

# Me, You and AIDS

Kenya

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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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Adapted from a booklet written at the national workshop  
organized by UNESCO Chair, University of Nairobi and the Kenyan National  
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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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa.

One hot afternoon, two visitors came to see the matatu drivers and touts at the bus terminus. They asked the men to come together.

We're here as your guests. We've come to ask if you want to hear a presentation on HIV/AIDS.

Yeah, we need that, but we have other problems, too.



Like what?

Trouble with the police.  
That's a big problem.

Yeah, like last week, I spent the  
whole weekend in jail because I  
refused to drop "chai" for the  
"karau" at the meeting place.





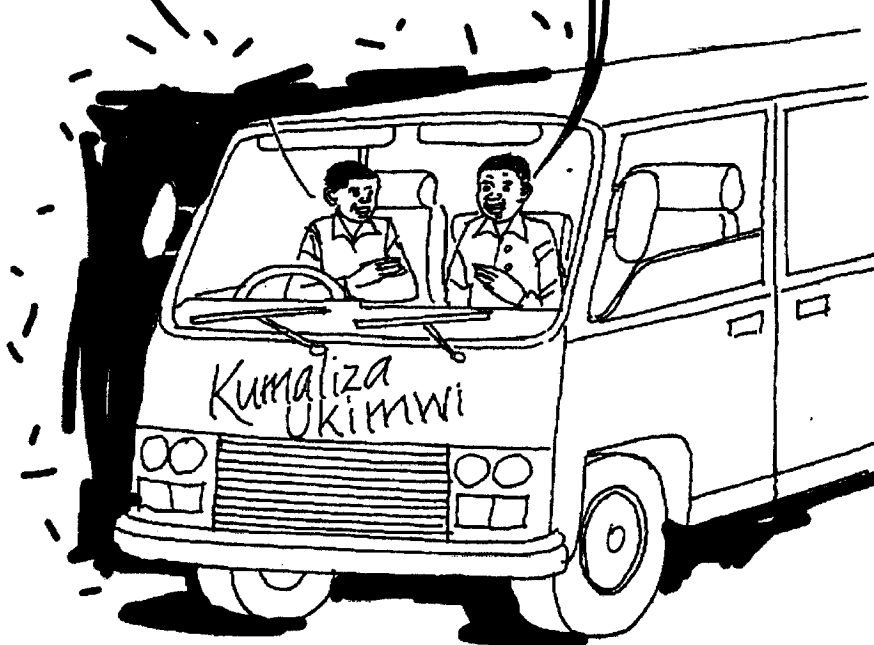
And we're worried about dealing with accident victims in these times of HIV/AIDS.



After some discussion, the visitors agreed to come back to talk to the group about some of their problems.

So why didn't you come to work yesterday? You had no "dinga"?

No. I have a much more serious problem. After being with Jane - you know, my "supuu" - I got some kind of funny disease. I had a terrible pain in my private parts.



Oh, too bad. That's happened to me, too. But Jane looks like a pretty decent girl...

She's a decent girl. I don't understand how she could have something like this...

Have you seen a doctor?

No, It's no big deal I took some "Suta" capsules and I think they're working...



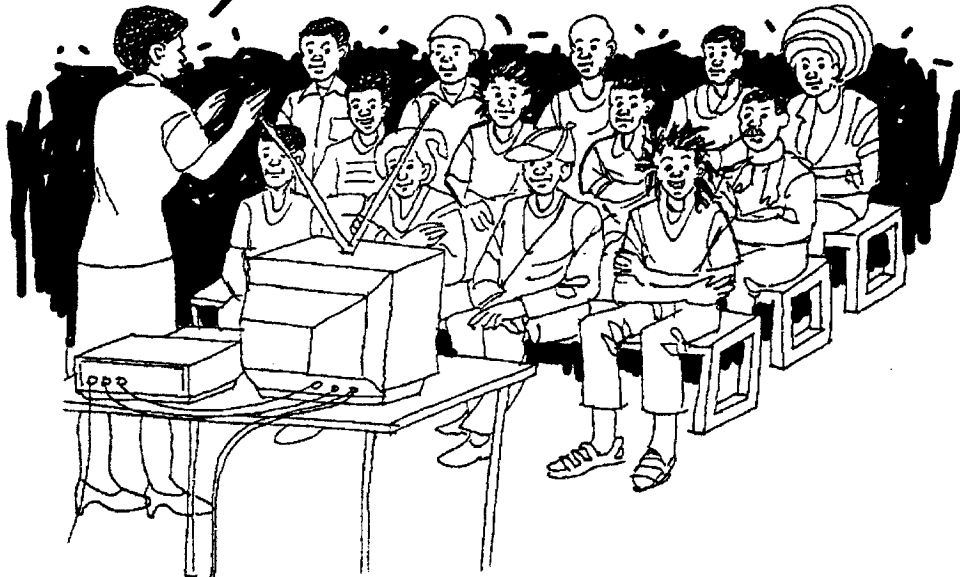
Yeah, and next time,  
be more careful.

How? You mean condoms?  
Yeah, I know about them, but  
that spoils all the fun. I like  
it "mundu-ko-mundu".



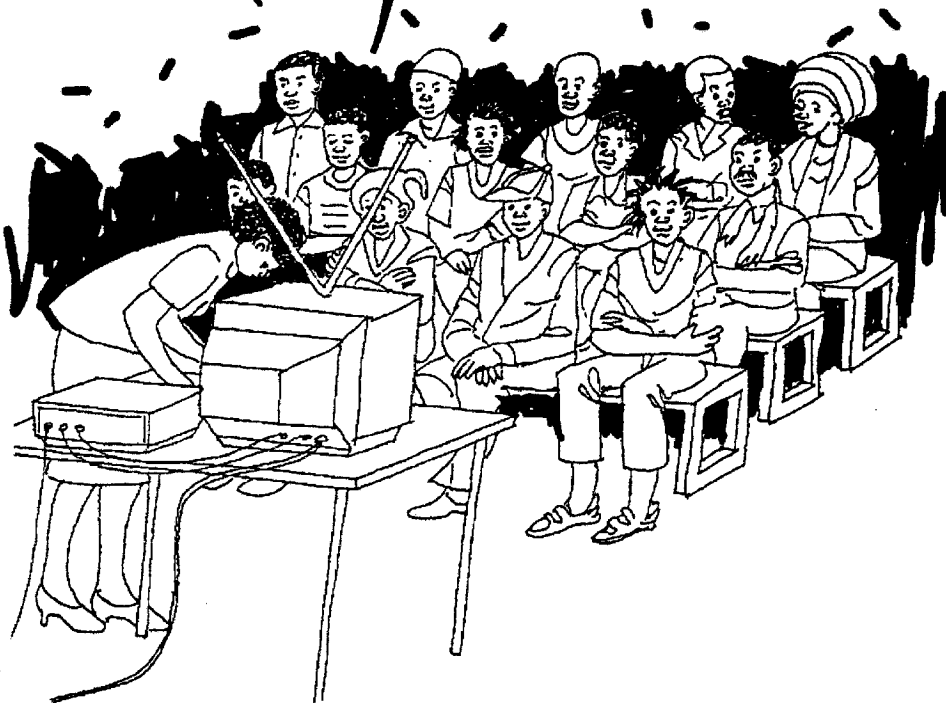
The lecture was held in one of the social halls at the Matatu terminus. Business that day was slow. Out of curiosity, many people attended the lecture.

My name is Doctor Lisa. I come from the Grogan Treatment Centre. I'm here to talk about sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs, for short.



Sexually-transmitted diseases?  
Eh, this dame uses big words.  
Does she just mean gonorrea  
and syphillis and AIDS? What  
does she think she can teach us?

How do I know?  
Let's listen!



"You must know that some STDs can make you sterile. Some of them don't show any symptoms for years. Some people are walking around with the AIDS virus and don't know it. Others cause symptoms like pain, a burning sensation or sores in and around the private parts."



"If you have any of these symptoms, or any time you have sex without using a condom, you must remember the risk of AIDS and sterility. It's best to see a doctor."

It's a good thing that lady came. She talked about that problem I had. I must say, women today know and do so many things. We need to change our ways. If we don't, we may get some incurable infection, or even die.

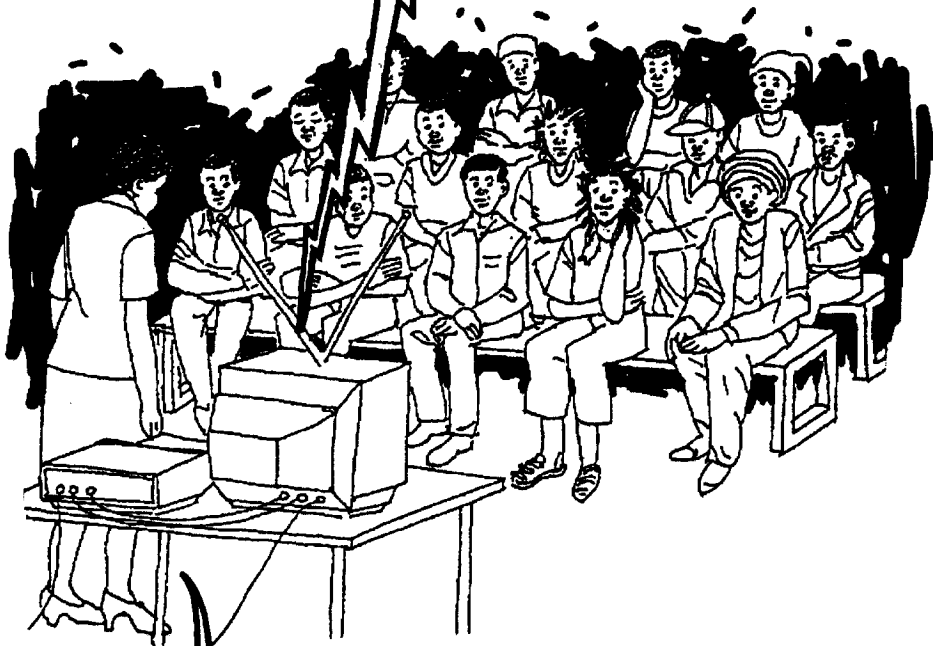
Look who's talking! Not too long ago, she was a "dame". Now she's a lady!

So? I can change my mind, can't I? If she's intelligent, I'd say so. Why not? I'm man enough!





We all know about HIV and AIDS from seeing posters and hearing about it on the radio and TV. But more people are dying from AIDS than you know. In some cities in Africa, two out of every five people die from AIDS,



AIDS kills. But first, it makes you very sick for a long time. How would you continue to make a living if you were sick for so long? Who would look after your family?

Most adults get AIDS by having sex with someone already infected without using a condom or by sharing needles for injecting medicine or other drugs.



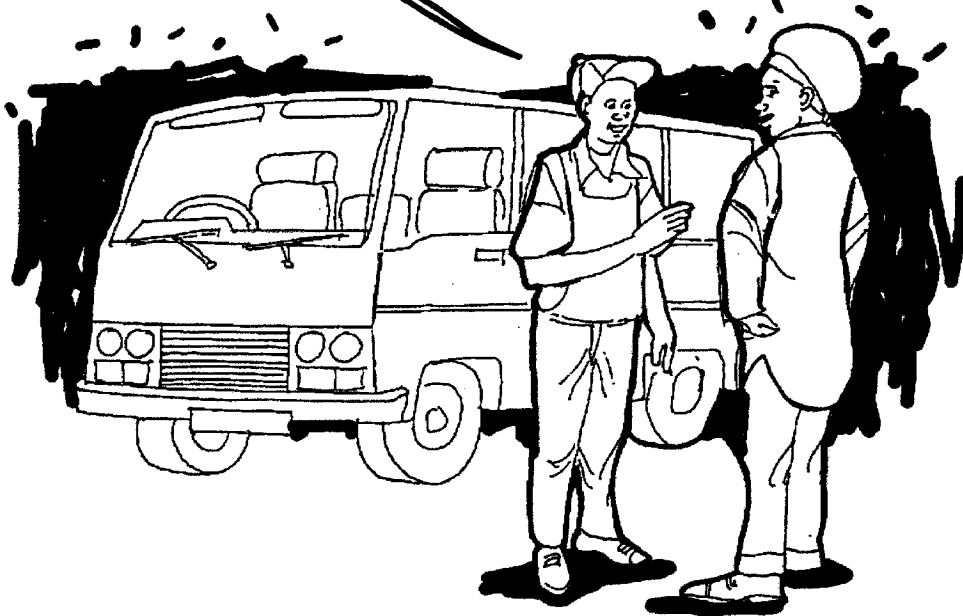
You can also get this disease if you receive infected blood during an operation. Any time blood from an infected person mixes with your blood, even through a very small cut or wound, you are at risk of getting this disease.

Use a condom every time you have sex. If you and one person get along well, you both may want to stop using condoms. Before you do, you must go to a clinic for an AIDS test. If neither of you has HIV/AIDS, then you can do it "mundo-ko-mundo". But to be safe, you must stick with that one person and that person must stick with you. If you have sex with others partners, use condoms. Always.



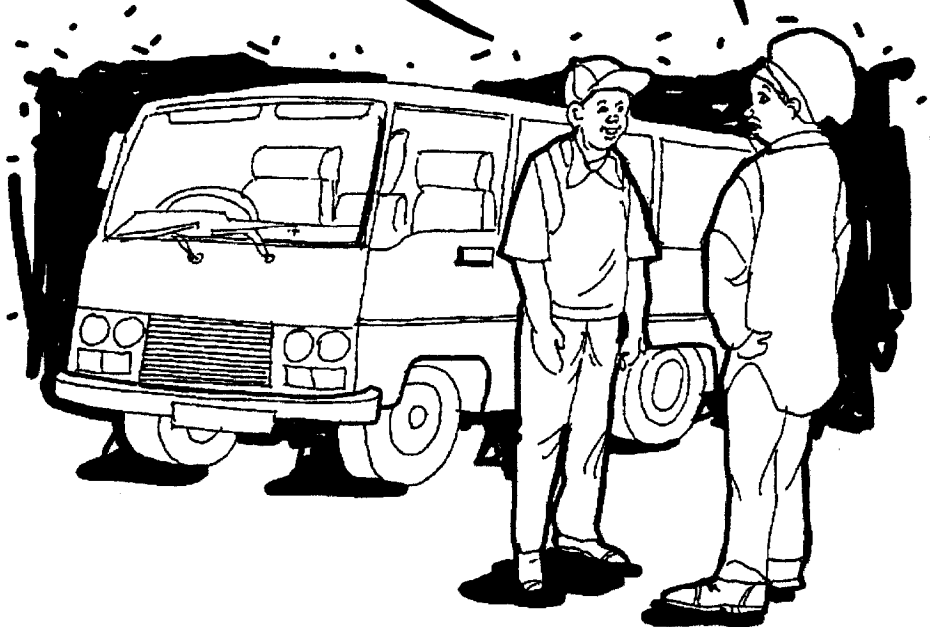
Did you hear about the ABCs of AIDS? 'A' is for Abstinence, 'B' for Being faithful to our wives and 'C' is for using Condoms.

Yes, we have choices. If you've currently got an STD, you should use 'A', After you're cured, you can choose between 'B' or 'C'.



So what are you going to do about your "supuu" and the Karumaindo bar?

I don't know. All that drinking leads to loose sex. And we can't just blame the 'supuus', If the 'supuus' give us AIDS, who gives it to them? No, both men and women spread AIDS... Both sides will have to take responsibility for preventing it.



It's not so simple, this whole AIDS thing. But it's important to talk about it. Who knows? One of us could have it already.

We should get tested. Once I know I'm clean, I'm going to start doing things differently.



1. Why is it important to know about sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs)?
2. How can a person protect him or herself from getting an STD?
3. Why is HIV/AIDS considered the worst of all the STDs?
4. How do you get the AIDS virus?
5. Are "suppus" the cause of the AIDS problem? Why or why not?
6. Could someone who looks like a "decent" woman or man be infected with the AIDS virus?
7. Why is it important to talk with your partner about STDs and HIV/AIDS?
8. When is it safe to have sex "mundo-ko-mundo"?
9. What are the ABCs of AIDS?
10. How would your life change if you got infected with the AIDS virus?

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.