

## STORIES FOR HOPE

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

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#### **Participants:**

- Nyirasafari Leocadie
- Mukiza Emmanuel

**Relation:** Mother

**Relation:** Son

**Facilitator:** LastName FirstName

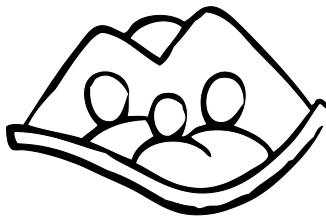
**Date:** DD/MM/YYYY

**Recording Location:** Byumba

**Story Number:** SFH0121

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### Nyirasafari Leocadie and Mukiza Emmanuel

Story Number: SFH0121

**Leocadie:** My name is Leocadie, I've come from Rutete Village, Nyabishambi Cell. This Mukiza Emmanuel is my son.

**Emmanuel:** I also am called Mukiza Emmanuel. I've come Rutete village, Nyabishambi cell, Shagasha Sector, Gicumbi district. Leocadie Nyirasafari is my mother.

The question I would like to ask her is about life before and after starting the school, which life did she live?

**Leocadie:** For me I was born in Rugunga presently Gacurabwenge village and cell. I was born 1963 in a peasant family because my father was masonry. About our life in the village, you know I was living in a poor life, we even used to put very old dresses. I then started school at Gacurabwenge. Briefly that's how and where I joined school.

**Emmanuel:** Which class level did you complete your studies?

**Leocadie:** I started my primary school at Gacurabwenge, I continued and completed my primary six, thereafter I didn't manage to continue to secondary because I was not allowed to go on. By then it was said to be allowed. So I studied 3 years of vocational training (familial). That's my school life which completed 1980. I don't know if you're asking me more or I can go on.

**Emmanuel:** After completing your studies, what did you go for?

**Leocadie:** After completion, I went to Kigali and studied typing machine for 1 year, that's in 1981 and then completed. I got a job for typing in the ministry of primary education where I served for 12 years until 1994 genocide.

**Emmanuel:** During the war, I was then young. I would like to know about life during the war.

A conversation between Nyirasfari Leocadie and Mukiza Emmanuel

**Leocadie:** Before taking you through life during the war, let me tell you about how I got married. As I started job in 1982 and married 2 years later – 1984, I gave birth to my first born. You are the 3<sup>rd</sup> born. You were born in 1989 then the war started when you were 9 months old in 1990. Please ask again your question I don't remember exactly.

**Emmanuel:** I had asked about the life you lived in, during the war until it ended.

**Leocadie:** Having a very young baby of months, I was living all the course of the war. I continued at my job though not running smoothly, there were certain problems and even our salaries were paid on time. The war situation turned to be worse in 1994 when we had to flee the country to what was then Zaire. There our circumstances changed extremely: living in very bad conditions. I even gave birth to 2 other children there. We fled when I had 4 children. Surely it became very critical during repatriation from Zaire back to Rwanda. Before returning we were poorly fed on maize, which was hard for the young and created some bad situation. While fleeing, we took nothing, leaving our possessions behind. Yet we had lived a better life earning little money but with some progress. In Zaire, the fact that we had left all our possessions we surely suffered there. While returning, the main thing we had was having many children: I had the youngest baby in the bag, having luggage on my head. We could move long journeys, were very tired, not having food to eat and the children fell sick. We eventually were restored to normal life after entering back in Rwanda, though we didn't manage to make to Kigali because it late, we then lived in the village. I understand you know we are living a relatively present situation than then.

**Emmanuel:** Upon return from Zaire, how were you received?

**Leocadie:** You, by then, did not understand the situation thus necessary for you to know it. Upon return, we were warmly received since they had taken long without seeing us. After sometime there, and not going back to Kigali where we had lived before, there arose a problem: cultivating our old land that had been left to them. They felt deprived of the better life they had enjoyed. They expected us to go back to Kigali, yet personally I could not afford 6 children in Kigali with no job. We faced the situation using a lot of energy insisting to keep along with them which later worked.

**Emmanuel:** I would like to ask you about the life of our grandfather whom I was not able to see because he died earlier on before I was born.

**Leocadie:** My dad?

**Emmanuel:** Sure.

**Leocadie:** My father was very old by the time I was born. I was the 6<sup>th</sup> born of his 10 children. I know my father as masonry and used to tell us they built church in Rwanda with the introduction of missionaries. They were taught gospel plus the work of hand. That's how he got

**A conversation between Nyirasfari Leocadie and Mukiza Emmanuel**

into masonry. By our time with him he was hardworking for agriculture and masonry; he used to give us a lot of advices and told us of his love of football, which resulted in a broken jaw. He used to be a goalkeeper. Generally he was a good and cool gentleman, loving and caring, advising education and hardworking and proud of his experience. That's briefly his story; he died in 1985 as I was now grown up, actually shortly after my marriage. His death emanated from liver disease, which he suffered from for a long time.

**Emmanuel:** After genocide, what was your education plan for your children with my father?

**Leocadie:** Prior to genocide, as I had said, I was a type-writer and your father was a driver but we were better-off with plans to build a good house, only everything got to be distorted by the war. Coming back from Zaire, we had nothing. We had lost all possessions and we had also lost people. I could not find my friends, and life had become very hard for me. Had it not been for the war, we would all be living a better life than today, because now we can't even find what to feed you when we had everything with us. That's why today we are doing our best for our children to be educated. Such discussion sessions are very good for you to understand, and do everything possible not to have this situation again because it destroys.

**Emmanuel:** I would like to ask you about what you would advise your children.

**Leocadie:** My advice for the young is to educate with all the strength and mind. Because it's the only thing to help all people in the near future to make a decent life. So I strongly urge you and the others to focus on your education.

**Emmanuel:** I would also like to know about paternal grandpa just in case you know anything about him because I have always felt eager to know about him.

**Leocadie:** I have little information about your paternal grandpa. All I know is that he died at an early age, because I even got married when he had died. But I've heard that he was a hunter and loved hunting very much. He had started hunting from Ruhengeri up to Nyabishambi where he relocated himself and did some farming as well. He died of an abrupt death.

**Emmanuel:** One more thing, I understand you had a different background from my father, and you all met in Kigali. How did you meet?

**Leocadie:** You know there is a road we used to board taxis connecting Jeuness and Rwasama, so I had come to Kigali at my elder sister's home. We then got into a taxi sitting beside a young man by name of Bizumungu who was a young brother to your father. We had a chat together and he was acquainted to my sister. We were staying at Kimihurura, this young man later came to visit us there, and had told his brother about our acquaintances. After some days, your father as well came to visit us and we fell in love, by then he was living in Kigali working as a driver.

A conversation between Nyirasfari Leocadie and Mukiza Emmanuel

**Emmanuel:** I would also like to know if my father had ever told you about his history before you were engaged, and his entire life if he had gone to school or not?

**Leocadie:** He used not to tell me the real truth about his life because I could learn of other different stories about their family from other people. He could always tell me the positive side. He told he had first lived with elder brother doing his business in Byumba and later came to Kigali for driving and that's when we met. Should I tell you what I learnt from others or not?

**Emmanuel:** It's ok! Just tell me about his education.

**Leocadie:** His education, he told me that he had dropped from primary 3 joining his brother. Basically, he had to learn reading and writing, and that was all.

**Emmanuel:** What was the most frustrating thing in your life?

**Leocadie:** My biggest frustration: 1<sup>st</sup> as a clever student and later was careless to mess up everything and suffering the problems of the 1990-1994 war and killings.

**Emmanuel:** What was the most positive thing in your life?

**Leocadie:** I have always felt proud of being able to deliver children and I really needed so. Because I remember I used to even record good names for children prior to giving birth to anyone. So I really wished to give birth to children which I surely did.

**Emmanuel:** Of all the advice received from your parents, what were realities that you came across and dwelt on the piece of advice already received? What were those?

**Leocadie:** My mom always advised me to respect. Like when we had become disrespectful, she would say we will face it too. Just as mothers to kids we will face but we could despise it. Just like you kids at times become disrespectful to me. My father also used to advise me to work hard, which is very critical and I would as well recommend you too to do so.

**Facilitator:** Thanks a lot for the long talk to the kid about: your education; your war life; your encounter of his father; your entire family story; and you also talked about the upbringing of children, all of these are good for him to understand. Please take him through concrete advice that helped you all along to have proper care of your children as they are distinct to the ones we find on the streets. Just advise him on the way forward.

**Leocadie:** My critical piece of advice to him and to all the others is to focus onto education which I said is very, very important. Submit to teachers; and attend class carefully, unlike me who messed up. Again there is a need to make and share with friends. It's actually in all of what we have discussed. It will really help him in life!

A conversation between Nyirasfari Leocadie and Mukiza Emmanuel

**Facilitator:** Thanks a lot! You've had a constructive talk and I would advise you to always have such talks or even discuss more other things he might have not asked here as well as other children. Thanks again.

**Leocade & Emmanuel:** Thank you too!

