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# Package 78, Script 8

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## Pass on the Message and Not the Virus

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**Notes to Broadcaster**

The number of people dying from the AIDS pandemic is alarming. But, though the virus is destroying entire communities, some people are finding it hard to believe that the disease is real. HIV/AIDS is seen as a "slow poison", and is often blamed on witchcraft. Some people think it is God’s punishment. In the drama that follows, villagers come face to face with the reality, that AIDS is real and that AIDS kills.

As always, adapt the script by using information and music which are relevant to your local situation.

**Characters**

Narrator

Ma Biy - Wife of Pa Ngong

Pa Ngong - Husband to Ma Biy

Tah - Pa Ngong’s friend

Lamfu - Leader of the Men’s mobilization forum (MMF)

Nurse - Female nurse in the Health Center

Ma Nkem - Bereaved lady

Joe - Village town crier

Fooy - Pregnant woman with AIDS

Fon – Elderly traditional ruler

**Narrator:** Welcome to the program. The title of today’s drama is”Pass on the message and not the virus.” Please remember that, although our drama is a story and doesn’t speak about real people in a real village, the situations that it depicts are very real.

***Music: John Minang on HIV/AIDS. 20 seconds then fade out.***

***Sound of* *a* *baby* *crying. Footsteps approaching and knock on the door.***

**Ma Biy:** Pa Ngong! Where are you? Where are you, husband? There is bad news.

**Pa Ngong:** What is it, woman? Can you people not stop gossiping in this house?

**Ma Biy:** Eeh! Eeh? Can you believe that Bonjeh’s son, the one who works near our coffee farm down the valley of Ngham, is no more? He … he died. He died on the coast working as a labourer.

**Pa Ngong:** Shut up! Who told you?

**Ma Biy:** Ma Nkem. He died of AIDS.

**Tah:** (o*ff mic*) What is happening here? Why are you people quarrelling, Ngong?

**Pa Ngong**: Bad news about Bonjeh’s son.

**Tah:** (*off mic*) What happened?

**Pa Ngong**: Ask my wife.

**Tah:** (*calling out*) Biy! Biy! Come out here - what happened?

**Ma Biy:** (*sobbing and crying*) Bad news … Ngum died yesterday in …

**Tah:** Oh! (*Clapping his hands*) Slow poison, again.

**Pa Ngong:** We must take revenge. Someone has killed that boy because of his wealth.

**Tah:** He came home to get married and then left his wife here two months ago. (*Sighs*) Poor girl! She will probably be sick soon.

**Ma Biy**: Before he left here, he was infected with AIDS.

**Pa Ngong**: (*angrily*) Leave this place, leave! Gossips! You think that nurse knows more than our oracle in Lumetu?

**Tah**: Let’s go, Ngong. We must discuss this with the other men.

***Music slowly fades in*. *As the intensity* *increases, there’s the sound of* *clapping, music and jubilation*. *Then fade under.***

**Lamfu:** (*sharp and vibrant voice*)**:** You are all welcome to this development forum. (*Appreciative responses in the background)* All you Oku people here are gifted in traditional medicine. We have so many herbs in Lake Oku we could fight a war! (*Cheers in background*) Next week we will start digging the road to Elak and Feking, so prepare yourselves! After some dancing we will get news, then more wine.

***Music, dancing and shouting* *fades up then under.***

**Lamfu:** Who has news about the development of this village?

**Voice off mic:** (*loud whisper*) Pa Ngong has an issue.

**Lamfu:** Go ahead Ngong. (*Loudly*) Stop the noise! *(Cut music)*

**Pa Ngong:** Ma Bonjeh’s son is … is …no more. He died on the coast, my wife said. The health workers said it’s AIDS.

***Silence for a few seconds, then some one coughs.***

**Male voice:** It’s witchcraft …slow poison. I can’t believe it - that boy was too rich … They must have killed him to take his wife and …

**2nd Male voice:** (*interrupting*) Yes! The gods of the village may be angry. We must consult the gods to find out about the boy’s death.

***Noise and arguments.***

**Lamfu:** Silence! Silence! Let’s all go home. I will meet with the health worker personally.

***Sounds of voices dispersing in various directions.***

***Music: on AIDS. 15 seconds then fade out*.**

**Lamfu:** Nurse, nurse … are you there? The road to this Mbam is too

long.

**Nurse:** Who is that? Pa Lamfu, is that you? Enter! How are your people and your farm?

**Lamfu** *(coming on mic)***:** Better! Thank you for the seat.

**Nurse:** Take some kola.

**Lamfu:** Nurse, why are you deceiving our people? Why is it that when our people die you must gossip? You are causing our wives to be stubborn and to lie.

**Nurse:** What have I done and said to cause this?

**Lamfu:** Who said Bonjeh son of Ngham died of AIDS?

**Nurse:** (*laughs*) Well, it is not my place to say yes or no to this question. But many people are dying.

**Lamfu:** Why are you talking about it so much to our wives and people?

**Nurse:** The disease has no cure. Not even the traditional doctors near Lake Oku can cure it. It’s killing thousands of people. If you sleep with more than one woman you can get it.

**Lamfu:** I… I…I hope you are not abusing the Fon, our leader, who has 120…

**Nurse:** (*interrupting*) No, no! He should stick to them and they should stick to him. Did you know that last year 413 people died in Oku from AIDS and 304 are infected and a majority of them are youths? If you doubt my words, Pa Lamfu, come and we will visit some patients.

**Lamfu:** Yes, let’s go!

***Sound of door closing, pause, then* *persistent knocking.***

**Nkem:** Yes… enter. Welcome to you, nurse.

**Nurse:** How are you today?

**Nkem:** Better. I have food to eat but no drugs to take … my husband is still on the coast and my son is no more …

**Lamfu:** (*dismayed*) Ohhh …

**Nkem:** (*sobbing*) I hear my husband is also sick ... I’m dying of malaria every day.

**Nurse:** Come to the clinic tomorrow and we will give you some drugs.

**Lamfu:** *(nervously)* Eh, let’s go.

### Sound of door closing

**Lamfu:** (*shouting*) Doctor Bakum - the traditional doctor - is having sex with that sick girl whose husband went to the coast.

**Nurse:** Yes, we know of other traditional doctors who have died in this manner.

**Lamfu:** (*shouting*) Chee-eh! (*Sound fades as he runs off*)

***Music with AIDS theme, then fade out*.**

**Lamfu:** Please, son, take the talking drum and convene a village meeting! You hear? Tell the men, children, women, girls … we want them in the Fon’s palace.

**Joe:** Yes, Papa.

Sound of baby crying, noise of an axe splitting wood. Then, fade in sound of woman crying.

**Ma Biy:** What is it? What’s wrong?

**Fooy:** I am…. pregnant and the doctor said I am HIV-positive … (*sobbing*) How can I convince my husband that another pregnancy can take away my life when he doesn’t believe that AIDS exists because he is a herbalist?

**Ma Biy:** Take it easy … you must go for antiretroviral drugs. The nurse says she will talk to the people who make the drugs soon. And try to convince your husband that he must have a test for AIDS and use safe sex. Using antiretroviral drugs alone is not enough.

**Joe:** (*loud and clear, like a town crier*) Meeting today at the village head’s compound! Men! Women! Girls and boys should be there.

***Pause then noise of village congregating. Three claps and the noise dies down.***

**Fon:** We have called all you here to listen to the nurse. She will tell us why, for the past three years, so many people are dying in this village and why all our traditional efforts have failed. Madame Nurse?

**Nurse:** Mbeh’ (*traditional greeting to a traditional ruler*). I have come to tell you, people of Oku, that AIDS or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is real. For those of you with one wife, stick to her. If you can’t stay with one wife, use a condom. Many of us are dying of ignorance. From this day onward, let there be no argument. If you are getting married, do your HIV/AIDS testing. The Elak Health Center is doing voluntary free screening and testing. (*Insert local information here*) (*In a strong voice*) Pass on the message and not the virus. *(Cheers of women in the background).*

**Fon:** My people, you have heard her. Let us go home and ask our children who are working on the coast to come home and join us fighting poverty and AIDS.

**Lamfu:** (*Loudly*) I have surrendered to my wife. (*some laughter*) It is no joke. Please go home and take care.

Sounds of voices going off in different directions, fading to silence.

**Ma Biy**: Pa Ngong, I hope you have understood the truth today, and won’t talk foolishness again!

**Pa Ngong:** Let’s talk to our children and tell them that AIDS is real and raging like wild fire.

**Ma Biy:** Yes my husband. Well, we have only one thing to do…

**Ma Biy and Pa Ngong:** Pass on the message and not the virus.

Music up for a few seconds, then fade.

**Narrator:** Thanks for listening to the program. See you next week same time on the same radio station.

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MMF - Men's mobilization forum

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# Information Sources

Elak Health Center, Oku

Provincial technical group in the fight against HIV/AIDS, Northwest Province, Cameroon.

Doctor Ngum John, Banso Baptist Hospital, P.O. Box 1, Bamenda, North West Province, Cameroon.

Cameroon Baptist Convention.

Oku Student Union, P.O. Box 218 Bui, Cameroon.

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