



Following His Vision

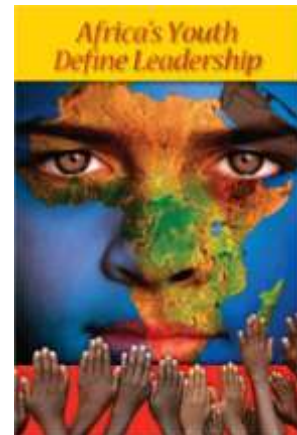
"Vision is a dream that one takes action upon to convert it into a reality."

Edward Rhulani Ngwenya
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Leadership Africa USA in collaboration with US AID's African Education Initiative and AASBEA Publishers together published a book, *Africa's Youth Define Leadership*, in order to give a voice to Africa's. *Africa's Youth Define Leadership* is a compilation of essays in which eleven African youths from nine different countries have voiced their idea of a good leader. In this book, Edward Rhulani Ngwenya, 22, from Benoni, Johannesburg wrote his ideas and his experiences of what it is to be a good leader.

In his essay, "Pillars That Hold up Good Leaders," Edward describes good leaders as people that lead by example. Other characteristics that Edward names include being reliable, adhering to positive values, sound judgment, being a good listener, have discipline, and understand the importance of teamwork.

As one of the elder of four children, Edward attributes his growth and character to his family. Edward states his parents inspired and supported him at all times, especially under the hard times imposed by the Apartheid in South Africa. This support and inspiration however, was only a small part of Edward's success.



"I have made it my life's mission to prove to the world that circumstance need not craft an individual; one can rise beyond circumstance."

Edward Rhulani Ngwenya

As Edward states in his essay, "action makes a good leader." According to Edward, the problem with many of today's youth is that they blame their actions on their circumstance. Many of his friends have stopped following their dreams in pursuit of a life of crime, drugs, and alcohol. But for him, blaming your circumstance is not taking responsibility for yourself. It is his personal philosophy that one must "rise above expectations."

In his essay, Edward's description of a good leader is personified in himself. Because of his published essay, in *Africa's Youth Define Leadership*, Edward has since obtained various opportunities to hone his leadership skills.

In June 2008, Edward participated in the Study of the U.S. Institutes for Global Student Leaders program. The program offered Edward an intensive study of the Civil Rights Movement as well as exposure to a broad spectrum of American social justice efforts past and present while allowing him to expand his leadership skills through workshops and discussions.

Edward described his participation in the program in the following statement:

"The opportunity to participate in the Program was a vast learning and growing experience for me. I have met and shared unforgettable moments with great young leaders, like myself, people of great minds and potential. Thus I now believe in a brighter future not only for Africa, but for the world at large."

Currently, Edward is in his third year studying Medicine (MBBCh) at the University of the Witwatersrand. His plan is to practice general medicine for a few years to help out his community before specializing in Neuro-surgery. With his contribution to the book, *Africa's Youth Define Leadership*, and his continual efforts to train his leadership skills, Edward has surely stepped up to follow his dreams.

"Thus, I now believe in a brighter future not only for Africa, but for the world at large."

Edward Rhulani Ngwenya
