



# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Ololade Benson (Part 6 of 9)



<b>Role:</b>	Translator
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Nigeria
<b>Interview Date:</b>	23 October 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Donald J Horowitz Robert Utter
<b>Videographer:</b>	Nell Carden Grey
<b>Interpreter:</b>	None

### Interview Summary

Ololade Benson speaks about her role as a translator and the challenges of communicating sensitive material such as witness statements concerning rapes and killings. She discusses her personal engagement with an international non-profit organization that she founded in 1998 to help single mothers, widows and children in Rwanda. She emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability for charitable organizations operating in post-conflict settings. Benson draws attention to the targeting and suffering of women in Rwanda during and after the genocide.

*The transcript of Part 6 begins on the following page.*

## Part 6

- 00:00** Donald J Horowitz: Now during the course of this, you mentioned earlier and that I'm going to turn – we're going to take a little break and I'm going to turn the rest of the interview over to my, my, my colleague – during the course of this you've mentioned that you've taken a bunch of courses.
- 00:15 Yeah.
- 00:17** DJH: And what, what courses and why have you done that?
- 00:20 I've done a lot of courses on gender, tran-, and then conflict transformation because when you look at what happened in Rwanda it was all about the war and the effects of the war. When you look at HIV/AIDS as well it's like women suffer a lot, they're most vulnerable in the society when war breaks out, they are raped. They have to go out to look for work and they're raped and all that.
- 00:40 So I just thought that these things were interrelated. So I've done a lot of courses, courses on conflict management, conflict transformation, gender and conflict, peace and gender.
- 00:50 And the last one I did – then I did just one classroom course in June this year which was on HIV project management and administration, so that if I had – if somebody gave me a whole lot of money and I needed to manage a project I would know exactly what to do.
- 01:04 I don't like dabbling into things. I don't – I want to be comfortable with what I'm doing, you know. And even in the newsletters as well, whatever information I put there, I have to be sure that it's correct. Those things are very, very important for me. I don't like inventing things and I have to be able to defend anything I say or write. So I like doing things properly.
- 01:23** DJH: Is there – I want to come back to the court just for a minute and I'm sorry to jump around . . .
- 01:30 It's okay.
- 01:31** DJH: . . . but in your work for the court, is there, are there places where you've been particularly proud or pa-, places, places where you've been maybe a little disappointed?
- 01:47 That's a big question.
- 01:48** DJH: Yeah.
- 01:52 All in all I think I'm, I'm happy, it's okay.
- 01:57** DJH: If, if, if there was going to be a court in the future . . .

- 02:00 Yeah.
- 02:00 DJH: . . . that they were going to start, hopefully we won't need one but I wouldn't bet on that at the moment. Would you have some suggestions as to what the designers of that court might do that would improve things?**
- 02:14 They should have a budget for this kind of thing that I'm doing.
- 02:17 DJH: For, for, for helping people . . .**
- 02:19 Yeah, for helping people, yeah, yeah.
- 02:19 DJH: . . . who are associated with, with the crimes . . .**
- 02:22 Because I, yeah – because I know that the people, colleagues who worked in Angola said they had to come together as well to help the street children. They used to donate like \$10 a month and hold parties for them and go out and see how they can help them, you know.
- 02:37 DJH: So you're not the only person – I mean you've done a marvelous job but you're not apparently the only person who's decided they have to find a way to help some of the victims.**
- 02:45 Yeah, some of the people, yeah. And I think the UN should be doing a bit more of that as well. I don't know that they – I don't know, for example, they have a gender officer in Rwanda. They have a gender officer here, but I think that there should be somebody on the ground there in Rwanda as well.
- 03:00 DJH: Okay. And, okay, any other suggestions for future tribunal designers?**
- 03:07 My focus is just on, on my passion unfortunately.
- 03:10 DJH: Yeah, and that's fine, that's fine. Okay, okay.**
- 03:14 I can't – off the top of my head I can't think of anything else, yeah.
- 03:17 DJH: All right.**