

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

# Home, the Best Medicine

Zimbabwe

U  
N  
E  
S  
C  
O  
  
2  
0  
0  
1



A product of a UNESCO-DANIDA workshop for the preparation  
of gender-sensitive booklets on HIV/AIDS

## Some other titles in the Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

- *Inheriting Me, Inheriting My HIV/AIDS* (Zimbabwe)
- *Who Is the Real Chicken?* (Namibia)
- *Positively Living* (Zimbabwe)
- *Real Men, Take Responsibility* (Malawi)
- *Don't Throw Me Away* (Togo)
- *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)
- *Home, the Best Medicine* (Zimbabwe)

**For free copies, contact:** Namtip Aksornkool

Section of Literacy and Non-formal Education

Basic Education Division, UNESCO

7 Place de Fontenoy, 70007 Paris, France

Fax (33 1) 45 68 56 26 or (33 1) 45 68 56 27

e-mail: [n.aksornkool@unesco.org](mailto:n.aksornkool@unesco.org)

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

# Home, the Best Medicine

Zimbabwe

U  
N  
E  
S  
C  
O  
  
2  
0  
0  
1

A product of a UNESCO-DANIDA workshop for the preparation  
of gender-sensitive booklets on HIV/AIDS

Adapted from a booklet written at the UNESCO-DANIDA sub-regional  
workshop for the preparation of gender-sensitive materials  
(Mbabane, Swaziland, February 2001)  
with active participation of UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA

Written by Florence Matende

Graphic design by Jarupan Chaianandana

Workshop organization by Dorothy Littler and Tirso Dos Santos

Project Co-ordination and training by Namtip Aksomkool

First published by UNESCO in October 2001

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 partially funded by the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA). 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 how these affect people's risks of 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 practice<sup>1</sup>, 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 some of life's common situations, 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.

---

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

(My son has AIDS. But it is not going to stop me from taking care of him. Simply because he is my son. Our health worker is going to help us.)

What! Mai Tichaona, you want all the people to know about his disease?

You want us to be the talk of the village?

Who do you care about? Your son or your neighbours? You have to use your head, baba va Tichaona!



The Tafara family have taken their son home from hospital. The doctor tells them that home is best for him. The surroundings are familiar to him. The family is always there to help, comfort and love him.

The mother is going to get the disease with all the soiled laundry and bathing!

We must help Tichaona in his last days. We will work together to make him happy and comfortable to the end.

I have already taught mai Tichaona how to care for him. The chances of getting the disease are small as long as you follow my advice.



The village health worker is invited to the homestead.



The family are at their homestead now. Tichaona has come home. Everyone sits around him talking and sharing jokes.

Where is my big mug? I want Tichaona to use it and drink chee from it.

Bring the claypot with maheu. He will drink maheu while the meal cooks.

Tichaona, you can use my slippers. I think they will be more comfortable.



The mother is tired.

She has to do everything herself.

Calm down, calm down, mai Tichaona. Let me help you. Take a rest now. I'll be doing part of the work from now on.

Son, when you were a boy, I used to enjoy bathing you. Now with all this weight, I am too old for it. What am I going to do? I have to do everything myself. What a curse!



I sold that bull to send him to the hospital. Now where will we get the money to buy this balanced diet thing?

Baba va Tichaona, what about the traditional food the nurse talked about? The vegetables, corn and fruit we have in the garden are very good for him.



We've run out of bandages for the wound in his foot. Can you give me a supply?

I'm sorry, we haven't received our supply yet. Actually, you can tear up an old bed-sheet that is clean and use it for bandages.

Thank you very much, nurse. We are so happy. Our son is comfortable. He is home where he belongs.



## Questions for discussion

1. Do you think that people who are HIV positive should be ashamed of themselves ? Why ?
2. Does it cost a lot of money to take care of people living with AIDS ? Why ?
3. Do you know people with AIDS who come back to live in their village ? Describe how other villagers feel about them.
4. What type of food is good for HIV/AIDS people ?
5. Normally, who takes care of people living with AIDS ? Why ?
6. Why is Mai Tichaona upset when she bathes Tichaona ? Is it fair that women shoulder most of the care of sick people ? Discuss
7. What do you think people living with AIDS need in their last days?
8. Why is it important for people to die in dignity ?

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 21<sup>st</sup> Century--their images, customs, attitudes and belief. They are aimed at helping readers, women and men, young and old, raise issues and seek answers to questions concerning their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.