

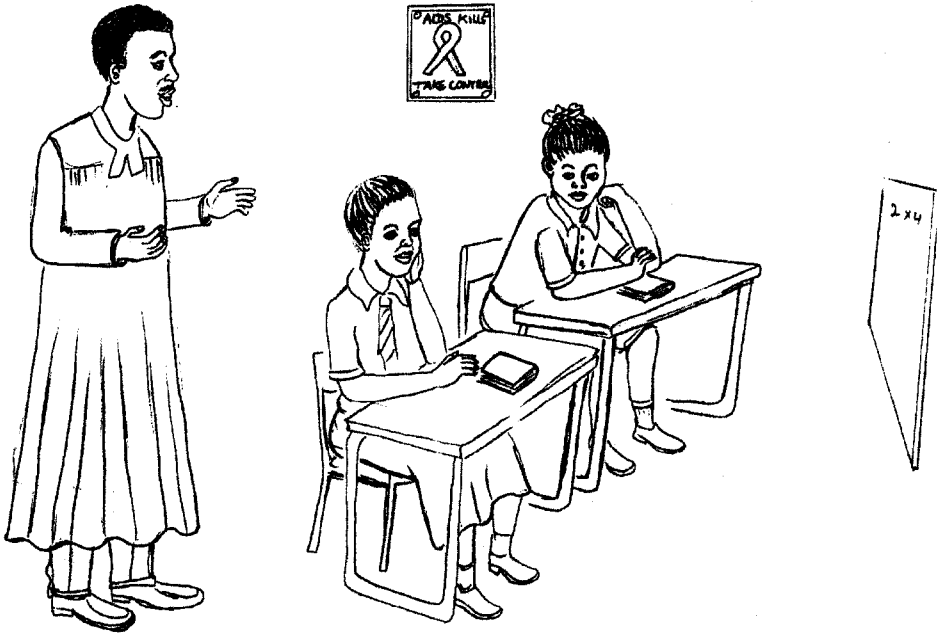
Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

Educate a Woman, Educate a Nation

NAMIBIA

U
N
E
S
C
O

2
0
0
3



Literacy and Non-Formal Education Section
Division of Basic Education

SOME OTHER TITLES
in the Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

- *Home, the Best Medicine* (Zimbabwe)
- *Inherit Me, Inherit my HIV* (Zimbabwe)
- *Who is the Chicken?* (Namibia)
- *Positively Living* (Zimbabwe)
- *Real Men Take Responsibility* (Malawi)
- *Me, You and AIDS* (Kenya)
- *Open Your Eyes or Be Blind Forever* (Namibia)
- *Nangi's Shattered Dream* (Namibia)
- *Breaking the Silence* (Namibia)
- *The Wicked Healer* (Namibia)
- *Still Ravaging after Death* (Namibia)
- *Should I Know My HIV Status?* (Malawi)
- *Sugar Daddy, Sweet or Deadly?* (Malawi)
- *The Wicked Hyena* (Malawi)
- *If You Don't Have It, Don't Catch It* (Swaziland)
- *Don't Play with Your Life!* (Namibia)

For free copies, contact:

Literacy and Non-formal Education Section
Division of Basic Education, UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy, 70007 Paris, France
Fax (33 1) 45 68 56 26 or (33 1) 45 68 56 27

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

Educate a Woman, Educate a Nation

NAMIBIA

**U
N
E
S
C
O**

**2
0
0
3**

**Product of a UNESCO workshop for the preparation
of Gender-sensitive booklets on HIV/AIDS**

**Adapted from a booklet produced at the UNESCO
Workshop for the Preparation of Gender-sensitive Materials**

Original text: Gerson D. Garosab

**Revised by the
Literacy and Non-formal Education Section,
Division of Basic Education, UNESCO**

First published by UNESCO in September 2003

**Opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and do
not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO**

**This material may be reproduced in total or in part with appropriate
acknowledgement to the authors or the publishers**

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is one of an ever-growing series of easy-to-read materials produced at a succession of UNESCO workshops.

The workshops are based on the appreciation that gender-sensitive literacy materials are powerful tools for communicating messages on HIV/AIDS to poor rural people, particularly illiterate women and out-of-school girls.

Based on the belief that HIV/AIDS is simultaneously a health and a social, cultural and economic issue, the workshops train a wide range of stakeholders in HIV/AIDS prevention including literacy, health and other development workers, HIV/AIDS specialists, law enforcement officers, material developers and media professionals.

Before a workshop begins, the participants select their target communities and carry out needs assessments of their potential readers.

At the workshops, participants go through exercises helping them to fine-tune their sensitivity to gender issues and to how these affect people's risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The analysis of these assessments at the workshops serves as the basis for identifying the priority issues to be addressed in the booklets.

They are also exposed to principles of writing for people with limited reading skills.

Each writer then works on his or her booklet with support from the group.

The booklets address a wide-range of issues normally not included in materials for HIV/AIDS such as the secondary status of girls and women in the family, the "sugar daddy" phenomenon, wife inheritance, the hyena practice¹, traditional medicinal practices, superstitions, home-based care and living positively with AIDS.

They have one thing in common — they influence greatly a person's safety from contracting HIV/AIDS.

We hope that these booklets will inspire readers to reflect on the problems and issues that ordinary women and men face in their day-to-day relationships.

In so doing, they might reach a conclusion that the responsibility is theirs to save their own lives and those of their loved ones from HIV/AIDS.

¹ The hyena practice is the custom of exposing young virgins to sex with an unidentified man as part of their initiation rites.

Anna Maria was from Bunga village in Western Rundu. She went to school in Rundu town. Anna Maria learnt about HIV/AIDS from different meetings at school. She learnt about it in life science. She read about it a lot.

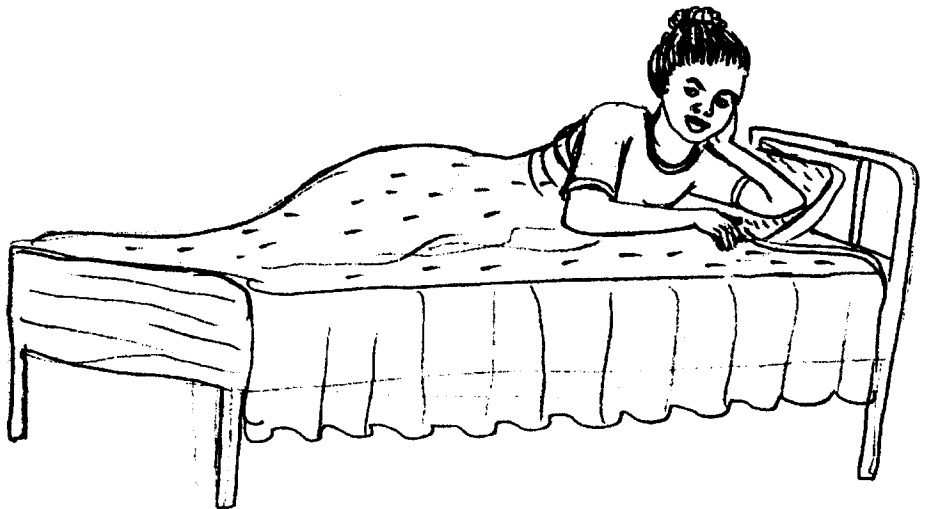
I never knew that AIDS is so bad. So many young people are sick from it. They just drop like falling leaves. Do you think we could get it too?

No one is free from it if everybody is careless. But everyone can avoid it, if we protect ourselves.



Late at night, Anna-Maria lies awake.

God! Maybe my people are also dying from AIDS. They may not even know it. These people are too poor to go to school. I'm the only lucky one. I'll use my education to help them.



As soon as the school closed for the summer, Anna-Maria went home. She visited her Aunt Aune. Aunt Aune was a good woman. People listened to her.

Aunt Aune, have you heard about this killer disease, HIV/AIDS? People are dying from it. If they sleep around carelessly, they could get it and die.

Hush, hush, my child. What are you saying? If your father hears you! This is not a children's subject.

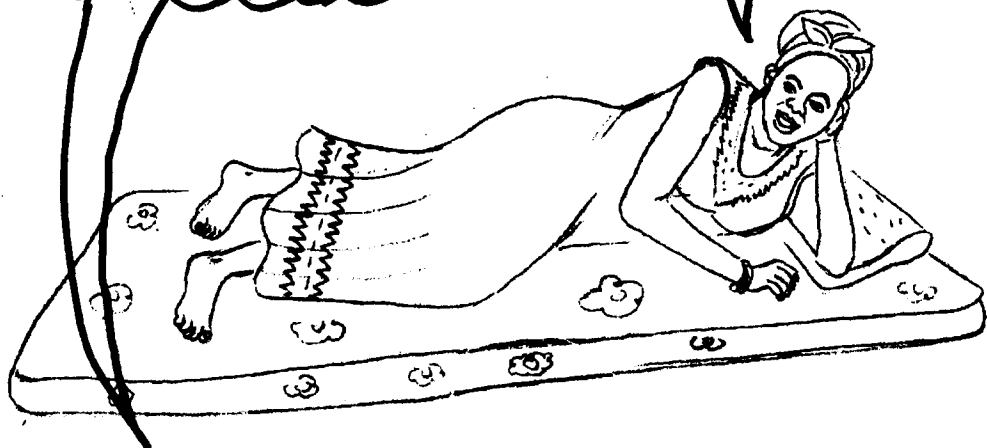


Oh, my God. We thought she went to learn good things in the town. Now, she's talking like she's living in the street. I must talk to her mother about this.

Anna-Maria insisted. They talked the whole afternoon.

Aunt Aune. All this, I learnt from school. A lot of people living with AIDS are very young. That's why the students must learn. So they can take responsibility over their lives.

Oh, God, my dear child! Is it serious? I thought that sicknesses like diarrhea and TB have always been there. But I'm confused now. Tell me, child.



It's easy to protect us.
We just use rubbers.
Some people call rubbers
condoms. Other ways to
prevent AIDS is to stick
to one partner who is not
infected.

And for young people
it's best to wait till
they were adults. Then,
we can take responsible
decisions about sex.

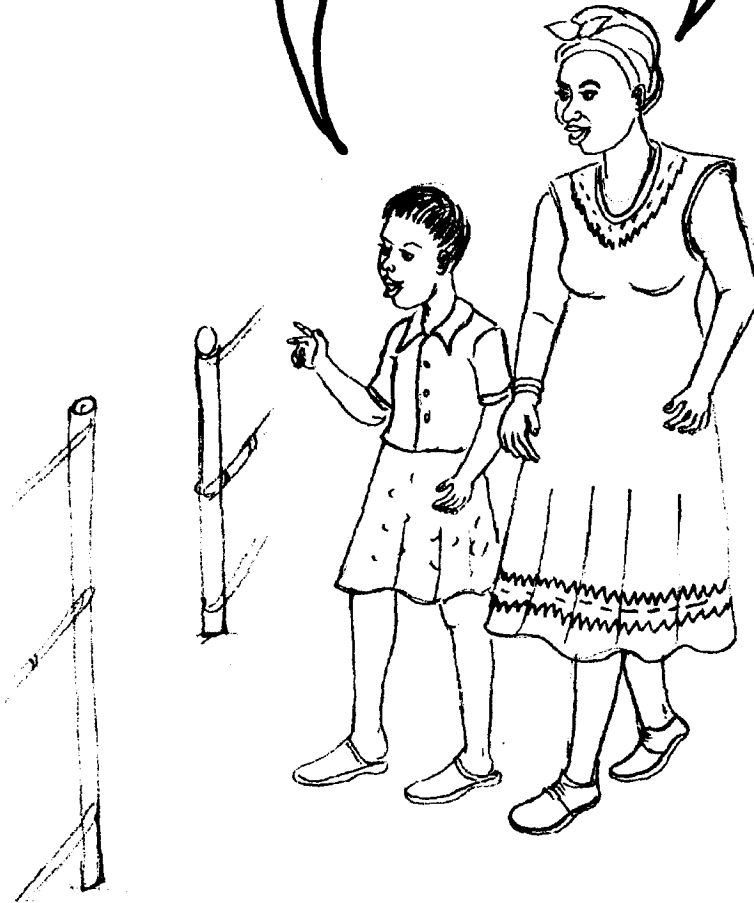


And you, Aunt Aune,
have you talked about
HIV/AIDS with Uncle
Hamutenya? Please
don't be angry with me
but everyone has to
know about this.

No, my child. How can I?
You know that women
don't talk about these
things. We just leave this
thing to our men. That's
the way of our people.

Oh, Aunt Aune, listen to me. Women can't talk about sex with their men. And we don't know what happens to our bodies. And we can get HIV/AIDS and die. This must change. Or we'll all die!

We must learn to talk to our men. Our life is our responsibility. It seems AIDS has no border. This is too important to keep quiet.



Anne-Maria asked Aunt Aune to invite the headman, the elders, the pastor and a nurse to a meeting. They will talk about HIV/AIDS. On the big day, almost everyone came to the meeting.

We should respect our tradition of solving our problem together. We have this killer disease around us. Our people must learn to protect themselves. Nurse, please...

We have sick people with us. But we often don't know that. They're sick with HIV/AIDS. Traditional healers can't help you. You must bring them to the clinic.



Then, it's the pastor's turn to talk...

God will give you strength to fight in this difficult time. Don't be afraid. Come out openly. Let's talk about the sickness. You, men must be faithful to your wives. Be responsible. Don't sleep around. Don't spread the sickness around.

Both, men and women must be responsible. We are in this danger together. Husbands and wives must talk about HIV/AIDS. We must change our way. This disease is not only real, but also kills.



After this meeting, the people living with AIDS came out and talked about their sickness one by one. The villagers were nice to them. They came to visit them. They treat them normally.

My friends don't let the same thing happen to you. I was careless. I had many women. I was afraid of nothing. I thought I was strong. Nothing could happen to me. You see me now?



Remember. We men must take responsibility. If you have sex with strangers, always use condoms. But it's safest to stick to your wife.

The men talked long into the night. Finally, they reached a conclusion.

Thanks so much to come out openly. This will help other men to save their lives. We need to get a group of men together. This group will go around and talk with other men. Men must be responsible!

If all men want to, we can stop the spread of AIDS. It's up to us to change things. Let's call our group, "Men for change"



The day before Anna-Maria went back to school, Aunt Aune came to spend the day with her.

My child, you did very well. You opened our eyes. Because of your idea, our people are changing. We sent you for education. You came back to help us.

Thanks so much, Aunt Aune. I'll study hard. And, I'll be good and strong. I'm so glad a girl like me can do something for our people!



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) With whom did Anna-Maria first talk about HIV/AIDS?
- 2) What do you think about what she said?
- 3) Do you think education can change people's thinking? Why?
- 4) Is it difficult for women to talk about sex with their men? Why?
- 5) If you have information about serious issues like HIV/AIDS, will you share it with our relatives and our neighbours? Why?
- 6) What do you think about the behaviour of the men in this story? Discuss.
- 7) What do you think about sex education in school?

Written by Africans for Africans, this booklet is one of a growing series prepared during UNESCO training workshops to produce gender-sensitive materials for HIV/AIDS prevention for southern African countries.

When gender concerns are integrated into post-literacy materials which recognize local conditions, peoples' attitudes, values and beliefs, dreams and aspirations, they provide a powerful tool for tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic currently ravaging southern Africa.

The series is an effort at filling the void left by medically oriented and didactic materials. They are based on the assumption that effective materials can help people change their attitudes, which in turn, will bring about positive changes in their behaviour.

These booklets reflect the way people communicate in southern Africa in the 21st century – their images, customs, attitudes and beliefs. They are aimed at helping readers – women and men, young and old – to raise issues and seek answers to questions concerning their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.