

## Transcript for Interview

Me: This is the interview for Mr. Call's Ethnic Studies class and so just tell me a little bit about yourself.

Gladys: My name is Gladys Appiah and I live in Puyallup, Washington. I was born in Ghana Africa West Africa and I'm 56 years old.

Me: Okay so my first question is, how long have you lived in this area live in this area?

Gladys: About 17 years now 17 years

Me: And where did you live before?

Gladys: Before I lived in New York, Bronx New York, NY

Me: And before that?

Gladys: Before that I lived in West Africa. Ghana, a town called Accra yeah Accra.

Me: Okay so what brought you to the United States?

Gladys: I came to United States for greener pasture because where I come from my family was very poor; and my uncle had a chance to work for U.N and I had a baby early age in my 20s. So, my uncle... I couldn't learn any trade or anything so my uncle said since you have a passion, I will send you to the U.S, maybe you can find a job and he helped me. And I came here in the US in 2001.

Me: What passion was he referring to?

Gladys: Um cause I always taking care of a lot older people. When their kids go to the market, I'll be with them and help them with their bathing and their feeding, and when someone has a baby, I always go there and help them with their baby. So that the baby mother can have enough for stuff like that.

Me: And you spoke about your uncle helping you coming here so like what type of struggles did you have like trying to come to America and like adapting to it like a new place?

Gladys: I mean struggling before coming here or when I get here?

Me: So, let's start with before you came here.

Gladys: Before I came here like I said I had a baby at an early age. So, I was struggling with taking care of as a single mother. And I couldn't help, I had an occupation but as a seamstress that wasn't going well for me. So, when I came here, I started the seamstress a little bit before entering into home care, and then that was in New York. I was doing home care and eventually I met my husband. And as I was having a second baby, we decided to move to a quiet place, that's why I end up in Seattle WA now.

Me: And you kind of spoke about like Ghana be in a challenging place for you but what is something that you wish something from Ghana that you wish more people in the United States practiced?

Gladys: Ghana we mostly, Ghana we mostly live in a group of families. Yeah, so always with you, you always have somebody to talk to and all that. You have a family member to talk to, to pray with and to reason with. I think that is good but when I came to America, I don't see that more often. If somebody is here their family is in another state, or they are not together. So mostly I see that a lot of people get depressed upon that. So, I think if they can adopt the Ghana style, living all together as a family and at least have your family around you. You can talk to them do stuff with them; I think that will help all of them in America.

Me: So, what you are saying is that like in Ghana is a more close tight knit community and like here it is very easy to feel isolated.

Gladys: Yes, that's what I mean you can easily feel isolated in here because everybody is living far or they have locked doors, locked rooms lock houses. But in Ghana the way we live, we call it compound house. You have a lot of people around you, your family is there, even if your neighbor is there their door is not locked. You can go in, you can sit outside and do stuff, but here is very hard.

Me: And it is kind of the opposite question, what is something from here that you wish more people back home in Ghana practiced?

Gladys: I think I'll use mine as an example, as a woman my parents did not give me enough education. So, I couldn't go much further, but in America because high school is free you know. If Africa can adopt that then everybody at least can graduate from high school.

Me: So, you are saying better education and higher-level opportunities for females?

Gladys: Yes.

Me: And what is your like current occupation?

Gladys: Currently, I'm a nursing assistant working for CHI Franciscan.

Me: Okay, and when have you experienced discrimination or oppression at work or like in and around the community?

Gladys: I think like when I started working my pay rates.

Me: Yeah.

Gladys: My pay rate was like \$1.25 lower than my other opponent, but we all have the same experience but mine they gave me a lower rate. And I question about it, and they say, "Oh no because their high school was verified and all that." They gave a lot of excuse which I think it was very discriminate.

Me: Cause like the excuses that they gave. you don't believe them to be true.

Gladys: So yeah, I don't believe them to be true.

Me: So, what do you think was like real reason why they are paying you \$1.25 less.

Gladys: The way I look at it I think is my ethnicity or my color or my race because the other opponent was opposite of my race. So, I think it's the color of my skin.

Me: So, speaking about race and ethnicity, how do you identify ethnically?

Gladys: I think everybody should have the same opportunity.

Me: Not it's like your identity; like how do you identify ethnically?

Gladys: Oh, I identify myself as African American. Of course, I was born in Ghana and raised with both parents from Africa, but since I've been here over 20 years, I've naturalized in America here. So, I consider myself as black, African American.

Me: I kind of want to jump ahead, but like what is, you said you've Americanized so, did you have any struggles being accepted as an American?

Gladys: I don't have that much struggles to be accepted as an American.

Me: Okay, and what is your favorite part of being an American citizen and like all the rights that come with?

Gladys: I think I have the right to vote, and I have the right to voice my concern, and I'm doing my best as a good citizen to pay my taxes and to obey the law.

Me: So, you said like vote, so you're saying like being able to like have a voice cause I'm assuming when you first came though like all the laws and stuff was affecting you; You didn't have a voice in those.

Gladys: Yeah, I didn't have a voice and I couldn't you could even vote. All you have to do is to just follow them. But since I naturalized and I'm able to vote and to voice my concern.

Me: And um what, this is kind of like switching gears but what role does your culture play in your life?

Gladys: My culture, my culture teaches us to respect not just your elders respect everybody, acknowledge everybody. Do not discriminate against your opponent whether it's your race whether it's gender, just respect in general.

Me: And those like ideas right, they were brought on for like your childhood?

Gladys: Yes.

Me: So, like what was your childhood like?

Gladys: My childhood life is like if you even walking to the market or you're walking to go play, if you see an older person, an elderly person carrying their groceries you go and help them and take it to their house. If they need water, you go and fetch some for them. It doesn't matter if it's your mom, no, it's to everybody, any older people; you give them that service and it's free.

Me: So, you grew up in a very considerate environment that like looked out for like...

Gladys: ...each other. We look out for each other, you can do farming, you can do vegetable farming, your neighbor can do maze farming. If you need maze, you can go there and get some and if they need vegetables, they can also come to you and get some, it's like an exchange kind of environment.

Me: And so, like how does that, how is that different from what you see your kids living today?

Gladys: My kids are living differently the way I grew up because they don't have that kind of, first we are not farmers, so we are not doing that in United States. And we're not doing that, and this is something different that I can't teach my kids here; but I can't teach them how to respect and to obey everybody.

Me: So, you've spoken a lot about respect, but like I was wondering if there was any other aspect of your culture that like brings you a lot of pride, like when you think about this you like I'm glad to be Ghanaian because of this?

Gladys: Yes, like Ghana we have beautiful dresses our cloth is beautiful, our dresses is beautiful, and we dance beautiful in our culture dance is very and our songs too.

Me: So being able to like, like how they're able to express themselves how they dress.

Gladys: We express ourselves more in our dancing; When someone is dancing you could tell what they want to say through the dancing.

Me: So, like dance and music is way to express ...

Gladys: ...it's a way of expressing ourselves. If the person is in sorrow, when they're dancing you could tell they are dancing in a sorrowful way. If they are happy, you could see it in the dance that they are happy.

Me: Speaking of like culture and that, is there like any way you intentionally pass on your culture to your family or children, or like those around you?

Gladys: Yeah, especially to my children I tried to let them understand my language, able to speak my language and then we have our own cultural food. I try to let them eat some and experience it, so being here I cook both American food and both African food so that my kids can know both of it.

Me: Again, like touching back on the language, what is your like relationship end with your language ancestral language?

Gladys: It's good I still understand speak my language.

Me: And have you taught like your children?

Gladys: Yeah, I've taught my children how to speak my language, which is very important to me.

Me: Some languages that it's very important.

Gladys: Yeah, my language is very important for me for my kids to speak and understand. So that when they go back or when we travel back home, they can express themselves through my language and the older people in my village will understand them, and they too understand them.

Me: Okay so you said like going back home, so like what is your relationship with your like currently with your homeland with Ghana?

Gladys: It is good my parents are still there, so I try to go every two years but fortunately since 2019 I haven't gone due to the COVID. So, I'm planning if the COVID goes down I can go and visit them.

Me: Okay, my next question is so like about like being in America. So, like being Ghanaian like how does that like affect your perspective and how you view things? Because like every person like views stuff differently based off of their upbringing and like what they've been through; so, like how has being Ghanaian affected your perspective?

Gladys: It doesn't, it's not affecting my perspective that much because I can't see people with the same color of my skin here and the only thing is my accent. Though I've been here for all these years, but I still have an accent. So, whenever I speak or talk, people will say, "oh where you from?"

Me: Yeah.

Gladys: And sometimes I say, "why?" they say, "you have an accent" and I say, "yes because I'm from Ghana originally."

Me: So, does that like sort of question does it annoy you in a sense?

Gladys: It doesn't annoy me it tells that someone is paying attention.

Me: And has anybody like treating you differently because of like your accent like how you sound?

Gladys: Not really.

Me: Okay, have you also been treated differently like let's say work based off your gender?

Gladys: No.

Me: So, like you got you haven't really experienced people treating you differently is that what you're saying?

Gladys: Yeah, people are not treating me differently as my gender or as my culture. I think I'm being treated fair if I should say.

Me: Can you like elaborate with you mean fair, like is everybody treating you the same everybody or what is it?

Gladys: Everywhere you go we have people good and bad people in our midst. So, for me I always count the good ones. I'll always count the good ones; I try to forget about the bad ones. Yes, we have some people I have been told at work even "why you wasting food aren't you from Africa?" Somebody told me that and I say, "why?" you say "Well I heard Africa you guys sleeps in the tree and you have no food to eat. Why are you throwing your food out? That hurt me. I made a person know that that is not fine, and he apologized. So that some of this stuff, people say stuff so mostly I just ignore it and go about my day.

Me: So, like this stuff people say, do you think it's because of like they're not liking you, or is it because of like an ignorance?

Gladys: I think it's an ignorance in them because when they say, "oh Africa I heard had you guys live on a tree." It's not that true, it might be the olden days, but since I grew up, I haven't seen anybody living in a tree. It's just I see they lack the knowledge to know about Africa or they just being ignorant or they just being altogether stupid, or I don't know.

Me: So, kind of like on them lacking knowledge, could you say that part of it is that like in the American education system there isn't much teaching...

Gladys: ...there isn't much teaching of African culture and when they teach, they teach the bad side. They don't teach the rich side of our culture. People still think we live on a tree, which is not true. People think we walk naked, which is not true. We all get clothed and all that. The only thing is that the education over there is not that much broad that everybody can go like up to high school free. So, if your parents don't have money, likely you're not going to have an education.

Me: So, let's say like if somebody's parents doesn't have money, and they couldn't go to high school. What would be their alternative, like what would they do?

Gladys: The alternative is to be selling stuff or just stuck in the village going to farm, being farmers.

Me: Selling stuff is like owning a business or?

Gladys: Not like owning a business, you don't have money how can you own a business? It's just a small trade something to go by daily by daily. Even if you do your own small farming, on market day you can bring some of your crops and sell, so you could be like a farmer/trader.

Me: Lastly, is there anything else you would like to say?

Gladys: All I can say is being in America I try to give my kids education. I wish I was very educated, if I was educated at my childhood I could have done so much; but fortunately, I didn't have it, so I tried to make sure that my kids get an education. So, that they can get a good job and then be a good citizen to the nation.

Me: Okay thank you for your time.