

Interview with Dr. Mohamud H. Egeh: Vice-Chancellor, Eelo University, Borama

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Editors Note: *A unique university having the hallmarks of an international institution of higher learning has emerged in the city of Borama located in the northwestern tip of Somaliland. Known as Eelo University, it prides to be located in the Awdal region of Somaliland-a region that takes its name from a medieval empire known as the Adal Sultanate and that has spearheaded other Somali regions in terms of historical significance, inculcating peace and prosperity, spearheading religious propagation, and taking the lead in cultural advancement. In an interview with Dr. Mohamud H. Egeh, the Vice-Chancellor of Eelo University, our celebrated editor, Adan Makina, paintakingly took the lead to bring you the interview in its entirety.*

WardheerNews (WDN): Dr. Mohamud H. Egeh, it's a pleasure to have you on WardheerNews.

Mohamud Hussein Egeh: Thank you. It is my honor to be interviewed by WardheerNews.

WDN: Before we begin our interview, please tell us briefly about your academic background?



Mohamud: I am a have Ph.D. in Water Resources, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, IA, USA, 2004; I also did a Master of Science in Agricultural and Environmental Science, McGill University, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental

Sciences, Montreal, QC, 1999. My undergraduate is a BSc. in Agricultural Science, Somali National University, Afgoi, Somalia, 1989.

WDN: You are the Vice-Chancellor of Eelo University, a university many would like to know more about in this exclusive interview. Tell us about the university, how it evolved, and the people and institutions or organizations that took part in its formation or establishment as an institution of higher learning?

Mohamud: Eelo University is located in Borama - Awdal region of Somaliland; to the northwestern Somalia. EU is a Non-Profit Organization founded by members of the Somali local community and those in the Diaspora to provide a top quality education to the communities in this region and beyond. It was founded on the principle that the fundamental and lasting benefits that result from higher education, scientific and technical research, and community participation will enhance the lives of all the residents in the region. We provide our students an opportunity to pursue appropriate skills. We as well contribute to all regional communities' educational research, and economical objectives. Through our strong higher education programmes in the fields of engineering and technology, management sciences, agriculture and research we hope to contribute to the re-building of the country both public and private sectors, formulation of the educational systems, and improving opportunities for the international community to contribute to the development, securing the peace and stability and reducing poverty in the region.

WDN: Borama is home to other universities such as Amoud. What made it so important to establish another institution of higher education such as Eelo in Borama?

Mohamud: EU realized a lot of gaps that needed to be covered. Our country and region needed skills with orientation to protracted sustainability. We have an education system that addresses the persistent problems like food scarcity, unemployment and irregular migrations.

WDN: How do you finance the running of Eelo University?

Mohamud: Basically, EU is financed by the fees collection from students, at least 20 students' Diaspora cosponsored bursaries and a yearly government grant of \$25,000. More still, we occasionally get some research grants generated from proposals we send to international NGOs.

WDN: How is Eelo University different from the many institutions of higher learning that have sprouted forth in the Horn Africa?

Mohamud: EU is unique in education approach; committed to academic excellence, which distinguishes it from other local universities. It endeavors to provide students with internationally needed skills; and to foster an atmosphere where students feel they are receiving the best education possible by cultivating confidence in them and in the community. Eelo has directed efforts to providing quality education; as such it sources some of its personnel from foreign countries to cover any gap not filled locally.

WDN: Which curriculum do you use to run this institution and who was behind the creation of this curriculum?

Mohamud: EU curriculum was first developed by a hired educational consultant in conjunction with the senate while benchmarking regional and global best ranked universities. It reflects the educational needs of the current national and international job market trends.

WDN: Tell us about the general outlook of the university campus, available housing, and hostel accommodation that are used for the university faculty and students.

Mohamud: The general outlook of EU shows that we have adequate infrastructure; international staffs are housed, local staff are paid good salary and they rent houses adjacent to the University.

The students from afar are accommodated by private university vetted hostel owners.



Students at Baki Farms with Mr. Jimale explaining mosaic virus

WDN: We live in a world where diversity is given utmost attention in many institutions worldwide. Tell us how you tackle diversity in Eelo University?

Mohamud: EU is a cosmopolitan University. Our staffs are procured from local sources, Asia, Europe and East Africa. We do not bias our personnel procurement process on race, national origin, faith, disability or gender. Selection is on merit.

WDN: Is Eelo University exclusively attended by students from Somaliland?

Mohamud: No. We have students from Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Puntland and East Africa. In fact we have a students' exchange program with Gulu University, Uganda.

WDN: How many faculties and departments does Eelo University have?

Mohamud: EU has 9 faculties; Engineering, Computer Science, Agriculture & environmental Management, Geology, Education, Management Sciences, Continuing education, English as a second language and Graduate studies.

WDN: Which faculty or department boasts to have the highest intake of students? And why is it so?

Mohamud: Faculty of Management Sciences; this is in response to the demand for personnel to boost commerce in the Country and region. The kinds of professions dear include the following: Managers, bankers, marketers, tax experts, procurement/supplies management officers, economists, the list is long.

WDN: Are there other academic institutions that you have agreement with as is common with many institutions of higher learning?

Mohamud: Yes. We signed a memorandum of understanding with Gulu University in Uganda. We have a students' and staff exchange program. Locally we have a good relationship with institutions in Somaliland; Golis, Amoud and Berbera Maritime Academy.

WDN: Is there any board, be it be from Somaliland higher education or others that provide credentials or oversee the curriculum you teach, in accordance with other schools of similar faculties?

Mohamed: Yes. We derive our mandate from Somaliland national commission for higher education. More so by signing a memorandum with a state owned University in Uganda; our credentials ought to be vetted by the Uganda national higher commission for education.

WDN: What future plans do you have in mind for Eelo University? By that I mean issues related to academic development, campus expansion, technological enhancement, and monetary solicitation?

Mohamud: We are focusing on three fundamental areas; Research, Vocational skills training and Graduate studies. We have an institute for research in which we are already handling some research programs on improved seeds for drylands, food multiplication and food security. This institute is as well in charge of fundraising for the University through proposal writing and developing new business plans for the University. We intend to open a vocational training institute to curtail the rampant unemployment problem. Courses earmarked include; building and construction, electrical installation, plumbing, electronics, carpentry, institutional catering and farming. We are benchmarking with some Universities in East Africa to offer unique graduate studies in the quest to build capacity of the much need experts by the government and non-government organizations.

Thanks to you, it has been a pleasure to be hosted by WardheerNews.