

Story sheet 3 – Confident

This lady, who did not wish to give her name or allow her face to be seen, is HIV-positive. **Wola Nani** has trained her in how to make these bowls from used paper. The bowls sell well both in South Africa and abroad, giving women like her an income. Many of our churches are using them as a focus of their giving for our appeal. Wola Nani is also fighting against the fear and terrible stigma that HIV still carries.

World AIDS Day – 1 December 2008 – is a Monday and will be marked in churches around the world on Sunday 30 November.



In the rest of our appeal stories, we have chosen one word to sum up the story of the person whose life we are learning about. These words are things we too can aspire to – being brave or passionate, patient or forgiving. This story is different – we are, instead, talking about how things should be and how we hope they can be one day.

Miriam (not her real name) cannot yet be confident enough to allow her face to be seen or her real name to be known. She cannot be confident of her neighbours still treating her like anyone else if they were to find out she has HIV. She cannot be confident that she will not be shunned or excluded. Wola Nani is working to change this so that one day she can be confident enough to reveal her status and her name.

Miriam says: 'When I came to Wola Nani I was not working. Now I can build my own house by working here and send money back to my parents in the

eastern Cape. I have a child who is three and a half. Before I started making bowls and selling them through Wola Nani, I was living with my brother, but it was very hard for him to look after me and my child.'

Wola Nani gives people who are HIV-positive a way of supporting themselves by producing beautiful crafts made from local materials – beaded ribbons, jewellery and bowls. Wola Nani trains the women and has developed a successful business through selling the crafts locally and overseas. The beaded ribbons are made for World AIDS Day, and Wola Nani has very large orders to meet. Wearing a beaded ribbon is a way for someone to show that they are supporting people who are HIV-positive. (Please contact Tŷ John Penri as soon as possible if you would like to order Wola Nani beaded ribbons for your church.)

Wola Nani also conduct huge campaigns around World AIDS Day to challenge the stigma that still surrounds the disease, and to campaign for more support for those infected and affected. HIV stigma has improved slightly over the last ten years in that more people are now disclosing their status.

Wola Nani has also trained a number of HIV-positive women to offer home care, which they are paid for, so that they can earn a living.

Wola Nani has made a huge impact on Miriam's life: 'Wola Nani helps us especially with job opportunities. You come here, you are worried, you are crying, but the support we get is excellent.' She says to Christian Aid's supporters: 'A big thanks for all the help you are giving, please pray for a cure.'

Bible text / sermon notes

Christian Aid produces excellent new resources for World AIDS Day services each year, which are available at: www.christianaid.org.uk/stoppoverty/hiv/resources/index.aspx (or contact Tŷ John Penri).

Many other organisations produce resources for churches for World AIDS Day – search the internet for ‘World AIDS Day church resources’ or ‘World AIDS Day worship’ or similar.

Prayers/prayer pointers

Pray for everyone around the world who is infected with HIV and everyone who is affected by the virus – through an ill family member or friend or through bereavement.

Pray for organisations like Wola Nani who are helping them.

Pray for us all, that we will openly love people living with HIV, to help to break the stigma and fear that surrounds the virus.

Lord of life and love,
never let our dreams become too small.
May we dream of the day when there is treatment for everyone with HIV.
May we dream of the day when people are no longer ashamed to reveal that they have HIV.
And may we dream of the day, one day, when there will be a cure.
Amen.

Fundraising ideas

Instead of, or as well as, your usual Christmas tree in church this year, why not have a World AIDS Day Christmas tree? Put a small evergreen tree at the front of the church and invite the members of the church to pay small amounts to ‘buy’ red AIDS ribbons (made from loops of ordinary red ribbon) to decorate the tree.



Make AIDS ribbon badges to give out in exchange for donations to the appeal, or contact Tŷ John Penri for supplies of Wola Nani beaded ribbons to give away in exchange for donations (asking people to give more than they cost to buy).

Children's church

The Wola Nani bowls are made from papier-mâché, which comes from the French words for ‘chewed-up paper’ because of its appearance. You could make bowls in the same way, soaking strips of newspaper or other paper in glue made from flour and water

(mix one part of flour with two parts of cold water, stirring well and adding the water slowly to stop it becoming lumpy. Add a couple of tablespoons of salt to stop it going mouldy). Either use a balloon or a another bowl as the mould, smeared with Vaseline so that the dried papier-mâché can be removed more easily.

The dried bowls can be trimmed for neatness and painted with children's paints. Alternatively, the top layer could be made of strips of paper taken from food packaging, to make them look more like the Wola Nani bowls.

You could also use diluted PVA glue to stick the strips together (though they may not be so easy to paint), but we would not recommend using wallpaper paste, as it contains a fungicide which could cause skin irritation.

Some of the children may have already learned about HIV in school, but for those who haven't, here are some basic points you could tell them:

- HIV is a virus (something that causes an illness) that stops your body being able to fight off germs.
- It's not easy to catch – you can't get it from sneezes or coughs or from touching something that someone else has touched. You can become infected if, for example, some blood from someone who is infected gets into your body, for example, through a cut on your skin.
- There is no cure and once someone has HIV, they will have it for the rest of their life.
- Without treatment, people with HIV will die because their bodies cannot fight off other illnesses.
- Even though there is no cure, there are medicines that allow people to live for many years, even though they have HIV.
- Lots of people are frightened of HIV and of people who have it because they do not understand it properly and think they will get ill from being near someone with HIV, and die, even though this is not true.

You could talk about the way Jesus touched and healed people in the Bible, especially about the way he healed people with leprosy, which people were frightened of in his time in the same way that some people are frightened of HIV now. One example is in Luke 5:12-16.