

**LbE**

**N.6 Zivilgesellschaft und politisches Engagement**

**Homosexuality - South Africa**

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**1 female off voice (Feature-Text + Outro)**

**2 fictional characters (Intro+ Dialog) :**

- **Philomène (name can be changed):** young woman who knows a lot ,  
Alphonse's big sister

- **Alphonse (name can be changed) :** young man who is more naive,  
asks a lot of questions, Philomene's younger brother

**6 Voice Over: - Musa** (young woman, English)

- **4 vox pops pavement)** (2 women, 2 men)

- **Stanley** (young man)

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## Teaser LbE

**INTRO :**

**Alphonse :**

Hello Philomene! Hello everyone!

**Philomène :**

Hello Alphonse! Today in Learning by Ear we're talking about homosexuality.

**Alphonse (*disgusted*) :**

Homosexuality! Eeeehh!

**Philomène (*surprised*) :**

What's wrong Alphonse? Don't you know what it is?

**Alphonse (*condescending*) :**

Of course I do! What do you think? We talk about it at school among friends.  
It's when men like men and women like women!

**Philomène :**

Yep, that's right, it's when people are attracted to people of the same sex...

**Alphonse :**

But it's dirty! It's against nature!

**Philomène :**

But why? It's all about feelings. Why don't you listen to this report and we'll talk about it later?

**Alphonse (*snorting*):**

OK...

**Philomène :**

OK, we're off to Johannesburg!

## **REPORTAGE :**

### **1. Clip : Musa (english)**

« I think I have always known that I was different. Different in the sense that I have always liked women more than men. So I thought maybe there was something wrong with me. Then all my friends were starting to date and they were all seeing guys. So I tried it with dating a guy but it did not work and yes, that is when I decided I'm gonna be myself and true to myself. I was around 15.»

### **Reporter:**

When she was a teenager, Musa Ngubane became aware of her homosexuality. This young South African recalls her first steps into a world that was totally unknown to her at the time:

### **2. Clip : Musa (English)**

« Fortunately for me, I discovered that there was a women's soccer team around my neighbourhood and I found out that a large number of the people who were already playing for that team were already seeing women, you know. As from then on, it started becoming easier for me to be myself and to express my sexual identity. »

**Reporter:**

Musa was able to come to terms with her sexuality despite the often hostile gaze of others.

**3. Clip : Musa (English)**

« I did actually speak to my older sister about it and she became really understanding and very supportive. And the friends that I used to have before, they were very understanding. I would get people of all ages talking negatively to my face about my sexual orientation, you know. I would actually get threatened by some of the guys because they think we want to be guys as well and we want to steal their girlfriends away from them and stuff like that. So I actually got a lot of verbal abuse from the younger generation and I would also get older people saying what kind of women I am to date other women, you know. »

**4. Sound: busy street in Jo'burg -- let run under voxpops)**

**Reporter:**

The prejudices Musa talked about are still going strong at the beginning of the 21st century, as is shown when people on the streets of Johannesburg are asked what they think of homosexuals.

**5. Clip : vox pop (english)**

**man 33 years old**

« Basically I think it is a sin in the first place but secondly, they can as well be accepted in the community. But there is no way in the Bible where it talks of gay people and their view. But also they must respect themselves because most of them, they just are wild, they are overdoing things, they are wearing

miniskirts in a way that normal women don't wear them and maybe that is what annoys people »

**woman 23 years old**

« I am Ingrid and I am 63. It is not something that I would say "yes, go ahead and do" but I am all right with it, you know, it does not intrude in my life. So everybody is free to do what they want to do.»

**man 44 years old**

« My name is Ronald and I am 44. I think to each their own. A gay is like any other person »

**woman 32 years old**

*« My name is Rusina, I am 32 years old. For my side, this is not good because if you are a man, you must have your wife and then make children, you understand?. Yes, it is a sin and I do not think at the beginning, that was happening. It is just a modern, a new thing that happens. »*

**Alphonse :**

Is homosexuality a new thing?

**Philomène :**

Not at all but it's a prejudice that is widespread.

**Reporter:**

The term "homosexuality" was invented by an Austrian in the 19th century but it has always existed -- in Africa and in the rest of the world. Most African languages have several words for designating different homosexual practices, which means that they were not unusual in traditional societies. Depending on

people and time, homosexuality was a rite of passage, a mark of equality between two people or on the other hand the expression of domination between master and slave. Sometimes it was practiced when there was a lack of men or women.

**Alphonse:**

Like when in certain societies girls and boys were not allowed to meet each other once they had reached puberty?

**Philomène :**

Yes, that was the case in Dahomey for example. There are traces of lesbianism -- sexual relations between women -- in polygamous societies or when there were harems because women were not satisfied by their husbands whom they saw too rarely. That's the case for example among the Nkundu in the current Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Alphonse (sighs):**

Pfff. This is all very complicated...

**Reporter:**

But coming back to South Africa today. Like Musa Ngubane, Stanley Mabena works for "Behind the Mask". This organization based in Johannesburg helps homosexuals across the continent and campaigns for their rights. Stanley first had sex at 17 and it was homosexual sex:

**6. Clip : Stanley (eng)**

« That happened with my cousin and I did not know how it happened but eventually, that was the first time getting to be in touch with myself you know. And there were times when I felt bad about it in such a way that, because I felt

like I cannot talk to anyone about it. It was difficult for me in such a way that I remember I attempted committing suicide. »

**Reporter:**

Thanks to « Behind the Mask », Stanley managed to build up his life as he wanted to. His mother also helped him by making the effort to try to understand him and talk to him. His father needed several months to accept his son's homosexuality because he was ashamed of it. Now Stanley is 31 and hopes to make life easier for other homosexuals who come across hostility.

**7. Clip : Stanley (eng)**

« We do have gay people that are getting killed. I feel very sad because all of these things, they happen even though there is the Constitution that protects and serves us as well you know -- as a gay person. The Constitution is there but at the same time people should also change in a sense that they accommodate the Constitution that we have and the human rights. »

**MUSIC**

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**PARTIE 2 : DIALOGUE**

**Alphonse :**

If I understand correctly homosexuality is not a new phenomenon in Africa...

**Philomène (interrupts):**

... no, not at all. And it's not the white colonizers who brought homosexuality to Africa despite what some people think. As we were saying earlier, homosexual practices can be found in several traditional societies.

**Alphonse :**

OK, and so homosexuality existed in different forms, between men and between women?

**Philomène :**

That's right. But several African countries banned homosexual rites and practices when they became independent. And in some states today homosexuality is still considered a crime, punishable by fines or even imprisonment.

**Alphonse :**

Hm. I think homosexuality is weird. I'm not surprised that many people are shocked. It doesn't surprise me that some people think it's a sin, against God's will!

**Philomène :**

Some even think that homosexuality is a disease. All this means that it's often difficult for homosexuals to find a foothold in society.

**Alphonse :**

Is it true?

**Philomène (smiling):**

That it's an illness? No, Alphonse. In the mid-1980s the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its Diagnostic Manual of mental disorders. And in 1992, the WHO removed homosexuality from its International



Classification of Diseases altogether. In theory, all the signatory states of the WHO charter recognize that homosexuality is not a disease; that it cannot be cured and that it is not contagious, that means it can't be caught like a virus.

**Alphonse (hesitant) :**

So, I can talk to homosexuals like to normal people?

**Philomène :**

Of course, because they *are* normal people. You can shake their hand, eat with them -- you're not at risk of anything!

**Alphonse (scared):**

Yes, but if I meet a homosexual he's going to want to seduce me!

**Philomène (teasing):**

Not necessarily! Only if he likes you! It's the same as you and girls. You like some, others you don't and sometimes you fall in love...

**Alphonse (sceptical) :**

Hm.

**Philomène :**

Talking of which, do you know Youssouf's [name can be changed] brother?  
The grocer?

**Alphonse :**

Georges ? Of course I know him!

**Philomène :**

He's gay!

**Alphonse (amazed) :**

WHAT???

**Philomène (amused):**

... and you didn't even notice although you've known him since you were a little boy!

**Alphonse (taken aback) :**

Georges ????? Gay ???

**Philomène :**

Yep my little bro, you see, you can't just tell from looking at someone!

**Alphonse (in shock) :**

Well that's something! Georges ! I would never have imagined that. He seems so ... normal! (*Thinking a moment*) So according to what you told me earlier, in some countries, people like Georges get sent to prison? But if they're like Georges they haven't done any harm to anyone...

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**Outro**

**Reporter:**

You've just heard another Learning by Ear program on the subject of civil society and participation. If you want to listen to the program again or to send us your feedback, go to [www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe). There you also find our other program of Learning by Ear. Thanks for listening and good bye for now!