

Parents Should Go to School

Sidonie Coudou

Bienvenue A. Tindokpo

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Adapted from a booklet prepared at a national workshop
organized by UNESCO

Written by Sidonie Coudou and Bienvenue A. Tindokpo

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

Translated from the original French text by Elaine Taylor

Edited by Cynthia Joerger

Graphic design and layout by
Charupan Jayanandana

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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 there is a need to make literacy programmes more relevant, so that woman will remain in the programmes long enough to benefit fully from the skills and information they offer.

This post-literacy booklet is one of a growing series of learning materials produced under UNESCO-DANIDA's *Special Project for Women and Girls in Africa*. The series presents a sample of the products of the regional and national workshops which UNESCO organised 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 the idea of addressing gender equity issues through basic education. Before the workshops began, they selected their target communities and carried out needs assessments. By analysing these assessments at the workshops, each group established a list of the priority issues to be addressed in the booklets. Each writer worked on his or her chosen topic with the support and advice of peers, the workshop facilitators and other resource persons. Local illustrators then illustrated the texts with simple line drawings.

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

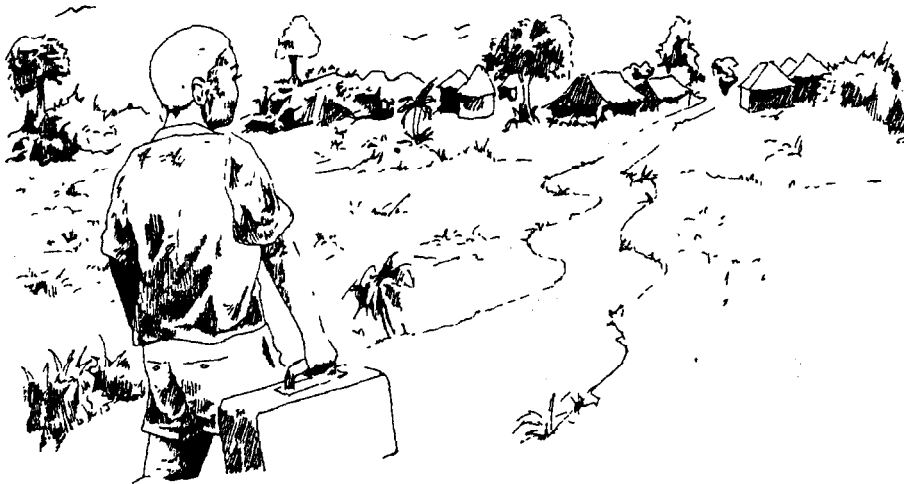
Though the booklets are intended for use with neo-literate women and out-of-school girls, the messages in these stories, and the radio programme scripts that accompany them, are also relevant for use as supplementary reading materials in formal schools for readers of both sexes.

The subjects of the booklets, based on the needs assessments, reflect a wide range of needs and conditions of women in Africa – from Senegal to Kenya, from Mali to South Africa, from Niger to Malawi. Over the course of this project, 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 depicts 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 an African context, and portray the issues and problems from their perspective.

We hope these booklets will inspire readers, as they did their authors, to reflect on some of the life situations, problems and issues that ordinary women and men face every day. The questions that accompany the booklets will help readers ask questions and find answers to issues that effect them in everyday life. The ways in which characters in these booklets cope with specific situations, rising above their trials and tribulations, could serve as lessons for women and men living together in 21st Century Africa.

**Dansou goes to school in the city. He lives
with his Aunt Cica.**



**He comes back to his village to spend the
holidays at home with his parents.**

The next morning...

*Mother, Auntie
gave me a package
for you.*



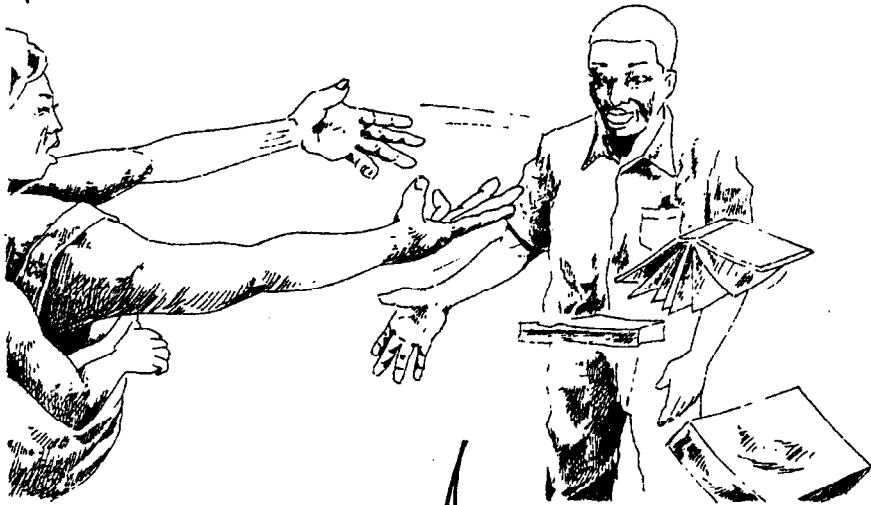
*Material for a new outfit,
I bet. Ha! I'll be the
most beautiful women in
the village.*

*Wait a minute...
What's this??*



A book?!!

*What good is that?
What can I do with
a book?*



*But, Mum, it's written
in our own language!!
Maybe you should
learn to read!*

No, son, I can't go to school. Where would I find the time to sit down and read?



*And you know your father...
he'd never allow it.*

*Just think of all I have to do in
a day - cooking, washing,
taking care of your brothers and
sisters, fetching water, and
wood...*

*And on top of all that the work
in the field!..*

But, Mum, Auntie is also a woman, and she's been able to learn!



What? Cica knows how to read and write? And your uncle? He agreed?

Dansou also speaks with his father...

*Things aren't the way
they used to be, Dad.
Men can do housework
too, you know!*



*Ha! Ha! Dansou, that's
ridiculous! You mean
men should do things like
cooking or cleaning? Are
you crazy?*

Exactly! At Auntie's, I do the cooking. She has too much to do at home, and she goes to school, too. We have to help her.



Oh my! What has school done to our son?

*Look, already, the
children are in school...*



*... If the parents join them,
who will work in the fields?*

*Relax, Dad. You can do both.
Adult classes meet in the
evening.*



*In literacy classes, you can learn
many useful things. Look at these
pictures.*

*Here, the farmers are learning to
use and take care of farming
machines. And this here is about
running co-operatives.*

*Here, they are learning to buy and
sell.*

**After a long and heated discussion,
Dansou's parents agreed to think
about joining the village literacy class.**



*Dad, and you too Mum, will be a
good example for the entire village!
We could even read together. I can
bring you books from town. I'd be
very proud of you.*

Questions

1. Are there boys in your village who live in town to go to school?
2. Are there also girls who go to town for schooling? More or fewer than boys? Why?
3. Why did Dansou's mother throw the book away?
4. Why did Dansou's mother think she could not go to school?
5. Should adults go to school? Why or why not?
6. Why did Dansou do housework at his aunt's house?
7. Do you think it's bad that Dansou had to help with housework at his aunt's house? Why or why not?
8. What are the advantages of going to school?
9. Do you think that Dansou's parents will decide to attend literacy class? Why or why not?