

Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series

Kaba's Story

Togo

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

**Adapted from the booklet written at the UNESCO-DANIDA national
workshop for the preparation of gender-sensitive materials
(Lome, Togo)**

Training by Leah Yentchare-Kolani

**Revised by the Section of Literacy and Non-formal Education
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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 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 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.

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

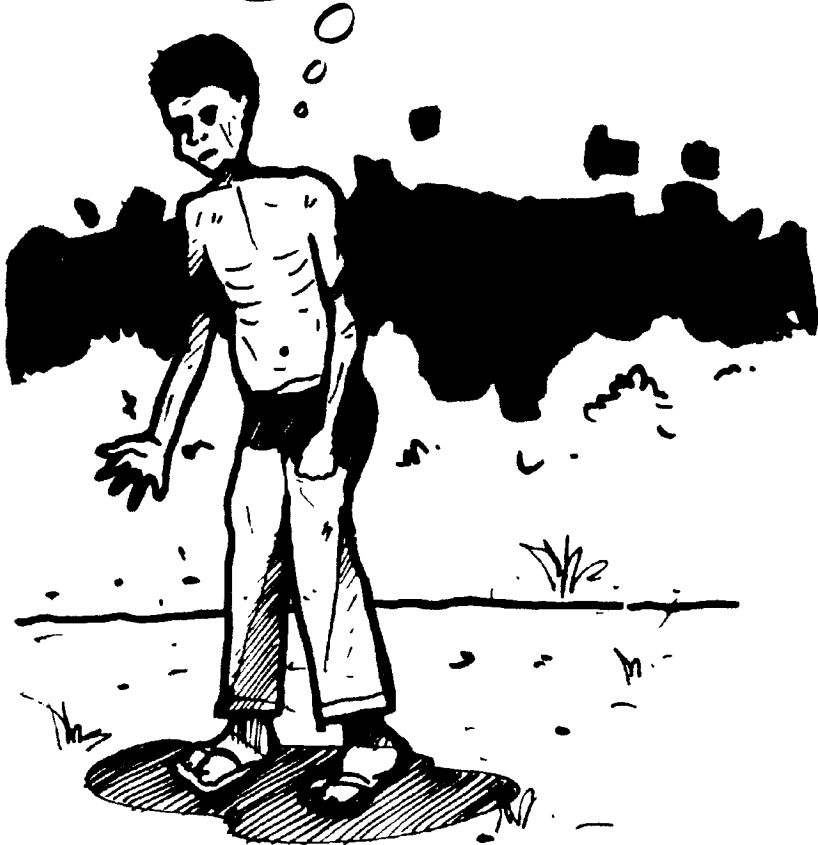
Kaba is 20 years old. He has HIV/AIDS.
His parents are ashamed of him.
They are also afraid of being infected.
They throw him out of the house.



Kaba, you have AIDS. We cannot let you stay. You can get us all sick.

Let's not go near him. Otherwise we might get AIDS.

What a horrible life! What will happen to me?
Even my own parents do not want me any more.
They are disgusted with me.



Kaba, alone in the street, asks himself what his future will be.

Look, friends,
(Kaba is there
under the tree.
He's got AIDS..

Let's get
away from
him.
You don't
want to
have AIDS,
do you?



Hello, friends. What are you talking about? Excuse me, but I have the feeling that you are making fun of Kaba.

So, what do you want? He has AIDS, the disease of shame. Even his own parents threw him out of their house.



Ama, a social worker from the Friendship Hospital, came from the other direction.

Don't be so nasty and foolish. You can eat with people who live with AIDS, play with him, and even sleep with him without getting infected. You just need to be careful.

Oh, you mean that you're not afraid of AIDS? Look at all the Saturday funerals!



Ama explains to her friends that they should not make fun or be afraid of Kaba. Kaba needs love and understanding.

To prove what she has just said, she shakes hands with Kaba.

Hello, dear friend.

What are you doing there, sitting alone?

Look at that. Ama's shaking Kaba's hands. She's talking to him normally. Is she crazy? I wouldn't.



Kaba responds shyly to Ama's greeting.

Kaba, my brother, come and talk with us.

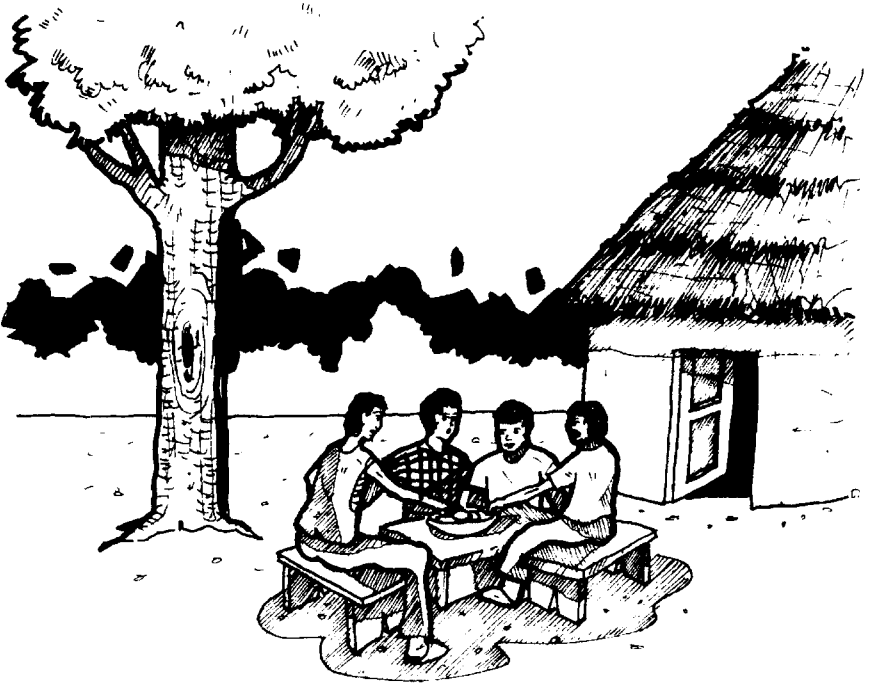
Hello, Kaba. How are you?

Yes, come on Kaba. You must be bored, all alone.



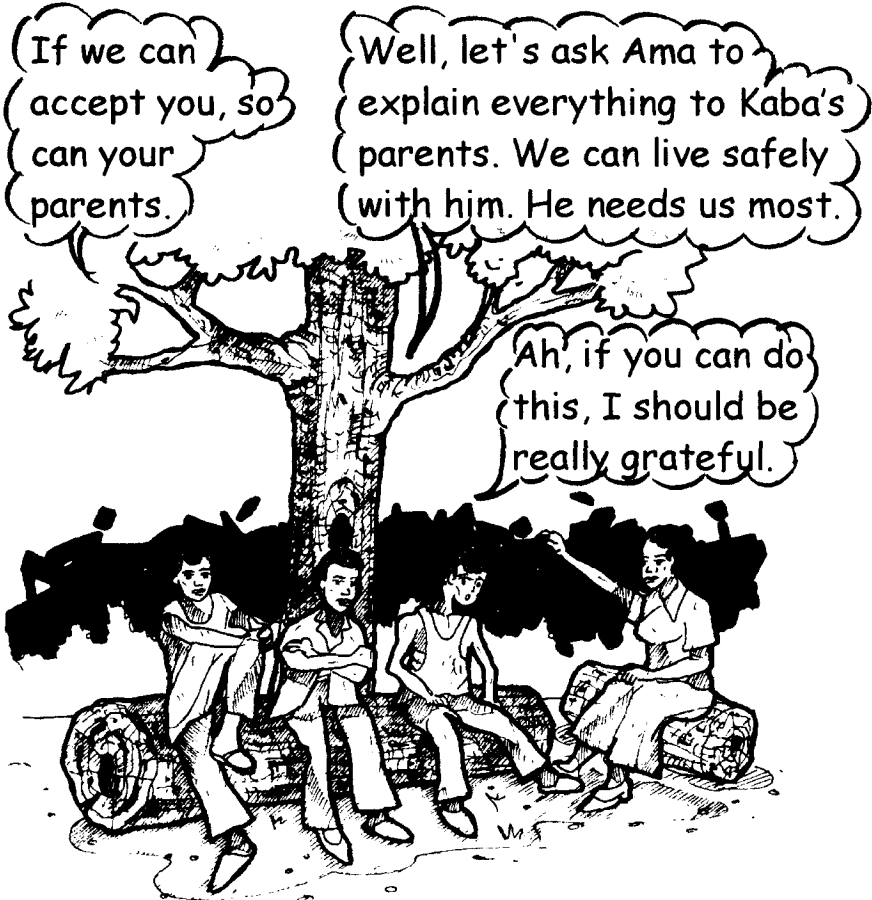
Little by little the fear melts away and the group approaches Kaba.

An attitude of trust builds up in the group that surrounds Kaba. The friends talk more and more easily with him and invite him to eat with them.



Kaba regains his self-confidence. He talks about HIV/AIDS with all his friends now. He hopes they will learn to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS.

His friends' acceptance makes Kaba feel better. He talks about the difficulty he has with his parents.



The group decides to take action. They hope Kaba's family will understand and take him back.

AIDS is transmitted mainly through blood and sex. So don't use the same blades, needles and syringes as Kaba.

Make sure that Kaba does not donate his blood to others.



Ama goes with the group and Kaba to his parents. Together, they explain to them what to do to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS.

Seeing his friends touching and hugging Kaba, his parents are convinced that it's possible to live safely with him. They realize Kaba need them. Slowly, everyone learns to adjust to living with Kaba. Kaba can now cope better with AIDS.



Questions for discussion

1. Why is Kaba so sad?
2. Do you think Kaba's family is wise to throw him out of the house?
3. How do people in your community treat people living with AIDS?
4. Is it possible to live safely with people who have AIDS?
5. What do you have to do to protect yourself from being infected by the HIV virus?
6. How can you support loved ones who are living with AIDS?
7. Can Kaba still be a useful member of his community?
8. Discuss the importance of compassion in days of HIV/AIDS.