

Independent Development Policy, Human Capital, and the Promise of a Knowledge-Driven Future



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On May 24, 2026, Eritrea marks 35 years of independence – a milestone that invites reflection not only on the sacrifices of the past, but on the foundations being laid for the future.

At the center of Eritrea’s economic development story is a defining principle: ownership of its development path as it cultivates investment and trade ties anchored on symmetric partnerships with primary and rigorous focus on human capital development; particularly through education, national capacity-building, and citizen-driven innovation – both inside the country and across the diaspora.

Human Development as a National Strategy

Since independence in 1991, Eritrea has pursued a development path that prioritizes human capital over structural and debilitating dependency. This philosophy is embedded in the national framework, *Eritrea Vision*, which places education, health, and infrastructure at the core of long-term transformation.

The approach is deliberate:

- Build skilled citizens
- Strengthen local institutions
- Ensure ownership of development.

This model seeks not just growth, but sovereign, sustainable progress.

Education as the Engine of National Progress



Education remains the backbone of Eritrea’s development strategy. Institutions such as:

- The Eritrean Institute of Technology
- Hamelmalo College of Agriculture
- Orotta School of Medicine and Health Sciences etc.....

have become vital centers for producing engineers, scientists, healthcare professionals, and policy thinkers.

These institutions are uniquely aligned with national priorities:

- Water resource management
- Agricultural productivity
- Public health systems
- Infrastructure development.

Education in Eritrea is not abstract – it is applied, purposeful, and nation-oriented.

ICES 2025: A Personal Reflection on a Nation of Ideas

Attending the International Conference on Eritrean Studies 2025 (ICES 2025) in Asmara January 2025 was not only informative – it was deeply inspiring.

What stood out most was not just the number of papers presented, but the quality, relevance, and originality of ideas emerging from Eritrea's young professionals. Engaging directly with these researchers revealed something powerful:

A generation that is not waiting for solutions—but actively creating them.



From innovative approaches in:

- Renewable energy
- Water systems and irrigation
- Public health improvements
- Economic and social policy

the Conference showcased a living ecosystem of knowledge and innovation.

Equally important was the human dimension. Conversations with young Eritrean professionals – many trained within the country – reflected:

- Confidence in their abilities
- Commitment to national development
- A clear understanding of local challenges.

ICES 2025 was more than a conference. It was a window into Eritrea's intellectual future – one that is grounded, capable, and quietly determined.

Infrastructure as a Reflection of Self-Reliance

Eritrea's progress is also visible in its physical transformation—particularly in water systems, roads, schools, and healthcare infrastructure.

Water – Transforming Scarcity into Stability



Over the past decades, Eritrea has undertaken an ambitious water development program:

- Expansion from 138 to hundreds of dams and reservoirs nationwide
- Significant increase in access to water for communities and agriculture.

These projects have:

- Strengthened food security
- Enabled irrigation and rural livelihoods
- Built resilience against drought.

They represent one of the clearest examples of long-term, self-reliant planning.

Roads, Schools, and Clinics – Building the Foundations of Opportunity

Across the country, continuous efforts have been made to expand:

- Road networks connecting communities and markets
- Schools and technical training centers
- Clinics and healthcare facilities.

These are not isolated achievements—they are part of a broader vision. Together, they form the architecture of national progress.

A Tribute to the Builders of the Nation

As Eritrea reflects on 35 years of independence, it is essential to recognize those who have made this progress possible.



A salute is due to:

- Eritrean engineers, technicians, and planners
- Construction teams working across challenging terrains
- Agricultural experts transforming rural livelihoods
- Healthcare workers and educators serving communities etc....

These individuals and teams—often working quietly and with limited resources—are the true architects of Eritrea’s development.

They are building more than infrastructure. They are building a nation grounded in resilience, dignity, and purpose.

The Power of Self-Reliance

Eritrea’s path has not followed conventional development models. Instead, it has emphasized:

- Community participation
- National ownership
- Long-term resilience over short-term gain

This philosophy has allowed Eritrea to build foundational systems that, while gradual in progress, are deeply rooted and sustainable.

A Call to the Diaspora – The Next Phase of Development

As Eritrea enters its 35th year, a new chapter is emerging—one that calls for greater engagement from Eritreans worldwide.

The foundations are now in place:

- Educational institutions producing capable graduates
- Infrastructure supporting growth
- A culture of resilience and self-reliance.

The next step is acceleration.

This is where the Eritrean diaspora has a critical role to play.



whether through:

- Knowledge transfer
- Investment and entrepreneurship
- Technical collaboration
- Mentorship and institutional partnerships

The diaspora can help bridge Eritrea to global systems while preserving its core principle of self-reliance.

The energy, ideas, and expertise seen at ICES 2025 demonstrate that Eritrea is ready—not just to build, but to innovate and expand.

Conclusion – A Future Built on People and Purpose

At 35, Eritrea's greatest strength is not only in what it has built, – but in who it has become.

A nation that invests in:

- Education
- Human capacity

Collective effort creates a foundation that no external force can easily shake.

From classrooms to conferences, from dams to laboratories, from local communities to global diaspora networks—Eritrea is cultivating something powerful:

A self-reliant, knowledge-driven future shaped by its own people.

The journey continues—but the direction is clear.

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