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Transcript of an Audio-Recorded Conversation in Post-Conflict Rwanda

Participants:

- **Tuyisenge Francine** **Relation:** Sister
- **Uwituze Yvette** **Relation:** Sister

Facilitator:

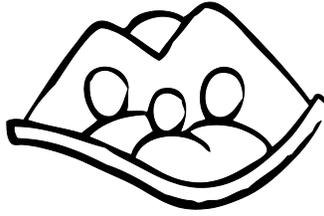
Date: August 2009

Recording Location: Kigali

Story Number: SFH0078

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(Tuyisenge Francine & Nituze Yvette)

Story Number: SFH0085

Nituze Yvette: My name is Nituze Yvette

Tuyisenge Francine: My name is Tuyisenge Francine, Yvette is my younger sister. Our mothers are sisters

Nituze Yvette: What I wanted to ask her about, she is older than me she has seen a lot, I am at a stage where boys start “chasing” (pursuing) me a lot. When you have many people interested in you it’s hard to make decisions. You don’t know who to choose, it becomes a problem. I wanted to know how she dealt with this issue when she was my age, how she avoided it or how she could tell who was being truthful.

Tuyisenge Francine: Thank you Yvette, as she said I am older than her. I am ten years older and I am also married I have a home. It’s true that at the age she’s in of 21 or 22 is an age where young men are interested in having a relationship with her. You have one person approaching after another. She is my younger sister, but we do not live together anymore because I got married. Even though I said our mothers are sisters we grew up together. She probably asked me this question because I am no longer at home so we do not have as much time to talk anymore.

I am glad she can ask me this question, we as a country have been through some hard times. We do not have parents anymore so we have to give each other advice in most matters. About what you asked me on what I would do in your situation, you are done with secondary school, they are starting to see that you could potentially be a suitor. They are not all truthful and not all of them can be your husband. Some of them will talk to you out of bodily lust, some just because you are beautiful and not thinking about the future, some just think you’ll go to University and get a good job so together you might have a good life.

I believe you can make bad choices if not well advised. You should first learn a person. Learn his upbringing, if it’s good or bad, I think you can see how the youth of today act. I

A conversation between Tuyisenge Francine & Nituze Yvette

would advise you, to look for someone kind and intelligent. Also look for someone who wants, it's not easy to judge this, but you cannot make a mistake in this case. Another thing I would advise you, is to spend time together, and learn his behavior. Know if you can bear his faults. As an example, I met my husband while studying university in Butare. You already know that this is when it's a maybe you don't know any more details. After he asked me out I did not respond immediately, I took my time to know him first. I wanted to know he was not like all the other young people, if he had many girlfriends. Or if he also liked holding hands going everywhere and indulging in back behaviors. Maybe he was interested in this sort of behavior. After a while, I found out he was serious young man with good intentions. After agreeing to be friends, we decided to focus our study, he had two years to finish and I had four more years. We decided to get on with our plans when we are done with our education. The university also went further studies so we had to trust each to be faithful. Is even this, took some time to be self-sustainable on my own. As you know we don't have parents we have to take care of ourselves. I wanted to make sure comfortable at home, before I got married.

Facilitator: So you trusted each other even when he was studying abroad, and I knew he would not cheat on me. I wanted to learn from all this, there are a lot of young men different agendas. You need to decide who is truthful and who is not. And always ask for a device, we in most cases know who they are. We can help you make the right decision. You can ask me or anyone else who is older than you. Do you have any further questions?

Nituze Yvette: What if your partner was hiding something from you during engagement? Something that you think you cannot live with but you find it out once you are married. What do you do then? Bearing in mind it's after we are lawfully wedded.

Tuyisenge Francine: this is why I said, before getting married you need time to learn someone. Not be wise to marry someone after one week. If it is truly something big, you will see it during your engagement. Maybe you could give me an example of something that could remain hidden. When you give yourself time with your partner, you will learn each others' behaviors. This is why you give yourself time during her engagement, if there is anything serious to find out is to be the time to see it. Other small things like not sharing ideas, or being too rigid can also be found out. So my advice to you is to take as much time as you need. Marriage is not something rushing to.

Nituze Yvette: Another question I have is if she meets a young man who has enough money to live off but did not go to school. If we got married, and his business went bad. What can we do this situation. Would you call that being married for money? Would you marry this person at all?

Tuyisenge Francine: You may come to you while uneducated but with enough money to take care of you and your family. People like saying that we should marry other

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people the same education, but I think most important thing is love. Either way without the same level cannot be in love, and should not be a barrier. You should know what type of man you want before getting to the relationship. I think education should be the first criteria, some people have physical specifications, either way everyone has preferences. So I think without education love would not be possible. But if it did happen and you loved this man, education should not be at the barrier. What I care about the most is love and honesty.

Facilitator: Do you have any other questions want ask? This might be a good chance to ask questions.

Nituze Yvette: Another question is, if you had to did your mother in law and she did not like you. If she told lies to your husband in order separate you, and she tried to show how bad you are so that your husband leaves you. And if your husband believes her and puts all the blame on you, what to do? This problem has destroyed many homes.

Tuyisenge Francine: Having your in-laws are separate you from your husband also depends on how much your close to your husband. That is why I said your home must be based on love. Without the love these problems can break your home. If your husband marries because of pressure from the family, he is likely not to have the maturity needed to get along well. On the other hand it to if it was his own decision Marry, out of love, then he will be ready for all decisions and consequences. You can talk to him and we stay married each other with an intention of living together, so do not let anyone come between us. But what I can tell you is, if your home is founded on love you will not have these problems. You should also be aware that you are marrying into your husband's family, so do not disrespect them anyway. Treat them as your own parents and try to join the family. In case they still want break your home, should stand firm and be strong. You are now in your own home and you should not let anyone bully you. But what I can tell you is, this situation will only happen if you were married for other reasons and not love. If it's love, every problem can be worked through.

Facilitator: While you think of another question, I will ask my own. Francine you've been through a lot before getting married and you have a lot of experience. Yvette brought you here, in order to get your advice. You are blessed have made good decisions until the day you were married to your husband. You also studied all through university all at a young age. What is your secret and what should Yvette learn from you?

Tuyisenge Francine: My secret is that I always had a goal, a goal to complete my education, and then get married after. I also wanted an equally educated husband. After the pain I had gone through to get an education, I wanted someone who had experienced the same. So my goal was to finish my education but also to avoid all obstacles that might take me off of this path. That is why I told you that once were friends we decided to date only after we had finished our education. What helped me to

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remain focused, was this goal of first completing my education and then getting married. I did not want to marry an uneducated man because it was hard for me to get my education. In University because of a lack of supervision many girls got pregnant and could not finish their courses. Sometimes they would continue their education after giving birth but that children would suffer in the process through things like malnutrition and so on. So after seeing all this, I decided this was not the life I wanted. I felt like I had enough time to choose a boy because at the University were equal numbers of boys and girls. You get one boy coming to you after another one, so if you don't have clear goals you can easily be distracted. I felt like I did not want to be part of all the issues girls were going through on-campus.

Facilitator: So you set personal goals and finished University, without getting into these problems. Yvette is there any other questions you would like to ask you?

Nituze Yvette: so if I met a young man with enough money but wanted to get married before I could finish university, if we love each other if he wanted to pay for my education while I was his wife. What you do in this situation given that studying a mother is difficult.

Tuyisenge Francine: this is what I'm talking about, you're not mature and old enough to be married. And make your own decisions based on facts. Nobody should make you stop your plans. You should have long-term plans regardless of whether you get married or not. This is what is called, "determination". If you value your education you should not get married before you complete it. When you're ready you will not need a man even prepare your wedding. You will be self-sufficient in most areas. Nobody can deviate your plan if you're determined. You should not make a decision whether someone else, make a decision because it's your choice. Nobody else can make your decisions because when there is consequences you are the one to face them. Also if someone cannot be patient with you and wait until you finish your education, they do not love you because love is patient. Since there is no reason to rush, he should be able to wait for you without a problem. He should give enough time to complete your education without a problem.

Facilitator: I think Yvette is about to join University, what would you advise a girl without this opportunity?

Tuyisenge Francine: even if she does not have plans of going to university she may still have other plans depending on the situation. She may say, "this is a young man loves me and wants to be with me, since I have no further plans for education we can get married." But as for Yvette, she can say studying at the woman is hard then she should wait before getting married. Everyone should have the own plans and stick to them depending on what level they are on.

A conversation between Tuyisenge Francine & Nituze Yvette

Facilitator: Where you get these the good qualities which you teach Yvette? In it your parents, grandparents, uncles etc. Where do you get this analytical ability?

Tuyisenge Francine: cannot say I got this from my parents although it's possible; sometimes people can adopt to the surrounding and behave accordingly. Problems and experiences can shape a person's future plans and ambitions and hence shaping character. So it would be hard to say if I got this from a parent.

Facilitator: Yvette did you get the answers to your questions?

Nituze Yvette: Most of what I had to ask has been answered but If I have any more I will go to her and ask her because she is not too far away from me anyways.

Facilitator: Do you accept that the next time that Yvette comes to you that you can answer her questions freely?

Tuyisenge Francine: I am ready to answer all her questions and this session helped us because is like a beginning. It has helped us to come together.
Thank you!

