are many social welfare programs throughout the region. They include helping out children from low income families by providing tutorials and school materials, giving vocational training to children of martyrs and disadvantaged children, and giving financial assistance to families of martyrs and HIV infected citizens. The region’s

administration gives financial assistance to freedom fighters with disability to help them start up their own business.

These fighters also get material support from Eritreans in the diaspora. Given the region's size and its steady rise in population, transport has become vital in recent years. Although they were run efficiently, the number of buses in the region were few. Now that more than eleven Harat buses have been assigned to the region, the communities are expected to get relief. In terms of communication, Eritel has done a good job to reach every corner of the region except Agmayet. And the region was badly in need of construction and maintenance of residential houses, especially after the 1998 Ethio-Eritrea war. Most of the houses that were destroyed have been rebuilt by the concerted efforts of the region's administration and the communities. Located in the south western part of Eritrea, Gash-Barka is the largest region in Eritrea, has a population of 860, 388, and it is a place where eight out of the nine ethnic groups live in harmony. It borders Sudan to the west and Ethiopia to the south. The temperature of the region ranges from 12 to 48 degrees centigrade.

Eritrea Profile

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