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

Participants:

- Uwamwezi Philomene **Relation:** (Elder)
- Duscabe Nicole **Relation:** (Youth)

Facilitator: Mukangiruwonsanga Agnes

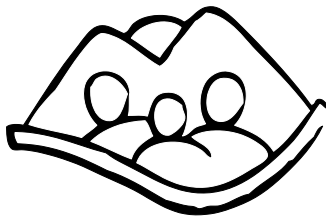
Date: DD/MM/YYYY

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Story Number: SFH0132

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Uwamwezi Philomene & Duscabe Nicole

Story Number: SFH0132

Mukangiruwonsanga Agnes: Thank you, I am called Agnes. I am happy to be here today, helping you in this conversation that you are going to have. You are cousins, one is old and another one is a young girl, try to advise and help each other so that this young girl can grow up with good ideas and strength to love her life and even her future. Thank you.

You may first tell your names.

Nicole: Thank you, I am called Duscabe, I am a student.

Philomene: Thank you, I am called Uwamwezi, I am a married woman.

Facilitator: Thank you, anybody who has a question can ask and then we start.

Nicole: Well, they are so many questions one can ask here, but let me ask this person who is in the position of my parents. Naturally, we know that murder is a very big sin, and usually it happens when someone has been extremely annoyed. So, how did the bahutu and batutsi used to live together before the genocide? Did it happen abruptly or there were problems between them even before.

Philomene: The genocide that happened in Rwanda was something that I can't really tell you its beginning but on the other side, I think it was bad politics because, before, these people were living together peacefully, sharing and intermarrying.

Nicole: I was told that before, Rwanda was a country that was speaking one language and lead by one king but later as you have told me; bad politics caused all the wars that happened. However, today there is reconciliation process that is going on. What advice can you give me or how should I behave myself so that I can manage to live in harmony with these people, some of those people who committed murder, even if they completed their sentence, one might take a step to forgive, but for them, as I honestly did it, but for them, they remain with the heart of murdering. So how can I be sure and live with such people at ease without fear that they will kill me too?

A conversation between Uwamwezi Philomene and Duscabe Nicole

Philomene: Thank you; concerning living in harmony, it is difficult, even in the bible when Cain killed Able, it was not easy for him to admit his sin. However, we are lucky today because we have known the word of God, it's a sin to murder; you must follow what scriptures tell us .this will help you and push you ahead. So, do not fear that they are being released and that tomorrow you can hear that so and so have been killed, the government is following this closely, be peaceful, and talk to them politely, they will also feel concerned not harm such a polite person, show them that you are not annoyed, slowly by slowly they will also change their mind positively. The bible tells us that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Be patient, follow the word of God, it will push you ahead.

Nicole: Another question is: before genocide, the way parents could communicate with their children and even other people through sitting around fire and conversing in order to strengthen family unity unlike today where a parent does his own business and children do theirs, was an interesting one in addition to other activities they could do, like agriculture. What advice can you give me or parents concerning communicating with their children because in these days, most of the communication, is done through telephones as you find that a child can even take a month without seeing his or her parent, the fact that today you find some still studying or doing other businesses hence little time for their children and yet we would want to have them face, for proper up bringing.

Philomene: Thank you, it's true that parents no longer get enough time for their children compared to the past generation. Our well being was poor, now we are old, so we try our best, do your best too, you will come with something.

Nicole: Anyway the problem is not with children as for us, we have specific time at school but instead, with the parents, sometimes they come home late, tired and sleep or when business has not gone well and then find that he or she is annoyed because of that, hence talking rude to the children and remember, for a child who respects parents, you cant approach him or her anyhow. In brief, they no longer spare time for people at home. What advise do you give parents?

Philomene: Thank you. Anyway it's not all parents who behave like that, but the fact is that some take a lot of time in their business than they spend in their families. So it's just a matter of becoming patient and also to try to get closer to them.

Facilitator: This young girl is trying to ask that; of the little time parents could be having; is there any way how they could share it with their children, how?

Philomene: Thank you, for sure, time is available but the fact that in these days we have a lot that we are running after, you need to request for an appointment. If you tell that Aunt: I would like to come and talk to you on Sunday, then I reserve it for you.

A conversation between Uwamwezi Philomene and Duscabe Nicole

Facilitator: What value do you give a conversation between a parent and a child for example this one doesn't have both parents so, she needs you as you are the only one she have.

Philomene: We shall talk and I am sure we shall talk crucial things and share ideas through patience.

Nicole: Still, I think; to request a parent for an appointment; you need to be with him or her physically, may be you didn't understand properly my question, I said some parents come from their business when they are tired to the extent that they don't even sit in the sitting room so that you could get even a chance to ask for an appointment. My request to you was that you can try to advise such parents that, despite their tiredness they should always pay attention for just few minutes to their children because it is really important.

Philomene: Thank you, it's a good idea, what I admit is that; as parents we should always meet and discuss on some issues with our children, especially those who are studying, they endure a lot. I am going to advise my fellow parents more especially to listen to students.

Nicole: Thank you for accepting that you are going to advise your fellow parents for issues that we need, for they are many, be news that we listen to the radio stations but fail to understand, so many things that we meet in daily life and fail to understand, for sure be always close to us.

Facilitator: You are blessed to be with you cousin who is even older than you, today it seems you have so many questions to ask her, therefore, we still have like sixteen minutes ahead, try to make use of them by asking more questions.

Nicole: Before people used work and in fact work but still pay attention to their children, so today this issue of limited time, where do they use time or where does time go.

Facilitator: This young girl is asking, before, parents could share ideas with their children whether in the garden or kitchen which is different from today, so, where did that go?

Philomene: I agreed with her that even us as parents we shall be having time together to share ideas of what used to happen in the past days as it is possible to find that some of the parents also don't have enough information and other could have been neglecting them but if we sit together first and discuss we can give you the exact information.

Nicole: It's a fact that every generation has changes that goes the way we put on and yet what we put on is what the factories with it, for example, in these days when we meet aged people they try to criticize manufacture today just as they used to put on what was available during that time, they would work hard to live and we also enjoy what is available to live.

So my question is, why do aged people always criticize styles of our era?

A conversation between Uwamwezi Philomene and Duscabe Nicole

Philomene: Most of those things are due to different understandings, more especially religion base issues, some people stand on their religion, they don't accept the way young people put on today, but all in all I think it's low understanding because, putting a certain arty is not known anywhere as a sin instead, a sin is done on the inside; in the heart. I am going to stimulate all parents to meet and look for how to give attention to all your questions.

Facilitator: This girl is asking you if this phenomenon of saying: "people of these days" was there during your time, as today older people say so referring to the youth.

Philomene: Yes, even before it was there, but in most cases it is based on religious understanding.

Nicole: So, basically what I say is that you advise your fellow parents to stop condemning youth's arty because it is normal that we go along and you are also going alongside it, what we put on is what we feel comfortable with, secondary, following our country's target of having relationship with other countries, we can't keep Rwandan culture only, instead we learn and practice other cultures and languages and we hope they also learn ours, nothing is behind all these we do other than having fun. So, try to advise your fellow parents and even the government about this.

Philomene: Thank you; concerning children freedom, sometimes you give a child freedom and then tomorrow they face problems resulting from that freedom.

Facilitator: Could you please tell her what those problems could be and she can get strength to prevent them.

Philomene: Problems resulting from much freedom include; unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, Prevention is just to follow the advices that parents shall be giving them as we have agreed that I am going to stimulate them for having conversations with their children.

Nicole: For me, the problem is with the parents not us children because you can't meet a parent once a month and ask her or him all that you have been thinking about for all that period before. Well, they are not the ones who make choices for us, but they also fail to be close to us and give us advice on how to make choices, but instead condemn us finally when they see things that do not please them.

Facilitator: I have realized that you have so many questions, but still you can even contribute ideas so that we get their solutions. What strategy do you think could help you to build your future?

Nicole: The strategy or a push that I would want from them is just their presence so that every time I feel a have a question, I can ask it because for me, when I think about something and decide to ask, it means I have given it value. But if it is up to him or her to find time and tell words of advice he or she might tell just few of what you need though it's important too.

A conversation between Uwamwezi Philomene and Duscabe Nicole

Philomene: Thank you, I am going to put more emphasis on that to see that I get enough time for you to the extent that no question from you will be left unanswered daily.

Nicole: Lastly, what I say is a request to all parents in general, the government of Rwanda and media; to motivate parents to be close to their children as they condemn us when in actual sense they should answerable because of their negligence . It's true they really need to work hard for our sustenance but also try to spare time for us.

Philomene: Thank you, its true when we meet as parents I will try to advise them, as we have seen that some truly don't fulfill their responsibilities, whoever, sometimes there is a reason; sickness; for example me, I don t hear properly , sometimes you might need me when I am not feeling well and fail to help you. So, I am going to look for so many parents like me, we put efforts together so that; in case you need me and it's not possible I get someone else to help you. Sincerely speaking, some of us are lame or sick but not all of us so, we must find some parents among us who are still young and thinking critically and make sure that we solve your problems. Thank you.

Facilitator: Are you satisfied?

Nicole: Yes I am satisfied

Facilitator: Ok thank your parent and she will also thank you as we wind up

Nicole: I thank her for having accepted to come when she is even sick. It's a big contribution, may almighty God bless her.

Philomene: Thank you too for having told me, truly, as my daughter some of problems you incur daily and which I couldn't imagine before as I was alone. I am going to accelerate my fellow parents to put it in our programs and see that we get time for our children. Despite our sickness we are going to work together as parents, get those who are still strong to solve your problems. Thank you.