

STORIES FOR HOPE

<http://www.storiesforhope.org> • ph: 734.678.5512 (US) / 0788260317 (RW) • email: ppasick@gmail.com

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

Participants:

- Muhizi Jean Claude **Relation:** Friend
- Masengesho Jeanne Dieu **Relation:** Friend

Facilitator: Muganyizi Taim Lydia

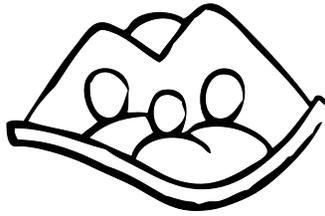
Date: 27/08/2009

Recording Location: Nyamata

Story Number: SFH0092

NOTICE:

- This transcript contains personal reflections and remembrances of Rwanda's culture and history and is exclusively provided with the participants' permission.
- Alteration or manipulation of content (which includes the creation of derivative works) is expressly forbidden.
- Individuals may copy this transcript solely for personal, noncommercial use and must provide full attribution to Stories For Hope and include Stories For Hope's contact information with any reproduction.
- Parties interested in other uses of this material please contact Stories For Hope.



STORIES FOR HOPE

<http://www.storiesforhope.org> • ph: 734.678.5512 (US) / 0788260317 (RW) • email: ppasick@gmail.com

Muhizi Jean Claude & Masengesho Jean de Dieu

Story Number: SFH0092

Jean Claude: I was born in the Ntanga sector, Cyugiro cell on June 15, 1982. I started nursery school when I was young. If I try to recall my life history, I find out that I passed through many hardships and that life is very different today! That's why I want to tell you about my life today, I want to build hope in you because your future needs to be bright. I'm 25 years old today. You will meet so many obstacles in your life but that shouldn't stop you from working hard to reach your destiny. I remember that time in school, the system was different from what exists today. The teacher would arrange us according to ethnic tribes. Using the same system they applied when we were filling extermination teams... Tutsi, Hutu and Twa.

At the end of 1993, I started seeing killings, people burning houses. There was serious segregation. It was terrible, I am telling you, and it led to all this instability you're seeing today, orphans all around, widows and widowers...

What do I want to tell you here?

We should not be like these people. You should bear in mind that all Rwandese are the same, we share the same blood and we should help each other. All this I witnessed with my two eyes, it's not a story that I was told.

Another significant thing was during elections, there was nothing like democracy or liberty. We were directed on who and where to vote. It came to 1994, and genocide! To me it was a result of the other segregation that had started back in school, the census of Tutsis, Hutus and Twas in class. Their main aim was to get the right numbers of those they wanted to get rid of, they used to say that they wanted to get rid of the enemies. The enemies were Tutsis, but I think if you look at the case today, the consequences did not affect the Tutsis only, we are all suffering to different degrees. Luckily enough, the RPF party came to our rescue and it started mobilizing

A conversation between Muhizi Jean Claude and Masengesho Jean de Dieu

peace talks all over. That's why you can see that we are making good progress today! Our country is developing and is fighting against whatever could try to bring back all that mess. A good example you can see today is our national ID. The description you find there indicates that you are a Rwandese, not a Hutu or Tutsi. There are clubs that encourage peace and reconciliation, I advise you to take part in them and encourage your friends to fight the genocide ideology.

Jean de Dieu: I thank you so much for such good advice and all that you have told me, but still I have one thing to ask about. It's true genocide happened, it was planned and put in action and they also used the youth as fighting tools. I want to know, how can one mend those broken hearts that were injured during the genocide?

Jean Claude: That's a pretty good question. It is exactly what I was telling you, take part and show your participation to your fellow youth. As you know, this genocide seed was planted a long time ago. It went on growing and it was put into action later on. If we start encouraging our youth today and showing them how bad ethnic discrimination is, I am sure we will reap something good out of them.

Jean de Dieu: There are many cases of misunderstandings out here. You find that parents don't care about their children so much, as a result, their children end up going to the streets. I am wondering how we can shape up these parents.

Jean Claude: That is a tough question. This is a problem that our country is experiencing, and as I told you before, it's you! You the youth must show your strength and participation to address some of these issues. You're the next leaders of our country, the future parents.

Facilitator: I would like to thank you for what you have told your friend. If I can ask you one thing, I have learned that you passed through many difficulties, and you are a victim of what happened during genocide. Now, how do you have the strength to forgive those people who killed your family?

Jean Claude: It's true I passed through many difficulties, this is true! From my own story, I remember when I saw the interahamwe throwing my aunt and uncle in the lake. I was hurt and the first thing that came to my mind was revenge. After the genocide I joined a karate team, I wanted to develop skills so that I could defend myself in the future. I did well and I was willing to go far. I thought my karate skills would defend me in case of any invasion, but that was not the case though. I remember one day when I was sleeping, I had a dream. I dreamt about a man coming to me dressed in full karate wear, and he called me to fight with him. We fought until

A conversation between Muhizi Jean Claude and Masengesho Jean de Dieu

he defeated me and then said to me "you see, your whole hopes are in karate. I think it will help you in revenge, but what I can tell you is to bow down and wait for God's powers to work for you."

I felt challenged and switched my thoughts to God, that even Jetil the king of karate died. I got interested in youth peace talks and that has helped me a lot! I cherish all of this to that dream.

Facilitator: You have told us what embarked the changes to your vengeful thoughts that you had at that time, which was the dream I think, plus the good governance that you came to see after the genocide. What else gave you the strength to remain strong and supportive?

Jean Claude: I like being exemplary, and one thing that motivates me is being a leader in Soles Ministries. There are so many young people that need to be advocated for, you cannot do that when you are not willing to struggle hard! That dream I had was a base for everything that I am doing today.

Jean de Dieu: I thank you so much for blessing my mind with such thoughts. I hope they will drive me far.

