

APPENDIX CAM17: EXAMPLE OF STORYTELLING

DIVERSE VIEWS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.

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Perceptions about children's rights are diverse and we interviewed Isaius Ruvuzampama, a 52 year old man, Mukandatwa, a medium-aged mother of 35 years old, and Hitimana Vincent, a 16-year-old boy, about their views on children's rights. The interview, conducted in Nyabagendwa, expressed the views of the different age groups.

Isaius



Mukandatwa



When we consulted Isaius about his understanding of children's rights, he told us that: "a child should have access to education, sufficient food, play different games and help his/her parents in doing household work". He tried to make a comparison between the time he was still a child and the present situation. He said that when he was still young, children's rights were not respected and valued because elders would punish/beat any child whenever he/she did something wrong, regardless of their relationship and this resulted in the prevalence of corporal punishment. "A child belonged to the entire community and did not belong to his parents alone like it is the case today." However, the parents exercised their authority with all due diligence and very rarely resorted to beatings.

Nowadays, corporal punishment is impermissible in our societies. As a result, they are no longer retained under the guise of the right to express themselves as it does not permit heavy punishments. To some extent, this is beneficial in that the rate of dropouts is lower now than it was then since students are not scared of corporal punishments anymore.

Isaius asked us our view on the physical punishment on children and we told him that people hold different views. We also asked him what message he had for the youth and he said, "you should behave well in front of everybody, even your peers. Respect parents, elders and the community as a whole.

MUKANDATWA also had this to say about children's rights. "Children have the right to study and to be provided with all school requirements." She further added that a child has a right to be given a name by his/her parents. We inquired from her if children's rights are observed in their area. She said that most of the children get their rights, but some do not due to poverty. She elaborated that some parents fail to buy school requirements and some are even unable to pay for health insurance for their children due to poverty, thus depriving them of their right to education and medical treatment. Mukandatwa revealed that some children deprive themselves of their rights, for instance by dropping out of school, running away from home and choosing to live as street children, smoking and

taking drugs. She asked us if we hadn't witnessed such practices in that village and we told her that through the process of collecting the story, there is quite a lot of information we acquire but our role was to express the views of the community members.

We interviewed Hitimana Vincent, 16-years-old as mentioned earlier, and asked him if he had any knowledge about children's rights. He said; "what is the use of children's rights if we are still suffering like this?" After pausing for some time, he continued; "going to school is my right. But how can I go there on an empty stomach?" He told us that he abandoned school at the age of 11 because his parents were not able to provide him with food and other basic needs. He further told us that it is why he takes care of his neighbours' cows and gets paid FRW 8000 (about 10 EURO). He also disclosed that he tries to help his two siblings who go to school with some school materials. One is in Primary Four and the other is in Primary Five, but both study with difficulty.



We asked him if he had ever heard people in his village discussing children's rights and he responded that children and parents are always trained and are trying to implement it because they are fighting against poverty, which is a barrier to their children's rights. He added that he works hard to complement his parents in buying food and help in providing school materials in order to improve the lives of his siblings and the family in general.