

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

The wicked healer

NAMIBA

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

Some other titles in the Literacy 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)
- *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)

For free copies, contact:

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

(ED-2003/WS/41)

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

The wicked healer

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-DANIDA
Workshop for the preparation of gender-sensitive materials
Okashati, Namibia, August 2001**

Original text: Rosalia Nailonga Shatilweh

Artist: Aindongo Isai

First published by UNESCO in July 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 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 a health as well as 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 practice ¹, traditional medicinal practices, superstitions, home-based care and living positively with AIDS.

They have one thing in common— they influence people to protect themselves against 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 the 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.

One summer morning, Ndadilepo went to a traditional healer for treatment. She could not have children. She was married for seven years.

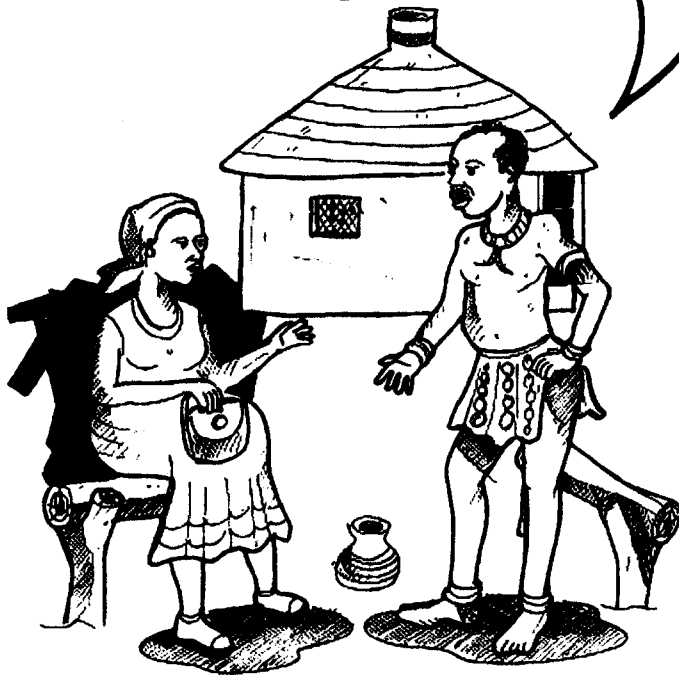
Good morning, Mandala! I need your help. My husband and I have tried for so many years, but I cannot get pregnant.

You have come to the right person. I will help you to get a baby.



How much do I pay? What exactly are you going to do? And what do I have to do? And my husband?

Don't worry ! I am long in the business. All my patients come back to thank me. This will cost you N\$250. And for now, you or your husband will do nothing.



Now, for me to be able to treat you well, you are going to do what I tell you. I have to put some magic herbs in your private part. But I first have to put it on my private parts.

What? Are you sick? How on earth is this possible? What kind of treatment is that?



The Traditional Healer let Ndadilepo into the examination room. He took the black powder and rubbed it on his private parts for a few minutes. Before, Ndadilepo knew it, he was forcing himself inside her.

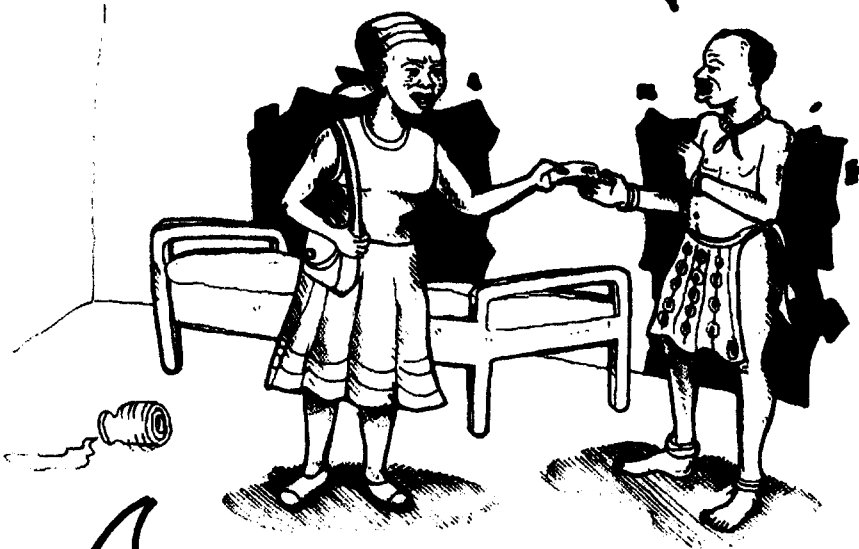
Wuuuuuhhh ! You're killing me. It hurts ! This thing is burning inside me! Hey, what are you doing? You're raping me. Stop. Stop. Oh, my God! You have messed up inside my body!

Don't worry, meme. The herbs are working already. Now, you must go and sleep with your husband.



Ndadilepo was shocked at what happened. She felt great pain inside her.

You must come back for a check-up after three months. Calm down, meme. You asked for it. You need help, right? What's the problem? You women can't make up your mind?



Leave me alone! Take your money. I am going! What kind of a healer are you? Trying to force us to sleep with you. You must be doing this to many other women.

Some days later, Ndadilepo's pain in her lower tummy still continued. She also had some yellowish discharge. She decided to see a nurse.

I have been feeling this strange tummy pain. And, some yellow things are coming out.

We must do some tests on you. Just to be sure of what you have. Then, we'll take care of it. Come back the day after tomorrow for the results.



Two days later...

Your results show that you have an infection down there. We call it gonorrhoea. How do you think you got it? And we need to see your partner too.

What? How? Ghono, what? Is this one of those "shameful diseases"? God, what'll my husband say?



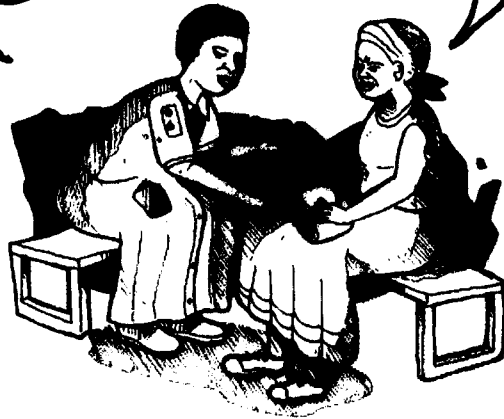
Ndadilepo was so upset and angry. She would be in great trouble if her husband found out. He would surely think that she had slept with another man.

But this is not the end of it. Nowadays it is important to also check if the people with "shameful diseases" also have HIV/AIDS.

The nurse explained to her in detail and advised her to go for an HIV test.

We have taken your blood samples for the HIV test. In three months, we will find out for sure. If you are HIV positive, we'll take care of you. You know that people with HIV often live for many years after they are infected. But it is important that you live healthily.

AIDS ? Is that the new disease? People also call it the killer disease? Oh, my God! Dear nurse. Help me please. I'm scared. Will I die?



The nurse talked to Ndadilepo for a long time. She assured her that she would not be left alone. If Ndadilepo had AIDS, she would need a lot of support from her family. Ndadilepo would need to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, and get a lot of sleep. If Ndadilepo is careful, she could live a normal life for a long time. If she does not have

Finally, the worst came.

Please come with your husband. We need to test him too.

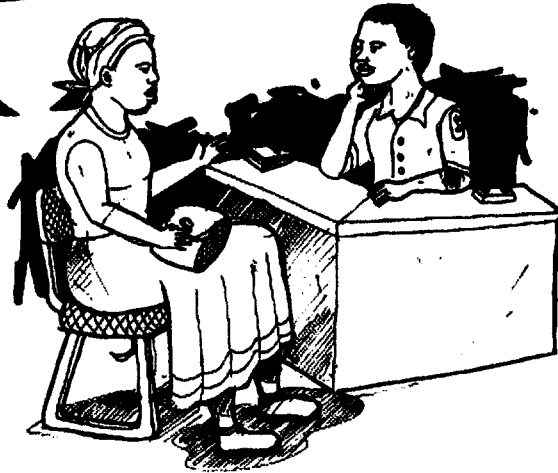


Oh, my God! What will my husband think about me? He'll kill me. It's not my husband. It was the wicked old healer. My husband will think I am a whore!

Ndadilepo explained everything to the nurse about how the Traditional Healer raped her.

Report? No, meme, I don't know anything. I'm just a woman. People told me this man is a good healer. I need a baby badly. My husband would leave me for another woman. Could you help me?

That healer did that to you? It's all a lie. He raped you. He can go to jail for that. Did you report him to the police?



The nurse told Ndadilepo that women fell into this trap. Many healers take advantage of their ignorance and trust. If the healers do this to a lot of women, they could spread some deadly diseases around. Women need to protect themselves.

Ndadilepo and the nurse went right away to the Woman and Child Protection Unit to report the case.

Can you take me to the man who raped you? It's good that you told me about this bad healer. We have so many cases like yours. We must stop this bad healer. We must report this to the police and arrest him.

It's easy for you to say this. Maybe this healer will kill me. Will this policewoman protect me? Humh!



Again, Ndadilepo was afraid. Her life was full of fear.

The policemen and Ndadilepo went to the healer's house.

Several women reported that you raped them. You must come with us to the police station.

Hum! No, no! I do not know what you are saying. Leave me alone! This woman, I don't even know her. She is lying. She's crazy! And you believe her?



The Traditional Healer died of AIDS after a couple of months, before he was prosecuted. Ndadilepo kept asking herself if she could do things differently. She had wanted a baby so badly. She had wanted to be a good wife. But she did not know that she had options. She could have gone to a modern doctor. Ndadilepo learned her expensive lesson.

Women need to step out and protect themselves. It is their right.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Ndadilepo visit the traditional healer?
2. Was it necessary for Ndadilepo to go to the traditional healer?
3. Did Ndadilepo's husband know that she had visited the traditional healer?
4. Was the man a real traditional healer? Why? Do you know a traditional healer? Relate.
5. Should Ndadilepo have reported the rape immediately to the police? Why?
6. Do you think that the traditional healer healed Ndadilepo?
7. How was the attitude of the nurse towards Ndadilepo?
8. Did the traditional healer receive any sentence after he was caught?

There are places where they can go for help. If you have a case to report, contact the following Centres:

Women and Child Protection Unit

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Windhoek | (061)221222 |
| Oshakati | (065)220039 |
| Tsumeb | (067)221961 |
| Opuwo | (065)273148 |
| Walvis Bay | (064)202281 |
| Mariental | (063)241072 |
| Katima Mulilo | (066)253012 |
| Rundu | (066)255025 |
| Luderitz | (063)202255 |
| Keetmanshoop | (063)224337 |

Or go to the nearest Police Station in your area.

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.