

From Tears to Cheers

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Zambia



A product of a UNESCO-DANIDA workshop for the preparation
of post-literacy materials and radio programmes
for women and girls in Africa

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- ***From Tears to Cheers*** (Zambia) Women's financial self-reliance
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A product of a UNESCO-DANIDA workshop for the preparation
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Adapted from a booklet written at a regional workshop
organized by UNESCO

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INTRODUCTION

Political leaders and development specialists around the world have recognised that illiteracy – particularly among women – seriously undermines their education and development efforts. Many believe that literacy programmes need revision to render them relevant to women's lives in today's Africa. Relevant programmes determine whether women will stay in the programmes long enough to benefit fully from the information and skills they offer.

This post-literacy booklet is one of an ever-growing series of learning materials produced under UNESCO-DANIDA's *Special Project for Women and Girls in Africa*. The series presents some sample of the products of the UNESCO Regional and their follow-up National Workshops which took place between 1997 and 2000 in Africa.

During these two-week workshops, African women and men involved in literacy work were introduced to the concept of gender sensitivity and to addressing gender equity issues through basic education. They had, before the workshops began, selected their target communities and carried out needs assessments. The analyses of these assessments at the workshops served as the basis for identifying the priority issues to be addressed in the booklets. Each writer worked on their chosen topic with the support and advice from the entire group and resource persons. The texts were also illustrated with simple line drawings by local illustrators.

The Literacy and Non-formal Education Section, Division of Basic Education of UNESCO edited the text and prepared the design-layout for the final product which will be distributed world-wide.

Though the booklets are intended for use with neo-literate women and out-of-school girls, the messages in the stories and the radio programme scripts that accompany them are also relevant for use as supplementary reading materials in formal schools for readers of both sexes.

The subjects of the booklets, based on the needs assessments, reflect a wide range of needs and conditions of African women – from Senegal to Kenya, from Mali to South Africa, from Niger to Malawi. A list of common concerns has emerged. These include: HIV-AIDS, domestic violence, the exploitation of girls employed as domestic servants, the lack of positive role models for women and girls, the economic potential of women through small business development, the negative consequences of child marriage, and the need for a more equal division of labour between men and women in the home.

Each booklet describes one way of treating a subject of high priority to African women. In the process, the authors have attempted to render the material gender-sensitive. They have tried to present African women and girls and their families in the African context and view the issues and problems from their perspective.

We hope these booklets will inspire readers, as they did their authors, to reflect on some of life's common situations, problems and issues that ordinary women and men face every day. The questions accompanying each booklet will help readers ask questions and find answers to some of the issues which also touch their own lives. How the characters in these booklets cope with specific situations, their trials and tribulations, can serve as lessons for women and men living together in 21st Century Africa.

My name is Kasiya.

My husband was a labourer in a co-operative farm. He didn't earn much money.

With our two small children and a new baby, life was pretty hard.

As a girl, I only went to school for two years.

With so little education, what could I do to help my family?



When Mary and Simon came home from school, they would ask me questions. I didn't want to admit that I couldn't help them. But I couldn't even read. Why didn't my father let me finish school? I fretted. What could I tell them?

Mama, mama, Mrs. Meluga told us to do this by tomorrow. She said you could read it for me.

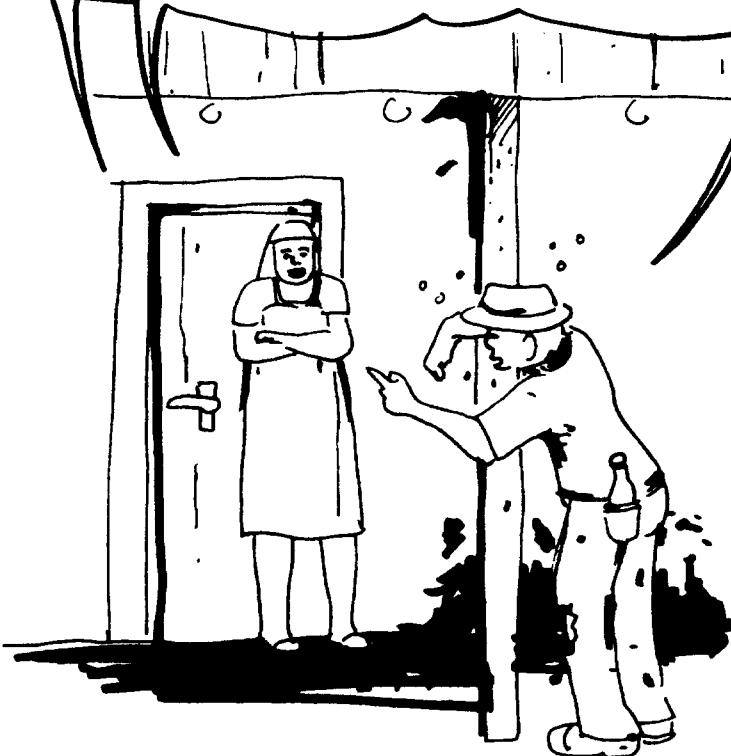


One day, my husband came home drunk.

Again?! When are you going to stop this drinking? You know we need to save every bit of money for the children's school fee?

Shut up, woman! It's my money. Since when are you my boss?

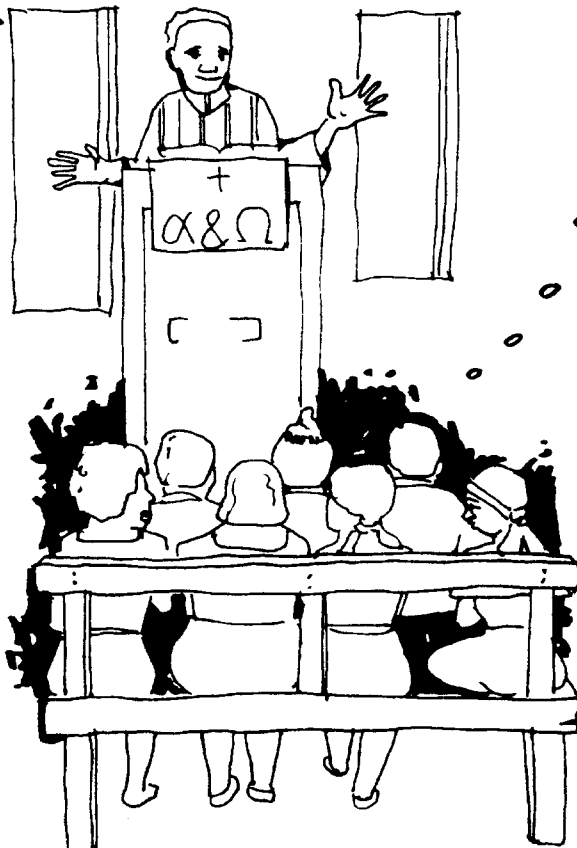
Don't you dare touch me! If you beat me again, I'll leave you for good.



I had never been to church before. One day, I decided to go.

There is now a literacy class in our village. Teacher Mponda can teach you how to read and write. You will also learn to make things.

A class? For adults? Hmmm...



That night...

My husband, I think I'd like to go to a class. The priest said women meet on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Even at my age, I can still learn something.

What for? Women don't need much schooling!
You have children to care for.
And what about me?



Okay... You can join the class if you really want to... But who'll look after the children?

It would be nice if you could take care of them, just for a short time.



You won't believe this, but my husband actually looked after the baby while I went to class. And he did it quite well. Still, he wouldn't let anyone see him feed the baby. He was afraid other men would say he "let his wife sit on his head."

The children became much closer to him. He would never admit it, but he's very proud of himself. I'd say he's a pretty good father!



In my class...

One day, a woman came from town. She said we could get help to start a business. She told us to go to the Women's Financial Trust Bank.

Women like you can get a loan from the bank.



At the bank...

I talked to the bank manager, Ruth Nonde. She became a very important person to me. She was so helpful. We filled the forms out together. I was so happy when I signed my name. Rose said that it would take some time, but I would get a loan.



Finally, the important day came. Ruth called me from the bank. I couldn't believe it. The loan was approved.

I know.
I'm so happy.

You see, you tried hard.
You learned new things.
You looked for help.
You were patient.
And now it pays off.



My own shop...

After I got the loan, I bought three molds for making clay stoves that cook faster and better.

I asked my friends, Kateka and Katebe, to make stoves with me. We started small, but soon lots of people wanted our stoves.

After a while, my husband joined us, too. I taught him how!



We made more and more stoves.
Women from the villages and the district
town of Mangsa came to buy them.

It's a good business.
I feel much better about myself.

Those days of darkness, before I learned to
read, now seem long ago and unreal.



Of all the things I do now, I enjoy reading with my children the most. My husband reads with us. I help him to remember the words he has forgotten how to read and write.



We are a real couple now, who work together and share each other's burdens.
I can hardly believe this is the same man who used to get drunk and beat me.

You're a wonderful example for the women in our village.



Questions

1. What can illiterate women do?
2. What could have been the reason for Mwape's drinking?
3. Is Kasiya's plan to leave Mwape if he beats her again a fair decision? Why or why not?
4. Why doesn't Mwape want Kasiya to spend too much time in school?
5. Kasiya came up with the idea of making a clay stove. What is special about these stoves?
6. What do you think of Ruth Nonde's job?
7. If you were applying for a loan, what kinds of problems would you run into? How could you overcome these problems?
8. Do you think Mwape benefited from helping to take care of the children?
9. What could other fathers and husbands learn from reading about Mwape in this story?

Written by Africans for Africans, this booklet is part of a growing series of booklets prepared during training workshops to produce gender-sensitive materials organized in the context of the DANIDA-UNESCO Special Project for Education of Girls And Women in Africa.

The workshops have been hailed as a great success by organizers and participants alike. They are an effort to respond to urgent issues and problems facing African women and men today. These booklets reflect the language, images, customs, social norms, attitudes and beliefs of real people whether they be nomads or villagers. They particularly try to help readers raise issues and find their own answers to their pressing needs.