

Recent immigrant workers in Iowa's meatpacking industry

Archie Green Fellows Project, 2015-2016

Komi Tadjere interview, 2016-06-26 : interview conducted by John W. McKerley

Interview ID: afc2015026\_03179

Date: June 26, 2016

Duration: 02:21:59

Part 1 of 2

00:00:00	Introductions
00:01:05	Birth in Diguengue, Togo
00:02:00	Family
00:02:20	Parent Occupation
00:03:20	Land division
00:04:00	Growing up in Diguengue
00:05:00	Family is Roman Catholic
00:06:00	Neighbors in Diguengue
00:06:45	Same ancestors in Togo
00:07:50	West African immigrants
00:09:00	French is main language
00:10:30	Not common to speak so many language
00:11:20	University training
00:12:00	Studied Sociology
00:12:50	Pull to be a farmer
00:14:45	Interest in other people
00:15:40	Root cause of poverty in Togo

00:17:20 French control in Togo

00:19:30 Aid work in Togo

00:21:50 Organizing in Togo

00:24:10 Using the Bible to organize

00:25:25 No profit in Resources

00:27:20 Church stepping in for State

00:28:30 Church is salvation

00:29:55 No Scholarship from the French

00:32:30 No limit in America

00:33:20 Visa is like a game

00:34:15 Nepotism in France

00:35:30 Hard to seek education in America

00:36:20 Different goals in America

00:37:20 Went to Pennsylvania first

00:38:10 Went to Illinois for work

00:38:40 Friends in America

00:39:30 Moved to Beardstown

00:40:50 Found Catholic Church

00:44:00 Offered to volunteer with Church

00:46:15 Background of Pastor

00:47:20 Church donations

00:48:50 Make-up of Church

00:49:30 French speakers in Beardstown

00:50:35	English ability
00:51:50	Background of other Africans
00:53:05	Difference with other Africans
00:54:00	Overcoming differences
00:54:40	Education advantage with Visas
00:56:55	Generational Differences
00:57:40	Certificate of Accomplishment
00:58:30	Looked for work at Cargill
01:00:05	Opportunities at the Library
01:01:25	Getting Social Security Number
01:01:40	No jobs at Library
01:02:35	Making ends meet before working at Cargill
01:03:00	Wife in America
01:04:00	Adapting to factory work
01:05:05	Applying life in Togo to factory
01:06:00	Community college and factory life
01:07:05	Difference between cold and hot side of factory
01:08:30	Work on the cold side
01:09:40	Training week
01:10:40	Diversity of workplace
01:11:05	Good relationships at workplace
01:12:10	Gaining skills at the factory
01:13:30	Benefits of language ability

01:14:20 Worked for Cargill for about three years

01:15:30 Union too close to Cargill

01:17:10 Lack of communication from union

01:18:50 Union not reaching out to Africans

01:22:40 Contracts where not in French

01:23:40 BRIFU Meeting

01:25:15 Role of community organizer from Springfield in BRIFU

01:26:00 Good relationships between ethnic groups

01:28:10 New ideas for organizing

01:30:55 Difference between Africans and African Americans

01:36:50 Need to make own analysis and work as a team

01:38:30 Work can bring people together

01:41:00 Left Cargill for school

01:44:30 Invited manager to graduation

01:46:00 Issues due to lack of work experience

01:49:10 Employees complain too much

01:50:20 Employees don't want to learn

01:52:40 Work by organizations still needs to be done

01:54:40 Education opens doors at Cargill

01:56:55 Support through loans

01:58:00 Political Science helps understand what is going on in America

01:59:20 International Relations can bring Africa and America together

02:00:45 Went to work for Department of Human Services

- 02:02:50 Work as a Social Worker
- 02:04:35 Help low-income people
- 02:06:20 Requirements for help from State
- 02:08:40 Helping undocumented people
- 02:10:40 Union at Department of Human Services
- 02:11:20 Better relationship with current union v. Cargill union
- 02:12:45 America is a land of opportunity

Part 2 of 2

- 00:00:00 Found American dream through education
- 00:02:20 Still need to do more
- 00:02:45 Everyone has the same rights
- 00:03:40 Need immigration reform
- 00:05:00 Helped daughter reach America
- 00:05:40 Thanks for sharing story