

AIDS AIDS AIDS AIDS

STEPS FOR THE FUTURE

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Promotions and Publications

The role of the librarian in the community has evolved from provider of books and information to becoming more actively involved in the community. The public expect the librarian to provide assistance, support and information on a variety of social and health issues as they may feel inhibited by social structures and conventions to approach other knowledgeable role players in the community who would be more suitable to perform that function.

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome, generally known as AIDS, has reached pandemic proportions, but ignorance about this disease is rife. Librarians should make use of all means available to inform the community about the spreading of the disease, living with AIDS and the implications it has in AIDS victims' lives and those they come into contact with. Information about AIDS will empower them to make informed decisions and take charge of situations they might be confronted with.

The Western Cape Provincial Library Service has taken a number of videos on AIDS into stock and will continue to do so. Librarians should take note of the latest material recently received and not yet catalogued - a series called *Steps for the future* dealing with AIDS-related issues. Quite a few titles are available in more than one language, which make them accessible to a variety of library patrons,

Issues addressed include the attitudes of religious groups, interviews with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) positive groups, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and an attempt to make

children between the ages of five to eight aware of HIV/AIDS. Other topics include the life stories and endeavours of AIDS activist Zackie Achmat and South African gay and lesbian liberation movement pioneers Simon Nkoli and Bev Ditsie. Several human interest stories make the threat of this killer virus real and the stories would be easy for library patrons to relate to.

Religious groups

Body and soul / director, Melody Emmett.

HIV/AIDS is forcing religious leaders to reassess their traditional attitudes to sexuality in a country where 90% of the population claim one sort of religious affiliation or another. During the struggle against apartheid the churches played a leading role in the fight for freedom. Today millions of people are in a desperate situation because of HIV/AIDS. What role do the clergy play in this new struggle for human rights? **Body & soul** looks at the attitudes of three main religions in South Africa through people on the ground who have to interpret and practise religion in terms of today's realities.

HIV positive groups

***Dreams of a good life** and **Gotta give** / directors, Bridget Pickering and Eddie Edwards.

A film of laughter, fear and the solace of sharing. Five women talk about life, love and how their dreams for the future have changed since finding out they are HIV positive. The women now examine their relationships with men more openly than ever before. A film with and about HIV positive women. / A music video featuring

Moodphase sive and *Godessa* with a message for young women: take control and use your power to negotiate your relationships. This upbeat film uses a popular form to promote the empowerment of female identity.

* **Ho ea rona** and **Tsoga** / directors, Dumisani Phakati and Sechaba Ramotoai.

Ho ea rona (We are going forward) is a short film about four friends. Thabiso was a national boxer; Thabo, known to his friends as Kwasa Kwasa, is a DJ; Bimbo, a true intellectual, is a man of short sentences; and Moalosi is an AIDS activist. All four are HIV positive. They meet to reflect on their lives, to cry, to reminisce - but also, most importantly, to laugh. / A Soweto school made headlines after 70% of their students were reported to have tested HIV positive. Ignorance and fear became the agents for discrimination. Years later, Joyce, an ex-learner shares her experiences of being raped as a young girl and suffering discrimination after testing HIV positive. Having overcome the challenges posed by her HIV status, she provides a source of guidance and encouragement.

A luta continua / director, Jack Lewis.

'HIV is not a death sentence!', say the HIV positive group from Khayelitsha. They tell their stories in a series of short films which are then screened at taxi ranks and shopping malls in Cape Town's townships. This powerful film about courage in the face of death includes footage of the group process, the short films themselves and their public screenings. Although they were too young to be part of the struggle against apartheid, they face a new struggle in their lifetime. They decide to call the film **A luta continua** - the struggle continues.

Mother-to-child transmission

Mother to child / director, Jane Thandi Lipman.

The prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV - the statistics, the people - come vividly to life in this documentary, which follows the lives of two pregnant and HIV positive women lucky enough to be part of a drug trial at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. The film charts the lives of Pinkie and Patience as they approach the delivery of their babies. It reveals their expectations, hopes and inevitable fears concerning not only the

health of their babies, but the trauma around the disclosure of their status to their families and partners as well.

For young children

True friends / director, Bert Sonnenschein.

A trilogy of short films using hand-made animal puppets to dramatise different issues around HIV/AIDS, making them easily accessible to young children five to eight years old.

Activists and pioneers

It's my life / director, Brian Tilley.

Zackie Achmat is an AIDS activist who refuses to take anti-retrovirals until they are made freely available. After defeating the multi-national drug companies, he takes on the South African government for its confusing policies around HIV/AIDS. When Zackie gets ill, his provocative position is not one all his friends and colleagues support. Everyone wants to know why he refuses to take the medicines that would let him lead a healthier life. Shot over five months, personal and public images are interwoven to provide an intimate look at an internationally profiled defiance campaign and the complexities of its leading figure.

Simon & I / directors, Beverley Palesa Ditsie and Nicky Newman.

Simon & I recounts the lives of two giants in the South African gay and lesbian liberation movement, Simon Nkoli and the filmmaker herself, Bev Ditsie. The story is narrated by Bev, both as a personal statement and a political history. Through good times and bad, their relationship is viewed against a backdrop of intense political activism and the HIV/AIDS crisis. Their converging and diverging lives, culminating in Simon's death, are revealed in this heartfelt testament using a mixed format of interviews and archive footage.

Human interest stories

A fighting spirit / director, Leo Phiri.

A national hero turns public enemy when he confesses his tragic secret. Gilbert Josamu, Zimbabwean middle-weight boxing champion, discovered he was HIV positive at the height of his career. Living in a society where HIV/AIDS is taboo, Josamu forged his medical certificate and continued to pursue his career. Just months before he died, he finally confessed to having lived

with HIV for 14 years. The public outrage that followed forced him into his toughest fight yet - the battle for acceptance. This is a story told by those who are still alive.

Looking for Busi / director, Robyn Hofmeyr.

Here is the incredible story of a fifteen-year-old's journey to take control of her life. Abandoned by her mother when she falls pregnant, even before testing positive for HIV, she must depend on the help of extended family and friends. Life starts to look up when Busi is chosen both for a mother-to-child drug trial and to be the subject of a television documentary. But after the television programme is aired on South African television, exposing her HIV status to the world, she disappears. Desperately worried, the filmmaker and her best friend go looking for her.

Other titles in this series

A red ribbon around my house

***The ball** and **The sky in her eyes**

Dancing on the edge

Eclipse

***Guilty** and **The moment**

Heavy traffic

House of love

Imiti ikula

***Let's talk about it** and **Dispel your attitudes**

Love in a time of sickness

***Master Positive** and **Not afraid**

A miner's tale

***Ndodii** and **Big balls**

Night stop

***That's me;** and **Choose life**

Wa'n wina

For more reviews and titles on HIV/AIDS refer to the article *AIDS in Africa on video*, by Freddy Ogterop in *CL* May/June 2001 pp 42-43.

* Two titles on one video.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, *Film/Video/DVD Selector*.

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