

Learning by Ear –

Civil Society and Political Commitment No. 3

Racism Great - Lakes: Radio program "Great Lakes Generation"

Feature + Script : Yann Durand

Editor : Sandrine Blanchard

Translation : Anne Thomas

1 Female off voice (Featuretext + Outro)

2 Fictional characters (Intro+ Dialog) :

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

- **Alphonse (name can be changed)** : young man who is more naive and asks lots of questions, Philomène's little brother

5 Voices for voice overs:

Sylvie : 20-year-old woman

Natacha : 20-year-old woman

Désiré : 30-year-old man

Casanova : 25-year-old man

Cyuma Baha : 50-year-old man

Teaser LbE

INTRO :

Philomène :

Hello Alphonse and hello everybody.

Alphonse :

Hello Philomène.

Philomène :

Welcome to our Learning by Ear series about civil society and participation.

Alphonse :

Today we're going to talk about racism and ethnic conflict -- what's the context Philomène ?

Philomène :

We're going to find out about an interactive trans-border radio program in the Great Lake region that promotes dialogue between young people from different ethnic or national backgrounds.

Alphonse :

So off we go to Kigali, Rwanda!

Reportage

1. Clip : Sylvie (French)

"We reject everything bad that happened before and we say that we have to go forward, that we have to stop hating each other and have to take a look at our future."

Reporter:

We're at Contact FM, Rwanda's beacon radio that broadcasts from the capital Kigali. Sylvie is a young woman from the Congo. She's barely 20 years old but she is already one of the hosts of "Great Lakes Generation", a program made by young people for young people.

2. SFX: participating radios announcement

Reporter:

The aim of "Great Lakes Generation" is clear: They want to promote dialogue between young people from different ethnic groups or countries in the region. The interactive program is broadcasted every Sunday in the early afternoon in the three countries involved in the project -- the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, yet another part of Africa that has been dogged by endless regional conflict. The region's inhabitants share a common destiny says 30-year-old Désiré, the Burundian program coordinator:

3. Clip: Désiré (French)

"All the young people have experienced the same problems; they've gone through war or crisis. Sometimes they were even in the army, manipulated by politicians -- most of them have experienced the same situations of crisis..."

4. SFX Great Lakes Generation jingle

5. Clip: Natacha (French)

"Our culture, our history... It's all interlinked, we have more in common than not and that's what becomes clearer by the day. We realize that what separates us is only political."

Reporter :

That's why Natacha, a 20-year-old Rwandan, refuses to fall into the polemical trap. The program illustrates this polemic with a fictional dialogue:

6. SFX Fictional dialogue

Reporter :

Audience participation is fundamental to the Great Lakes Generation project. The debates take place in French -- the common language which is most spoken in the target region but some speak Lingala, Kiswahili, Kirundi or Kinyarwanda before then translating their ideas.

7. SFX listener contribution

Reporter :

Today's topic is the history of the sub-region, which changes according to country or even family. Every week, a guest is invited to discuss a particular theme, today's guest is Cyuma Baha, the professor of philosophy at Rwanda's national university in Kigali. He says that the youth has a greater chance to overcome racism.

8. Clip: Cyuma Baha (French)

"They have an advantage that we don't have at our age. It's harder for us to change what we think about the various borders at our age. Their advantage is that it's new to them -- it's encouraging to see them take apart a philosophical matter such as history."

Reporter:

"How well do you know your neighbours?" That's the question Great Lakes Generation asked its listeners when the program was first broadcasted in October 2006.

Alphonse:

Well, if we're neighbors, we know each other, don't we?

Philomène:

That's the point -- not always! It's often superficial, we don't always know what the other thinks, and remember: we're talking about neighboring "countries" here. The program has also broached topics such as the relationship with the authorities, or the manipulation of history. The program enables young people to meet on air and get rid of their prejudices because in the end that's the main problem. Listen to Casanova!

9. Clip: Casanova (French)

"In the Congo for example, there are some women with scars on their faces and a Rwandan might say this is Congolese fetishism. It is all about learning what they do that we don't do -- not necessarily bad -- or what we do that they don't do. It's so we can know each other, come closer together."

Reporter :

Coming closer together is also what Casanova's team is all about. The Rwandan often goes to Burundi or Congo, to cities like Butare or Bukavu to host a program. And he often meets up with Sylvie from Congo.

10. Clip: Sylvie (French)

"We often meet in Butare for about three or four days and we think about different topics we can deal with over the next few days. It helps us to follow our trains of thought like this. We're also young and part of a society. I think we

know what young people like. What might attract them. We start with ourselves."

11. SFX: receiving phone calls at the switchboard

Reporter :

There are a lot of people like Damas, who call in to take part in the live program and there are even more who listen every week. The organization US AID that finances the project together with "Search for Common Ground", the international conflict resolution and conflict prevention NGO, are delighted about the program's success. After nine months on air, 63 percent of the students in Bujumbura, Kigali and Bukavu were already listening says Desire, the coordinator:

12. Clip: Désiré (French)

"And there are also at least 400 young people who belong to listeners' clubs all over the sub-region and listen to us. We get their feedback every time they fill out forms. We find out what other subjects to discuss. The listeners' clubs help us evaluate the program and decide what to do tomorrow and the day after tomorrow."

13. SFX : music in the live studio

Reporter :

"Great Lakes Generation" seems to respond to a need that the region's young people have to look beyond ethnic differences. Natacha agrees:

14. Clip: Natacha (French)

"Yes, it's a program but beyond that it's a state of mind. Young people today are saying: "no, it's over". We're sick of our past, this history that has been

transmitted from generation to generation and we want our generation to be the one for whom borders are only physical."

15. SFX : Great Lakes Generation jingle

Music

2nd part: Dialogue

Alphonse :

So tell me Philomène, are all the conflicts that exist or that have existed in the Great Lakes region or in Darfur down to racism?

Philomène :

Well to begin with, how do you even define racism?

Alphonse :

Well, it's when someone doesn't like foreigners!

Philomène :

Yes more or less... To be precise it's a concept, which implies that there exist racial groups which are superior to others. But it's been genetically proved that there aren't any different races among human beings.

Alphonse :

OK, but it still doesn't mean that people don't like people of another group!

Philomène :

No, it doesn't, strictly speaking, but in practice physical or cultural differences often make people suspicious -- it's often the case that one particular group

wants to be superior to another in order to take advantage of it, or benefit from certain privileges.

Alphonse :

Is that segregation?

Philomène :

Yes, as soon as a country's law defines somebody's rights according to whether he or she belongs to a particular group or another, there can be segregation. But usually we talk about discrimination -- somebody might be discriminated against. Even if this is not actually upheld in official documents, if the discrimination is not institutionalized as such.

Alphonse :

But how does someone become racist or discriminating? People aren't just born like that, are they?

Philomène :

No not at all. Scientists say that it's a cultural phenomenon -- often a child who is brought up in a racist environment becomes racist unconsciously. Parents obviously play an important role in all this.

Alphonse :

Is that why we heard them insisting about the manipulation, the deformation of history in the "Great Lakes Generation" program? They realize that the ideas of their parents, of their elders have to be called into question?

Philomène :

Exactly.! But it's not easy, you know -- psychologists say that it's hard to "decondition" children above the age of ten from the unconscious fear that lurks behind racism.

Alphonse :

Fear of what?

Philomène :

Oh, it would take too much time to explain all the ins and outs of this complicated issue to you, little brother. But basically all human beings are inhabited by an ancestral fear and those who can't deal with it project it elsewhere and this can provoke what is then called racism.

End

Outro

Reporter :

You've just heard a Learning by Ear program on the subject of civil society and political commitment. To listen to the program again or to send us your feedback, go to www.dw-world.de/lbe. Thanks for listening and don't forget to tune in again next time!