

## STORIES FOR HOPE

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

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#### **Participants:**

- Munganyinka Melaine **Relation:** Mother
- Murebwayire Marie Claire **Relation:** Youth

#### **Facilitator:**

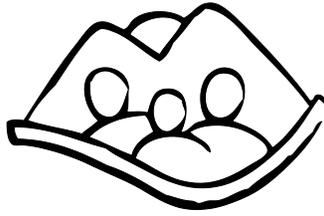
**Date:** May June 2010

**Recording Location:** Byumba

**Story Number:** SFH0130

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### Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire

Story Number: SFH0130

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**Facilitator:** You are welcome. I am glad to be with you here in this hall where we conduct stories of hope I think you can introduce yourself to one another

**Marie Claire:** I am called **Murebwayire Marie Claire**, I am twenty years old. I've come from Byumba sector and glad to have invited Aunt so as to converse with her on several issues a person may incur most especially a girl. Thank you.

**Melaine:** Thank you. Am called **Munganyinka Melaine**, I have come to respond to my daughter's invitation so that I can explain so many thing that she meet in her life. I have also come from Byumba. Thank you.

**Facilitator:** Thank you. We can begin; whoever has something to say can begin.

**Marie Claire:** Thank you, I usually sit down, and think when I look at girl's welfare and imagine whether even before it was like that before. That's why I felt eager to invite you so that you can explain to me about the behavior of a girl before.

**Melaine:** Thank you for asking such good question. Before a girl was just some to keep at home, helping parents, do general cleaning at home, would be someone respecting parents disciplined, organize everything at home and even the way they could put on would describe her. Whoever these days a girl child no long respect as we used to. We could help old people but these days, when a girl looks at an old woman she thinks for will not be like her, she can imagine that that old woman was also once like her hence ending up disguising her .A girl child would sit at home with her mother, ask her for whatever would be not understanding .she would be all the times eager to agree with her mother and learn a lot from her. Briefly a girl child would learn all the behaviors from her mother by trying to imitate what she could be seeing her doing and even feel at one time to be like her in future.

A conversation between Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire

**Marie Claire:** You have talked about “Nyampinga” what was she?

**Melaine:** As I have told you, “Nyampinga” would be a model girl ,disciplined, respecting well behaved, and someone who lives with people in harmony and peace everywhere but these days girls no long behave well they have lost cultural behavior.

**Marie Claire:** I always hear that in the past days girls used to have a habit so called “guca imyeyo” what was it?

**Melaine:** It’s true that habit was there, because long ago people used to be naked so they could fear that other people would see deep in their sexual organ when they sit. So they could therefore stretch out their inner wall parts of their sexual organ so that it would act as cover for them.

**Marie Claire:** As you have told me that they used to do so for covering purpose, could there be need for girls to continue with that habit to day?

**Melaine:** As time goes on people get more civilized, like today we have got closes, a kid is born and immediately put on hence no doubt that people are going to see her naked. So that habit is no long the case like before. Some children fear to ask their parents and even some parents too fear to tell their children about such things. Finally these children hear these things from some people out hence getting worried about stretching some one’s sexual organ. That’s how that habit is phasing out

**Marie Claire:** I would like to know how would someone choose a partner in yours days.

**Melaine:** In our days there were people whose duty would be announcing that in so and so’s family there is a mature boy or girl. That person would later act as go between but these days such people are no long there instead you just hear that someone has got a lover through telephone, publication papers where people who are looking for lovers write and describe themselves as in age, height , skin color, job as some people even mention the salary indicating that some these days they follow the salaries un like in our days where someone would just follow how you behave, some even meet in tax , talk and agree with out go between.

**Marie Claire:** I was told that in the past days it would the parents to meet and agree to let their children marry. Wasn’t that become a problem to the married people as it would mean that people would marry when they don’t know one another?

A conversation between Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire

**Melaine:** There was true love in the past days but these days there is cold love some it was because people would give cows, would share whatever they could be having. The way people used to live was different from the way we are living to day. Love is cold hence everything is just to pay.

**Marie Claire.** Wasn't there any other role the parents would play as in building family for their children after getting married so that they can also extend their family as well as having many family friends?

**Melaine:** They used to say that it was producing and raring that would make people rich. Whenever someone would produce, people would move up and down mountains carrying baskets to take to that person who would have produced. Everybody would feel happy when someone would produce, the neighbors, family friends, relatives, would at least get something to take to that family that has gained a baby and that would please newly married couple who would have produced which would give them courage to make a step in their parent foot. However these days someone produces and find that for sure the neighbor is not even interested in holding the baby. Some produce and spend two months without any receiving someone at home with at least a basket of sorghum but in the past it would be feasting to hear that you daughter or neighbor has produced.

**Marie Claire:** As it said that parents used to force their children to marry so and who would be from a family friend, what would happen say if someone could refuse to follow his or her parent's decision?

**Melaine:** It was impossible as I have told you that people had true love, share everything and give cows. It means that sometimes someone would be still pregnant and yet the child who would come out already given to a certain family may be they gave one another cows , they grew up together , they shared something and extra. There was therefore true love among people. But these days there is a lot of conflicts among people.

**Marie Claire:** So it's known that most of the work at home would be done by girls. Were they not over worked compared to boys?

**Melaine:** Unlike today where people are civilized, in the past days there would be work assigned to boy s and work a assigned to girls. But most the work at home would be done by girls. She would do cleaning, cooking, digging, and even weave say a mat so that when she gets married her parent could keep remembering her because of that mat. Just as I told you she would be at home al the times as she would be not studying to say that she wants to go for revision or coaching. Even whenever she would be sent some where and got caught up with

**A conversation between Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire**

time while still there she would rather stay there and go home next morning other than traveling over the night un like these of today who don't fear to walk over the night even if she is washing a plate and someone gives her a call she throws it a way and go. You can't know when she will come back whether she sleeps there, you just see her coming back at any time she wants. So a girl by then she would tell her self what if it to sweep she would do it before she is told but today you have to first plead her otherwise she just puts on her trouser and leave home. She can even tell you live that mummy why don't you always leave me to go to visit my age Mets or go for social hour with others therefore she would not be over worked as she would do it with all her heart, happy and she would feel it as her responsibly.

**Marie Claire:** Today you find that girls are sharp they share fun with boys freely was it the same case in your day or could you also get time to go for fun?

**Melaine:** social and fun were there but as I started telling you that a girl child was to stay home most of the time doing work at home so they could not get time for such except boys because for them they could finish their work early as it could be not enough as for boys. However they could tell us that work for men would be few but tough and for ladies it would be a lot but easy. So she would keep home, weaving and making butter after the rest of work instead of going for fun as girls of today do.

**Marie Claire:** You see those things of keeping home cleaning milk containers, making butter, are no long there like before as there is no many cows today like before. What cultural thing should a girl do to day so that she can be model but still going along modernization?

**Melaine:** What they do today, just as you have got a chance to talk to me and learn a lot you need to advise you fellow girls too and tell them that my aunt told me that things used to go like that and I found wise. Its true we no long have many cows like before even those who have they don't make pure butter like before as some use fats that come out of boiled milk for making butter to the extent that today you might be sent for original butter as a medicine and fail to get it un less you go to old women who still follow Rwandan culture. Therefore just as someone who has got a chance to talk to you aunt, there are some parents who fear to talk to their children. Please to talk to your fellow friends whom you school and go together, praying together is the secret you have been told by your Aunt.

**Marie Claire:** Just me as a mature girl who is approaching getting married, you have already how the situation was before and the procedure that used to be followed to marry. So as the situation is to day what should I do or which procedure should I take.

**Melaine:** For sure today modernization has come; people meet in the way and agree on love issues. So it's a bout you just follow what your heart will tell you. In our days we used to sit down and pray that we would like to have a husband who is like that and that but for sure what

**A conversation between Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire**

you feel you would like find with your husband you can't find it. So I know that once you have love someone and someone tells you that she or he has found your lover in bad acts, you feel that person is trying to separate you so you need to sit down and analyze how did our aunts go about it and even see family back ground .so analyze well because for us we got married when there were still the go between people but for you, you no long believe in them you think they are going to separate you.

**Facilitator:** So in way to advise your children do you advise her to look for a go between , come to you and seek advice after getting a lover or ask her mother that as you see that boy coming to pay us a visit you know that we are loving one another tell me whether to go head or not. Briefly tell her what to do so as not to fee shy before her mother and consider her as an important person to ask how to go about such issues.

**Melaine:** So what I can tell her as her aunt as we do not stay together, she has got her mother, if that boys keeps on coming to pay her a visit she can tell her mother that they love one another so as to assist her to make analysis and even ask her for mean time we are not together whatever she could be not understanding confidently and parents too should be ready to explain to their children without being shy.

**Marie Claire:** You see asking your mother when you have already loved one another, the boy is likely to hide his habits and then you think he is humble when in actual sense he is not and still on the side of go between I doubt them as whether they could also not deceive the family or eat bribes.

**Melaine:** There was no problem of bribes as all of them were not bad of and above all they would work in love and with good spirit. These days people love one another say because he or she did something for him or her following even the history of our country but for sure in the past people had love, they would share, if one has something say sorghum and the other one does not have she could pack some in a basket and send a child to take it to her. But today, no one can. So as time goes on, love among people continues to faze as the scripture even says "love will phase out among people in the last days".

**Marie Claire:** For a girl child more especially those who don't have Aunts, what can one do so as to help such people?

**Melaine:** That's why I have accepted to be here with you. I believe this will help the needy who are listening to us and you too now that you have known many things from this conversation , don't just sit with it, look for you friends age met and share with them what you have learnt.

**A conversation between Munganyinka Melaine and Murebwayire Marie Claire**

**Marie Claire:** There are some people who shy to the extent that they can't ask old people such questions depending on the situation they grew in and hence becoming a challenge. So is there away how you can put efforts together with other old people by organizing such conversation so as to help such people who didn't get a chance to grow up with their Aunts?

**Melaine:** Every Rwandan child , I consider her or him as mine and that's why I have told you that make useful what you have learnt from hear too, because some fear us they look at us and ask themselves whether the way they are living today is the same way we used to leave. Therefore you children should be free to one another and even you who have learnt this share it with those who need it like orphans as a parent and sensitize many to be free to their parents and ask them

**Marie Claire:** It has been a wonderful conversation with good ideas and concerning up lifting culture I feel I have learnt a lot. To my Age Mets who don't have parents, I will also try to share with them all that I have learnt from you and help them to keep our culture so that it doesn't faze out.

**Melaine:** Thank you my daughter for making a step and invite me to advise you because there are very many who fear this. Keep it up.

**Marie Claire:** Thank you too. May God bless you?

**Facilitator:** Thank you for conversing and I believe that what you will share with others what you have learnt from your aunt and even try to encourage more of your age Mets who have challenges to approach your aunt.