

## **Anne Gahongayire Oral History Content Summary**

### **Track 1 [duration: 1:44:29] [Session one: 18 March 2016]**

[00:00] Anne Gahongayire [AG] Story of difficult birth in Oruchinga Valley Refugee Camp, Uganda. Parents refugees from Rwanda. Describes growing up on camp with brothers, sisters, cousin, move to Nshungerezi Refugee Camp, Uganda, and Nyakivala Refugee Camp, Uganda when AG aged ten. Describes role of women in camp, role of children collecting water before attending camp school. Recollection of hunger.

[06:00] One of six children on mother's side, AG among youngest. Describes organisation of family compound. Describes enjoyment of school, high standard of education, AG going on to attend best school in country. Describes mother's lack of literacy and insistence on children's application to studies. Mentions lack of books, sharing pencils.

[10:36] Describes living in a refugee camp for 30 years, father's death when AG aged four. Discusses challenge of adaptation to living circumstances for men, compared to women. Attendance of English speaking missionary boarding school after primary school, living with electricity, first time in car, first pair of shoes. Mentions President of Uganda's children pupils at school.

[15:00] Describes first impressions of being in city, ease of integration in school. Detail of refugee camp living, sleeping arrangement in huts, lack of mattress and covers. Describes fear of animals while walking distances to fetch firewood. Describes sense of community in camp, sharing everything.

[20:23] Describes school dormitory. Describes positive example of elder sister, encouragement of teachers.

[25:12] Describes favorite subjects at school. Mentions periods studied in History class. Describes languages spoken in different scenarios. Study of Psychology and Zoology and Mathematics at Makerere University, Uganda. Describes university experience. Describes politicization growing up hearing stories about Rwanda. Describes Rwandans' identification with Yoweri Museveni, becoming targets of regime.

[30:00] Describes mutual identification with Ugandan school friends. Mentions Banyankore people. Describes mounting persecution of Rwandans in Uganda, 1982, leading to participation in Museveni liberation struggle. Describes background of family fleeing Rwanda.

[35:12] Story behind parent's marriage, discussing tradition and religious obligation. Mentions grandparents' death soon after becoming refugees.

[39:30] Story of return to Rwanda. Describes involvement in clandestine movement. Story of journey to Burundi for brother's funeral, danger of crossing Rwanda as refugee with Ugandan passport. Describes feelings on return to Rwanda, seeking out and joining Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

[50:00] Describes regional meetings bringing together Rwandans in thousands, structure of eight-point mobilization programme in lead up to liberation war, 1990. Mentions Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), France, United Kingdom (UK), South Africa. Describes personal motivation, sense of solidarity, remarking on structured nature of movement. Describes assigned role, in charge of Women, mobilizing women around economic activities, literacy campaigns, political education, learning from other liberation movements. Describes Women's wing and Youth wing.

[55:21] Describes education of girls through generations, linking to marriage. Story about marriage of primary school classmate. Describes incidence of girls abducted when fetching firewood.

[1:00:00] Describes focus on Rwanda and source of contact and communication with country. Describes prominent concerns for women, Health, Education, control of Resources. Describes mobilizing scholarships for girls' education, efforts to ensure political participation, involvement in decision-making at every level. Describes regular forum in women's wing, remarking on discussions, growing debate experience, and skills building providing incubation, meant women always ahead of men in wider setting. Describes male response as generally welcoming.

[1:05:00]

Describes stages of return to Rwanda, initial military wing fighting, political wing staying behind to mobilize support for war. Discusses sectarianism in Rwanda, diversity and relationship between Hutus and Tutsis, RPF's priority to establish unified community. Describes own generation as working hard with 'burning fire'. Anecdote about first time AG remunerated. Describes family's support for AG's activities. Describes physical hardship of struggle, rewards, final appeal with genocide. Description state of disorder of first days of country's liberation

[1:10:00] Describes RPF occupation of northern Rwanda, events around time of plane crash killing Juvénal Habyarimana. Describes activities as each part of country liberated, non-governmental organization (NGO) involvement. Describes disintegration of RPF structures had built due to challenge of genocide, breakdown of trust. Discusses speculation that RPF involved in crime and killing.

[1:15:00] Describes involvement of women in genocide. Describes own role at the time. Story about encounter with badly wounded woman. Mentions Byumba, Rwanda. Describes NGOs involvement.

[1:20:00] Reflects on learning from period. Describes policy of non-identification of people following genocide. Story about two colleagues at Ministry of Gender. Remarks on strength of women, refers to own mother.

[1:25:00] Describes position in Ministry of Education, remarking on excellence of programme. Explains priority of raising awareness to ensure girls' education, changing social perceptions even among teachers. Discusses differing responsibilities between boys and girls during own childhood.

[1:30:29] Detail of arrival in Rwanda, 1994, with month-old child. Story of pregnancy, friendship, marriage, act of rebellion. Describes feelings of relief living in Rwanda as country of heritage.

[1:34:50] Describes when first heard about genocide happening in Kigali, Rwanda. Describes loss of RPF members. Discusses Rwandan genocide.

[1:40:00] Describes interpreting for NGO carrying out survey, travelling across country. Mentions Widows of Genocide Association. Describes impact of exposure, AG's nervous disposition, living in fear. Describes entire family in Rwanda killed. Mentions historic discrimination against Rwandan Tutsis in education system. Describes self-help and management to heal. Describes strength of programmes developed at Ministry of Education, collaboration with Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Describes lobbying and research with The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

## **Track 2: [duration: 52:47] [Session one: 18 March 2016]**

[00:00] More about role at Ministry of Education, planning, programming, budgeting, building councils for women from grassroots up. Describes integration of ideas into national law, increase in quotas for women balancing regional, ethnic, political issues, women taking top government positions in Planning Ministry, Ministry of Justice, Chief Justice role.

[05:30] Describes different phases of implementation. Reflects on success as result of hardworking women with small size of country. Describes impact of United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995, setting bar for quota of women in Parliament, exceeding it with 50 per cent, later 64. Discusses use of quotas as smokescreen in dictatorship, existing power struggle.

[11:30] Describes route to achievement of quotas, establishment of Gender Observatory, reference to Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to ensure laws in new constitution protected women. Describes impact of women at top of Judiciary, own experience working with Chief Justice. Describes running sensitization programmes for judges. Describes problematic courtrooms, lack of infrastructure, AG's work to mobilize funds, establishing new courtrooms, information sharing technology for case files. Describes administrative involvement in monitoring cases. Mentions case of former president Pasteur Bizimungu. Describes continued membership of FAWE, speak-out programs for girls' empowerment. Describes scholarship successes, work to break restrictive school entry rules relating to economic circumstances, lack of mattress, school uniform barring opportunity, FAWE filling gaps to enable.

[20:45] Discusses issues of early marriage and forced marriage, raising marriage age to 21. Describes culture of forced marriage, involvement in campaign using local opinion leaders, reference to law, alerting girls to move together, protect one another. Describes initiating debates in Women's Councils to impact influential female family members encouraging marriage.

[25:00] Describes successful reduction of marriages through insistence on school attendance, educated girls returning to villages providing live role models, becoming resourceful family members, springboard for impact on whole community.

[29:40] Describes approach to establishing new laws, policy development to understand situation, sensitization of lawmakers. Mentions Rwanda Law Reform Commission (RLRC). Describes advantage of having women's rights advocates Judith Kanakuze, Tito Rutaremara on Constitution-Making Commission, new constitution prompting necessary law reform in land laws, labour laws and new law against gender-based violence. Describes strategy of instilling faith that changes also beneficial to men.

[34:00] Describes land rights emerging as clear issue after genocide, prompting immediate action, Law No.22/99 on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Successions. Describes mobilization of women to claim rights, almost all land in Rwanda now registered. Describes legal necessity for woman's endorsement of any land transaction, provision of family councils protecting women.

[40:15] Describes main achievements of role, education of girls, lowering maternal mortality rate, women's participation in decision-making from grassroots up.

[48:00] Discusses biggest concern for women and girls in Rwanda today. Mentions current use of quotas to endorse wrong ideas in era of personal gains. Describes intention to document changes, expressing need for analysis with gender lens.