

English translation:

N: Nafkote M: Woman on the left

M: What do you think of the education system in general? How would you describe it?

N: To be honest, I'm not sure what sort of system we used before but now, with the changes that have occurred, we use the English system. You learn until the 10th grade – although it is split up until 4th grade, until 8th grade, until 10th grade –but the bulk is from 1st to 10th grade. Then there's the *matric*¹ that you take in 10th grade, which says, "Is this girl prepared for college – and if not college then pre-college – or not?" If you fail but your results are somewhat okay, you go into *yekelem*² school. No, it's not *yekelem*, you go into a trade school, and if you pass, then you go into *yekelem* school. And 11th and 12th grade is now called pre-college; they don't call it 11th and 12th grade like before. When I look at the change from most aspects, I think it seems useful, but when I consider it from another point of view, it means that you're tested in the 10th grade at a young age – you could be 15, 14, or 16 years old. If you take the exam and fail at that age, then what can you do with your life? If you pass, you'll reach 12th and do pre-college then you'll go to college, but if you fail, you have nothing to achieve.

M: Yes. That's what I can't understand about the system. Personally, I believe that the system is good because the government has cooperated well to help the people; however, what I've never understood is – now 11th and 12 is pre-college so it's seen as freshman year for them, after that they go to college and finish their remaining three years. So during those two years as freshman for pre-college 1 and 2 or 11th and 12th grade, what's to happen to those students that fail at this level? Either they might have gone into trade school and chosen not to, or they didn't pass and get into college either, so I feel as though this one of the things that needs to be fixed.

N: Indeed. This is why I wanted to tell you. Those who went to private schools like us – you went to school in Addis Ababa, right?

M: Yes.

N: You were in a private school, Greek School?

M: Greek Community School.

N: And then?

M: Ethio-Parents.

¹ Matriculation exam.

² Regular.

N: And then?

M: I finished in Nazareth School.

N: Think about it, these are all what you'd call very good schools; they're well-known in the city. I was in Nazareth School for 13 years. This is useful for us; since they taught us well and followed up with us each step of the way, we won't have any problems. But think about the children in the rural areas. Even though we have to pay and suffer just a little bit, then we can attend a private university in the city. This is what makes me believe that the system isn't fully correct on some issues. But, I don't know. For me, as I've told you, I'm very fortunate. I went to Nazareth School, which is a private school and a Catholic missionary school as well.

M: Tell us about the time you spent in Nazareth School.

N: Attending an all-girls' school for 13 years on one side, can be useful to you. You could come out as a strong woman. You could learn a lot of things about different ways of thinking. On the other side, however, there are no guys, and perhaps it's a more natural environment to learn together with males and females, and being with girls only may change the situation. But it wasn't a boarding school, so after you leave school you can mix with your friends, with guys, with whomever's there. But I feel as though my experience at Nazareth School was very positive. I meet a lot of good people, I had a very good time, and the teachers were very good. Well, the work was a bit hard, you had to study a lot, you have to work very hard, and you have to read a lot, but, at the end, it would bring about a good result.

M: That's true.

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