

## STORIES FOR HOPE

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

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#### **Participants:**

- Habumukiza Bernard
- Mujyanama Eric

**Relation:** Teacher

**Relation:** Student

#### **Facilitator:**

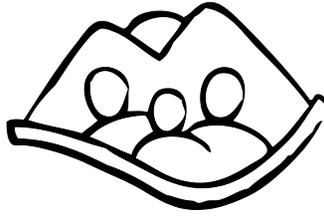
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#### **Recording Location:**

**Story Number:** SFH0115

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### **Habumukia Bernard & Mujyanama Eric**

**SFH0115**

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My name is **Mujyanama Eric**; I am a student at APAPEB Secondary School,

My name is **Habumukiza Bernard**; I am a teacher at APAPEB Secondary School.

**Eric:** Education is one of the prerequisites of development in countries and organizations. The world developed because people studied and have skills and capacity to do things, but many countries in the world include ours; have a problem to pay a low salary to teachers, that's why young people do not like to choose education as carrier. Why have you chosen education as your carrier even though it has lower salary comparing to other carriers?

**Bernard:** Thank you Eric. Yes, Education is one of the key functions in development in many countries of the world include our country as you said, in the entire world, educators are not well paid , it is not me who chose that carrier, I think it is the calling of God. I believe that God has a plan for every person; include me. After my secondary school, I studied in the school of Art, in option of Art education, I didn't apply for the job but the government appointed me in education. In the past, when the government appointed you to a vacant position, you could not refuse to work, because you could not disobey the law of the Republic of Rwanda, if you refuse, you could be deleted on the list of the present and future public administration staffs forever and sometime you could get extra punishment. So, I had to accept this position and I have been a teacher since 1992 till today. I have done other things but education was my major and full time work. You said that the education has a low salary, for sure the salary is very low comparing it to other jobs, but after attesting the importance of education and the importance of teachers, I realized that it is a good career because it helps you to be near the youth, to be updated in the new world which is developing and changing very fast. I liked the career of education, but before, I used to think the same way you are thinking today, and I didn't like education, being a teacher, yet having a low salary is not easy for anybody, but if it is your calling, it will be very difficult for you to leave that career. Today people prefer much money, I

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need money to assist my family, to help other families and to get developed but I preferred to develop my career of education so that I would give my contribution to the country in building it without relying on the salary. I could apply for other jobs because I have studied art which has good jobs and high salary than Education. I think you are satisfied with the responses of the questions you asked.

**Eric:** Thank you, I have understood but I have another question. It is difficult to educate students, especially teenagers like us, how do you proceed to educate them until the preferred high level of discipline? What is your secret?

**Bernard:** The proverb in Kinyarwanda say, *“ujya kwica ubukombe arabwagaza”* this means that, if you want to kill a dangerous animal you have to first take care of it, when we see the relationship between teachers and students (teenagers), it is a stage which all of us cross and through this stage; which requires discipline; when you are a teacher, it requires an effort, it is not easy for everybody, it is a gift from God. To support young students from low level to high level requires being near them and sharing everything with them and knowing their problems, you advise them without hiding them anything concerning their behaviors. You show them good and bad examples, the problems they meet in their daily life, usually, when you live with youths, you have to be careful, don't be afraid to show them where there is danger and don't forget to thank them for what they have done.

The youth with bad behaviors must be corrected and oriented, and then after, you will communicate to their parents and share with them their concerns. The discussion between administration, parents and educators pushes and promotes the success for the youth regulation. This means that; I told you that when I started the work; there were many students with different behaviors until now some have good behaviors and others are still having bad behaviors. We correct bad behaviors by good behaviors. Even girls used to think that they study for having good marriage but today they study because they want to develop.

All those who have bad behavior must follow the instruction of their fellow, if not, they must be punished so that students might know that bad conduct has consequences and this can correct them. If you don't punish the children when they have done some faults, they grow up having bad conduct. If you are an employer who does not punish the employees, they will be unable to perform well their task. This is not our objective; our objective is to help the youth which is the strength and the future of our country.

When we are in the meeting of teachers, we talk about the progress of education and of our school, not only about teachers but also the schools of our country in general and our district in particular. Our objective as teachers towards students is to assure that they progress in studies so that they get developed and be updated in this world which is becoming like a small village.

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All of our students could not have bad behavior, in education; we associate education from school and family instructions so that education shall be complete and for students to know the behavior of the community. This is the secret and tool of success in education.

**Eric:** Thank you my parent and my advisor. But I have another question. To combine skills and education requires the efforts from teachers and from parents. Do you agree that, as a teacher at this school?

**Bernard:** The politic of the country is “education for all”, it is causing that education comes from the initiative of the parents, the politic of the country is to take care of every child and consider them as yours, it is that of restoring children everywhere and by everyone, this will build the country and not destroy the country. Parents should come at school to visit children and compare their behavior at school and that of home when they are in holidays. Parents are concerned by the education of their children, It shows that they combine education and skills which is similar with culture, the skills without education are nothing, in French they say : “SCIENCE SANS CONSCIENCE N’EST QUE RUINE DE L’AME” this mean that the science without conscience destroys the soul , it is the same in Rwanda, it requires both skills and wisdom to be complete so that parents must help their children in giving education and skills, parents come to school, they share with teachers in the meeting about how they can develop education and from there, they take some decisions with their children. .

**Eric:** As my parent, tell me and my colleagues what we can do on a daily basis so that we can study well, succeed and perform well in order to be important to our family and our country.

**Bernard:** We need many things from the youth, students are important for the future of our country, but they cannot reach this without our determination, if you like your country you must everything possible to develop it, train your children on what you think that it is better for your country. Let love be the vital thing among our children, love towards parents, and students from rich and poor families, educated or not have to love one another in the difficult life at school; with love you can progress and develop.

Students must have determination and vision in their studies. If you are in senior six secondary you have to think about Rwandan and foreign universities and you must study and help yourself, great encouragement, considering the example Galilee person who was recognized. You have to share everything, have the respect toward one another at school and outside of the school, you must be confident that you are a strong Rwandan, with power and authority, you must be confident that you are intelligent and able to do something which can develop your life and your family. Many of you will finish to study but not get jobs; you can create your own business, and be sure that you can support your family in the future. The youths have to

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love God also, this will put an end to wars, you have to see your colleague in the image of God and you will be a response, not a hindrance to your colleague.

Firstly, this will help you to study in unity and in sharing with others everything. Secondly you must love your country, if you like your country you must do everything which can develop it, construct and make better your country instead of destroying it. You must receive all visitors who come in Rwanda, such as investors, tourists, those with good ideas you have to welcome them instead of pushing them away. Thirdly, the other advice is to go far from discrimination which was the cause of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 which you know.

When you are at school you have to be united, to know that you are all students from the same school, you are all Rwandans; you are all young and consider yourself as twins who have the same mother. You must share parental milk of that school and of the country you live in. That is what I can advise you; respecting these advices is not an easy thing, but I have to advise you also about behavior, this country, our region and the entire world have a problem of HIV/AIDS. If you are young person with a vision, you have to fight against HIV/AIDS and all diseases, avoid drugs and cigarettes. In Rwanda, today we have a problem of sugar mammy and sugar daddy, for your protection don't be part of those people. Your future, the future of your country and the life of families should be assured.

But, if you ignore to protect yourself against HIV/AIDS and its related diseases; you will die without being developed. That is my advice to you and to your colleagues.

**Facilitator:** Where do you get your boldness and your advices?

**Bernard:** Thank you for asking me that question: what where do I get boldness and my advices"? When I was in primary school, I studied in a school both boys and girls, but when I was in secondary school, I studied with boys only. I studied in a religious school of brothers named Brothers of School of Christians, we had a time to talk with the headmaster of our school and he gave us good advices, every student had five minutes to talk with the headmaster because we were a small number of students. He told and explained us our previous and future life and this instructed me a lot. I had the chance to be loved by my teachers, they advised me, when I was a small boy, I stayed in the village where many old people were talking to me and advised me, and my parent used to advise. I remember there was an old woman who loved me, she advised me by showing me how to progress and develop in the future and she told me about praying. After growing, I evaluated my future, and I looked at where I didn't perform, I started to correct myself and there is sometimes I did faults and assumed its consequences like any other child. From these experiences, I got the courage and boldness to advise others because it helped me to get the experience. Sometimes people think that experience requires being old in age, hearing many things or being informed but to me,

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experience requires to evaluate, to think big and to meet people, to see how things are done, and to learn from others. After combining both positive and negative results in what someone saw, they listened and what they got as information, if they learn from the experience they got, they may choose what is important and this may be their weapon, from this, they may choose the good way to follow; there, I saw the girls and boys' behavior and the parents' behavior about sharing and helping one another in family's relation. "*Esprit de discernment*", this means the spirit discernment, this may give the courage to test things and give value to them, and this can make you a person who is able to construct their family or their society. It is from here, I got the courage and boldness of advising and helping others because it helped me so much.

**Facilitator:** Excuse me, as we wind up, I have a question about your experience when you were a teenager. Can you tell us your positive and negative experience during that time?

**Bernard:** In adolescence, young people think that all things are easy, but youth have to obey the law of society and must obey parents and old persons; the children must respect the parents, and this is a good thing, it will help the youth to progress, grow and follow good conduct in life, respect have to be a vital thing to the youth, don't kill a cattle eaglet, don't pursue old women, this is against the society; youth had not to go beyond the law of the society even in speaking, if not they must be punished, I was punished by my grandfather because I took his beer and cigarette, but to share everything and to live in love, to have good conduct of life for the youth requires to respect and to give value to the society's law and culture. That's what helped me. When I grew up, I acknowledged the mistakes I did when I was young. In order to have good behavior, they should talk with aged people in order to learn how to live in the society because no one can progress without the help of others. People need one another; this will help you to grow well and to be able to build your country and your society. In French, they say: *L'homme c'est comme l'autre*", this means that every person need help from others that are where I found the courage and the ability to respond to problems I had.

**Eric:** Thank you my teacher. You said that in the past; girls and boys studied separately, if you compare it with today; how was their performance?

**Bernard:** I studied in a Christian school where we were only boys but near our school there was a girls' school which was leaded by a religious sister. There were schools of boys which formed them to be the leaders of the country and to be the workers in foreign countries, they could be powerful, but for girls, education prepared them to make a good family. No girl could study the science option, only boys could study sciences. I didn't study in that school; in secondary school we studied with boys only, Christians created schools and leaded them, some were leaded by fathers, brothers and sisters. The combination of school came after I finished my studies, but in universities, students were mixed.

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Concerning the success and the performance, the mixture of boys and girls was better, some girls' schools were performing better than boy's school, even in our families we have boys and girls, when your sister was not at home, you had to do what she was supposed to do, this shows us that it could be like that even at school today, we have seen that sometimes girls performs better than boys, to study in a mixed school is better because it helps you to complement one another both boys and girls are skilled, so studying together is not a problem because even today they girls and boys are mixed in school, guiding the youth requires to be faster in all sides in order to reach a preferable level of education, it is not like in the past where they studied separately.

**Eric:** What is the secret of doing the same job for long time?

**Bernard:** That is good to ask for advice; a Rwandan expression says that you better sit with your father in order to know what your grandfather said before his death. To choice of the job depends on someone it depends on where you they got money, capacity and skills. To be a long time on the job requires liking it, you must work as if you were working for you and apply for the job that you are able to perform. It is good to have a good reputation on your job. It depends also on the team you want to work with, finally, you must be a good manager of human resource and logistics, manage the time and workplace, but if you are a bad manager you will be rejected by the society or the country. The job pays you, so you have to be serious on the job. When you will have jobs, make sure you remember that, there will be many people on your side who will always watch your steps and who want to get a good example from you.

**Eric:** Thank you for your time teacher and parent for being with us and thank you for your responses and advices.

**Bernard:** Thank you too, I am happy for your invitation and for your questions, I think that all questions are not responded as you wanted but we shall meet next time for reviewing advices I gave you on the job.

**Facilitator:** I want to ask Eric, how have you perceived these advices from your teacher? Is it your first time to talk with him?

**Eric:** It is not common to young people to have this opportunity to meet our parents, I am happy to follow the advices given by our parent and educator. I will communicate this to my colleagues and we could develop our country and progress in life. Thanks.

**Facilitator:** The parent of Eric, is it the first time to talk with him?

**Bernard:** It is not the first time but he didn't ask me always those kinds of questions and I am happy for that.