

UNICEF, Nickelodeon, The N, & The Kaiser Family Foundation Youth & HIV/AIDS December 1, 2003

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[START RECORDING]

MS. CAROL BELLAMY: My name is Carol Bellamy. I'm the Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund. That is UNICEF. My job today is just largely to introduce people but I'm delighted to be here.

Why are we here on a program dealing with young people, HIV and AIDS? Well I'll give you just one statistic. Just today, this one day, first of December U.N. AIDS, or I should say World AIDS Day, 14 thousand people; how many people go to your school for example? What school is here? Is there a school from Brooklyn here? How many of, ok, what school? What school is right here? Okay, how many kids are in your school? Three hundred, well think about that. That means more than 15 times your school is getting infected just today around the world. That's just today, one day. And of that 14 thousand more than half of them are young people. So that's why we're here to hear from you today. That's my point I want to make.

Now my job is to introduce people and they're going to take you through the program. So let me introduce you to some of the terrific people we have. First Linda Ellerbee she is a highly respected producer. I never get introduced as highly respected but she's the writer and host of Nickelodeon's Nick news. She's going to introduce you to some things here. She's going to talk about her experience. And she'll introduce you to these two great programs that you'll see today. And she's

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going to be up here in just one second.

After that I'm going to, I'm not going to come up anymore. But she'll be followed by Stephen Lewis. Stephen Lewis is the muckety-muck who represents; he is the Chief Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations. That's Kofi Annan. He's the Chief Envoy of the Secretary General to all of Africa when it comes to HIV and AIDS. So Stephen is here with us today.

Then three young people I'm delighted, one of whom I'm sure you know, Hydeia Broadbent as you know she's with N's Walk in Your Shoes. She's joined us today. But we're also joined by two young people from Africa. And it's really good to have them here.

Let me first introduce from Namibia, Naleo Helene Martin (misspelled?), come on raise your hand here. And then from Malawi I'd like to introduce Andrina Semengwa (misspelled?). If you don't know you can ask them later where Malawi and Namibia are. They are very important countries in Southern Africa.

Now just before I get off the stage and turn over the program to Linda I'd like to recognize Herb Scannell who is the President of Nickelodeon Network, very important. Both Nickelodeon and The N are doing great work on HIV and AIDS and I'd also like to recognize Jen Case who is the Director of HIV/AIDS Policy with the Kaiser Foundation here. So those are

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the sponsors today; Nickelodeon, Kaiser, UNICEF and you.

Now Linda let me invite you up here.

MS. LINDA ELLERBEE: Hi I'm Linda Ellerbee and I want to apologize to every one of you for, because I'm so dressed up. I don't ordinarily dress up this much but I actually have to go to Wall Street after this.

We at Nick News we went to South Africa. Because South Africa has more people with AIDS than any country on this planet. We went to see how that was affecting the kids there. And what we found were sad stories and brave people. But we were able in this program to show kids here in the states that once again anyplace in the world you find a bad situation you will always find good people trying to make it better. We met people with nothing who still found something to give. We met kids your own age finding the strength and the courage to face both adversity and intolerance. The stigma of AIDS is still huge in Africa. And we said to kids here in our show is that what happens in South Africa is an unfinished story. But it is not just their story. It is your story. It is our story. And that's why we're here today because AIDS belongs, the story of AIDS belongs to all of us. And how it all turns out this story is a story that we will tell, all of us with our lives.

What I'm going to, show you two clips. The first one is from the Nick News special that airs tonight at nine P.M. on Nickelodeon. It is called The Courage to Live; Kids, South

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Africa and AIDS. Please roll the tape.

[VIDEO PRESENTATION]

This next show is called With HIV/AIDS. It premieres tonight on the N at 9:30. It is about right here, what goes on right here in this country. It is about a kid named Trevor who meets Hydeia and Tyler. Hydeia and Tyler are infected with the virus and it is the story of how Trevor learns, comes to understand that people with AIDS are just people and deserving of our respect. And I just want to say for a moment how honored I am to be in the same room again with Hydeia Broadbent. We first met eleven years ago when Nickelodeon, Nick News did its first show about AIDS. She was just a little girl. She's a beautiful young woman now as you'll see. Please roll the tape.

[VIDEO PRESENTATION]

Until a cure is found the best weapon against this disease remains education. We are here today to celebrate that premise. And we also celebrate the lives of Trevor and of Hydeia who are living with AIDS and who are with us. We celebrate the lives of the children in South Africa and especially that of Kenesa (misspelled?) who died just recently. But her life counted. And we need to make sure that everybody's life counts.

We now understand that we already, all of us, live in a global village. And that means it is our responsibility, all

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of us, as citizens of this global village we have a responsibility to make our world better. It is dying to get better. Thank you.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: I'm Stephen Lewis. Those were very powerful short films. I'm going to suggest that our panelists join me now on the panel up here. And we'll talk a little amongst ourselves. And then I'm hoping that you'll have questions and we can engage in some questions and answers so that everybody will enjoy the exchange.

On my far right is Andrina (misspelled?) from Malawi, a very, very poor but very lovely country in Southern Africa. And sitting beside her is Nilow (misspelled?). Nilow and I actually met some time ago in her country of Namibia. And then sitting beside me is Hydeia whom you all saw in that last film.

There is a tendency to think that somehow AIDS is a problem for adults. And I want to remind you that in the films we've just seen there was an eight-year-old boy called, wasn't a boy it was a girl, called Gogo (misspelled?). It was a girl right? I think Gogo (misspelled?) means granny if memory serves me in parts of South Africa. So it was a young eight-year-old girl named Gogo (misspelled?).

There was a 13-year-old, 15-year-old; all these very, very young people who were infected with the virus and carrying on and carrying on strongly and valiantly. And what I'd like to do is to ask Hydeia and Andrina (misspelled?) and Nilow

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(misspelled?) to tell us a little bit about their own stories and what they have experienced and what happened in their families and with their friends and in their schools. What kind of difficulties they've encountered. I'd really like to you to listen to the stories, whatever they chose to tell, very carefully. And then let's just talk about it a little because these are incredible struggles that young people deal with when they're coping with HIV and AIDS.

Without putting you on the spot Nilow (misspelled?) and pretending that we're old friends, which we are, but I'd like to be. Why don't you start us off and give us a sense of what it's like to be living with AIDS in Namibia and the kinds of things you've encountered personally both good and bad.

NILOW (MISSPELLED?): Good morning everybody, Nilow Massen (misspelled?). I'm from Namibia. I'm a very young person, 21 years of age living with HIV for almost five years. A mother of a three-year-old son also HIV positive. And I got infected at a very young age and while I was still at school. And I happen to go for an HIV test as a result of my kid getting sick; today is fine, tomorrow is sick and that lead us to go for an HIV test.

For me finding out that I'm HIV positive I would say for quite some ten minutes I felt like no, this is the end of the life, I mean I'm no longer a human being. I'm a dead person. However, the counseling that I got I later realized

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like, no life goes on whether I'm positive or not positive.

The only thing that I needed as a person with HIV support, I need love. I need care. And I know all these things, the only person that can give this to me is my mom. I'm talking more about my mother because I grew up with my mother. I know my father but I'm not in that close contact with my father.

My mom got the news from the hospital (unintelligible) for her to (unintelligible). It was also difficult for me to break that news to her. So I started to take out of the hospital, she heard the news. The day that she proved how strong a bond between a mother and a daughter is showed me love, care and support that although I'm positive she can, I'm still a daughter. I'm still part and parcel of the family.

I happened to go back to school and when I went back to school everything, my mind, the only thing I'm having on my mind is HIV and AIDS. To get a book the only thing that I want to read in that book is about HIV and AIDS. To listen to television the only thing that I have interest on is HIV. So HIV and AIDS are staying a big hole on my mind. I nearly even got a little like you say, I could not concentrate on my studies. Everything is just HIV and AIDS.

Apart from this I always tried to joke to my friends about HIV and AIDS because in Namibia the highest prevalence rate of HIV is in young people. And I came to realize that still young people they believe what they see that HIV is

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something that's not meant for them especially if they are still at school. This was a big influence on me and I decided let me disclose my HIV status publicly so they can see that you can be young, you can be home from whatever family, HIV does not discriminate. And from to watch people discriminate people with HIV is there is a big, big, big stigma and discrimination (unintelligible) against HIV and AIDS in Namibia.

So I decided to disclose my status for young people to take me as an example that wherever you are HIV does not discriminate. And it's an experience that I have learned that although you are positive life goes on. I traveled on different places. I'm currently involved in activities with young people in working as an ambassador of light, an ambassador of hope in my country targeting young people in secondary schools. So life goes whether you are positive or not.

But being positive, wondering if (unintelligible) yourself and if you look at all the statistics being given of HIV it's in young people. So I believe that we as young people we need to do something, hold hands, fight against this epidemic. Thank you.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Nilow (misspelled?) is part of a group called Luronga (misspelled?) Eparu (misspelled?) which is the association of people living with AIDS in Namibia. And I remember when I first sat down and talked with them a couple of

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years ago. It was a very sad meeting because several of them had actually gone to the hospital to be treated. And they were turned away by the nurses at the hospital who didn't want to deal with people who were living with AIDS. And that was an extremely painful experience that the medical system should close the doors on people who were living with AIDS.

I remember three or four young women weeping as we talked about it because they had suffered such stigma in the process of struggling with the virus. Now right beside me is Hydeia and I'm going to ask her, and she has spoken to many students and to many student bodies over the last number of years. So I'm going to ask her to give you a sense of what she thinks is important and what she has struggled with.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: Well my name is Hydeia. I'm 19 and I was born with it. My birth mother was an IV drug user who infected herself and passed it on to me at birth.

All my friends, I've never lost any friends. They've always been positive about the fact that I have AIDS because if you meet someone with AIDS they're normal. You can't get it from touching them or being around them. You can't get AIDS like that. So there's no reason why you should be afraid to be a friend with someone who's infected.

And so everybody in my school, all my friends, they support me. They let me know that what I do is important because kids are our future. And if we don't take the time to

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educate our kids we might not have a future because there is no cure for AIDS.

So it's important that if you guys have questions or you go to your teachers, you go to your parents, you go wherever because everybody should be educated. And never be afraid to ask a question because there's no such thing as a stupid question.

And I will continue to educate kids as long as kids are becoming infected because there's something that's very important. Because as you can see it's not just happening in America. It's happening everywhere. And it's happening in your community. So don't think that you don't know anybody with AIDS because your best friend might have AIDS. So you should really think about what, you should think about what you say about people with AIDS before you say it. Because you don't know who might have it. And this is a people's disease. AIDS doesn't discriminate like people do. And just think about things because that's what's important.

If I was afraid of what my friends might say about me because I had AIDS I might never come out of my house. You know if I was afraid that people wouldn't like me I might not be going to college next year. And this is something that's happening. So don't think that it's not. And don't think that you should run from it or be afraid of it. And if you know somebody ask a question because more than likely we want you to

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be educated. And we don't want you to be afraid of us because there is no reason. We're just like everybody else.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Ok Hydeia has, whose name I mispronounced but now I will correct it, Hydeia has thrown out a challenge to you to think of some questions, any questions. She'll obviously be happy to answer any questions at all. I think everybody will.

But before we do that thank you for having you hand up but I'll call on you as soon as Andrina (misspelled?) has told us her story.

ANDRINA (MISPELLED?): Ok my name is Andrina (misspelled?) (unintelligible) from Malawi. I got infected when I was 16. I got infected when I was 16 and I've got a son who is HIV positive, four years old. And I was hiding about my status up to 20 years old. And because of stigma and discrimination in my country and (unintelligible) somewhat open you find that if you want to buy something, something like clothing people will laugh at you saying that you are dying so why buy those clothes.

And sometimes if you take a cab and maybe you feel (unintelligible) open and you want to use the same cab and somebody has seen that you (unintelligible) everyone will go away and don't touch that cab afraid of being infected. And they show the problem that I had to access of buying the medicine. And I was afraid of my mama Karen, and especially my

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mother because my father died when I was about seven years old.

And I had the access, my friends told me to go to a second something like an organization called the nation of peoples that were living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi. And in that organization I met some people who were HIV positive. And I was happier because I thought that, I was myself. Later on I got employed in the Chief of (unintelligible) in government of people living in HIV and AIDS. And in that I was trained as a voluntary counseling and testing and use (unintelligible) have safe sex. And I was with the (unintelligible) on peer education and worked on the youth council for three months. And I'm encouraging young men to go for testing because most of young men in my country, young people in the country, they don't want to go for HIV because they don't want to change their behaviors. They are afraid of changing their behaviors and afraid of being stigmatized.

I haven't got a lot to say because I haven't got many experience in this. And what I can say is that you must, we must all be positive and fight stigma. That's what I'm saying.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Now let's go to questions because I can see that a lot of people are anxious for. There's a microphone; is there just one? One on each side? All right, let's start in the back row. The young girl in the red with her, all right, right in back, sure.

FEMALE VOICE 1: Is it hard getting into a

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relationship?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Can you say that again?

FEMALE VOICE 1: Is it hard getting into a relationship?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Is it hard getting into relationships?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: It's not. I've had like several different boyfriends. People in my school or people that know me, I'm very public with the fact that I have AIDS. I sit down and I let them know. I educate them on what's safe and what's not. I've never had anybody not want to date me because I was infected with AIDS. And I was really, I think that's a very positive thing.

So it's not hard for me to have a relationship.

NILOW: One it's not really hard. I mean you are a human being. I have feelings. The virus is in my blood, not on my mind so what's so hard?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Let's take another question. Back here, why don't you come into the center aisle where there seem to be more hands up. This young fellow on the edge was the first person to stand up so why don't we give him a chance.

MALE VOICE 1: Hello. Does AIDS hold you back from doing anything? Does AIDS hold you back from doing anything?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Is there anything that you don't do because of AIDS? Does it hold you back from anything? Who

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wants to answer?

NILOW: I can only say when you are in a relationship the only thing that will not really but the only thing I can say is one has to always make sure that you don't do things that are risk. Like when you are in a relationship you prevent, you avoid yourself from unprotected sex and but because I say we are human beings and I mean I don't see any difference between me and a person who's negative. So why should I be hold back by anything?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: You guys when I was younger I was very sick. I had a lot of lung problems so I'm not as athletic as I would like to be. I used to do a lot of cheerleading and dance and I'm not able to do it anymore because I don't have the lung capacity.

But there's nothing really that we can't do. There's, if I wanted to I could but I really don't like being exhausted and trying to catch my breath. So but anything basically. We can pretty much do anything that we put our minds to. Like we're not, I'm not sick anymore. I'm able to do, like, I can do basketball, swimming and stuff like that. But it just, I get winded very easily so I like to sit out a lot. But I go to school. I'm in school. I go to school five days a week. I do pretty much everything that normal kids do like because I am normal.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Andrina (misspelled?) do you want

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to say something?

ANDRINA: Yeah (unintelligible) I've got a boyfriend. The one who infected me is also HIV positive. So in my country it is difficult to have someone to (unintelligible) you who is HIV negative because they always (unintelligible). Here it arises you're HIV positive. So I'm happy to have a boyfriend who is HIV positive. We are always using condoms. That's why I'm not getting anything like infections.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: So your experience is that when HIV negative young men want to have a relationship and learn that the woman is positive...

ANDRINA: Yeah if someone is proposing you and found that you are positive he goes away.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Ok.

ANDRINA: That's the problem in my country.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Next question. Right here at this.

FEMALE VOICE 2: How do you react to people who discriminate against you because you have AIDS or you're HIV positive?

NILOW: On my side I really, I look at that person twice because you point fingers at me, you know, point fingers to the (unintelligible) fingers are pointing at yourself. So it's like you're stigmatizing yourself. Stigma is there but as a human being you have to be brave. Being HIV positive to me does not mean it's the end of your life. So I believe that

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person who's stigmatizing me today tomorrow it will a shame.

So it's a deal that you have stigma. Today someone will come back to stigmatize you. So I don't really get frustrated by the sort of being affected by these. I know before I disclose my sickness I know there will be stigma, discrimination. And I am ready to fight it so that's not a big deal.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Nilow (misspelled?) how have; can I ask you how have you experienced the stigma? What has been done?

NILOW: On my side I don't, I haven't been stigmatized.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Really?

NILOW: Not even discriminated. I have friends. The friends that I have before I came to know my status are still the friends that I'm having. I'm accepted by my family, the community and everybody. So life goes on.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Either of the others?

ANDRINA: Ok on my side and about stigma, discrimination I found that the ones who are stigmatizing me are the one who have never gone for HIV test. And on top of that, ok (unintelligible).

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: All right, let's go to another question then. There's a hand up right here.

FEMALE VOICE 3: I just want to know if any, if your life is different if you had, if you weren't born with AIDS was, is your life different than it was before you were born?

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I mean, sorry, before you had AIDS or HIV positive. Who was your life different from?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Is your life different now from what it was before you got the virus?

NILOW: On my side life is different in a way that this is the time that I'm seeing what life's all about. Because I didn't, before I came to know my status I didn't know, I was just living life because it's life and I have to live some living. But now I'm living having a mission and a vision of what I'm living. And I know now that what is best for me not what's best and what is best and what is not best. So life is different in the way that I've become more mature. And it does not mean I'm going to (unintelligible). And I'm proud of the way I'm living my life now because on the other side I would not have been in New York today. So I'm really proud of the way I'm living.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Did you want to say something Andrina (misspelled)?

ANDRINA: On my side my life changed totally different because I had many infections that (unintelligible) is here. And when I changed my life and started to taking myself everything goes out on the (unintelligible). And at first you can't even believe that I was the one who has many infections and that my life has now changed. And I'm protecting myself. Thank you.

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MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Does the, there's a microphone right here.

FEMALE VOICE 4: I wanted to know if like the U.S. government is supplying Africa with donations for like the treatment of HIV because some countries like don't have the treatments for HIV.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: I think that's probably easier for me to talk about than members of the panel. Yes. The President of the United States back last January announced that the United States would spend a total of 15 billion dollars over five years, three billion dollars a year, turned out to be a little less than that in the first year. But it's very still very high which would go to 11 or 12 countries in Africa.

Interestingly enough Malawi is not one of those countries. But it would go to 12 countries in Africa for treatment and prevention and care and education for every single aspect. But a lot of it will go to purchase drugs to keep people alive.

Just out of curiosity; who, which of the three of you is now on treatment, now taking anti retro virals? Andrina and Hydeia? But you're not?

NILOW: No.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Can you talk about that a little bit?

NILOW: I believe that it's my, myself and I. I can

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make it without treatment because I'm a person who believes in myself. When I'm sick I know that my own belief will heal me because I'm, like the side effects of the treatment is something that I really can't cope with. So whether I get on treatment I don't think it will be any different. I don't see a need of me being on treatment. I believe that I will go on. I will live life longer if I'm believing. So I believe in me, myself and I. And when I'm sick I always talk to the sickness that hey, listen, you can't control me. I am controlling myself.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: You don't, by all means don't have to. Well I think we'll come back to that at some point. But let's, there's a hand on that side of the aisle, a young girl.

MALE VOICE 2: My question is why do you think HIV and AIDS has had such a devastating impact on the youth community just like worldwide?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Can you repeat that just once?

MALE VOICE 2: Why do you think HIV and AIDS has had such a devastating impact on the young community worldwide?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Why do you think AIDS has had such a devastating impact on youth worldwide?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: For one especially in America, PTA members, the Congress, the President, they don't want to think that kids are out here doing what we're doing. I'm going to say we, because I'm a peer, I am of your age group. I go to

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school. I see what kids do. I see what kids get into.

Adults don't want to believe that we know more than what we know. Am I lying? A lot of parents they don't want to talk about, you know, they don't want to talk about sex. They don't want to think that we, they don't give us credit for what we know. Therefore they're not giving us education that we need.

How many of you have actually had someone come to your school and talk to you about HIV AIDS? Look at how many kids are in the room. Look at how many people raised their hands. In my own state of Nevada I can't go and talk to my own peers about HIV/AIDS. And that's a sad, that's sad. We just were out here doing it but nobody's out here educating us.

And so as youth it's time that we educate ourselves. You know go to your parents. Go to your counselor or your principal. Tell them you want something in your school tomorrow about HIV/AIDS. Because kids we can make a difference. And it's up to you. I can't do it alone. Like I love traveling. I love going and speaking to kids.

But if you guys don't fight for your right it's not going to be there, the education. And I'm so happy that you asked that question.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Is there a law in the state of Nevada that says you can't go to schools to talk about HIV/AIDS.

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MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: I don't actually know what the law is or the requirement. But we went to a school after three o'clock. The mediator said the word condom. She was put on administrative leave and fined. So and my mom and me we can't afford to these five thousand dollars and what because we said the word condom. And so they changed the laws. We won't be speaking in any schools in Vegas. But I say I believe there is a law.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: I would have thought Vegas needed it more than most of us.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: We do, we do.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Yes? All right, by all means. Go ahead over here.

MALE VOICE 3: For those of you who are on treatment; what are some of like the side effects that you face?

ANDRINA: Like on my side (unintelligible), on my side since I was on treatment I didn't have any side effects. But I had my friends who have side effects. But I don't know how they feel. Because since I was on treatment I didn't have any side effects.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: The side effects that I sometimes get are headaches, nausea. I vomit sometimes but it's very rarely as long as I keep taking the medicine continuously and don't stop. Then I really don't have any side effects.

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NILOW: Just to add a bit on that. Why I say I really can't it's also on the other side I have seen a number of my friends and a number of my colleagues who are on treatment. You know they are eating too much. They are overeating and I don't like it you know. And it's, and it's also something like the side effects she spoke about. It's something that I can't cope with so those are the side effects and if you want to be on treatment you have to make sure that you also have enough, you will be able to afford to have enough nutrition. So treatment on the other side you must be responsible.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: See for the treatment to work you really need to have food. And for a lot of people, a lot of families in Africa there just isn't food. So the treatment goes into bodies that are very weak. And although the treatment is terribly valuable and terribly important and just today the World Health Organization announced that they want to put between two and three million people into treatment in Africa by the year 2005.

But some of the side effects I see, and I've seen a lot of vomiting. I've seen a lot of diarrhea. I've seen a lot of muscular aches and pains. And most of it is because people don't have enough to eat. Their bodies aren't strong enough. They don't have the food to make the treatment more effective.

So when we talk about drugs we also have to talk about food. Who's next? Debbie come over to this side of the room

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lest they feel discriminated against. So there's no stigma here.

FEMALE VOICE 5: How is drugs related to HIV or AIDS, like taking drugs that are bad for you?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: How are drugs related to, ok. For one when you do drugs your mind, you're not in your right mind. So you would do things that would put yourself at risk for becoming infected with AIDS.

When you do IV drug using needles to needle, sharing needles with somebody, blood to blood contact because that's the way that AIDS is spread, through bodily fluids. And blood is the number one way. So if you're doing IV drug using; when you, if I'm infected and I pass the needle on to her and she's not infected she will become infected. So that's how drugs are connected to HIV/AIDS. You want to elaborate on that?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: No, that's perfect. Go ahead again on that side.

FEMALE VOICE 6: Do you think you made a difference about on the way other people think about people who are infected with HIV and AIDS?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Good question. Do you think you've made a difference in the way other people are thinking about HIV/AIDS as you talk about it and educate them? Who wants to? Maybe everybody should answer that.

ANDRINA: Yeah it's something like on my side I feel

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like when I'm in a group of people who are HIV positive I make, I feel like something like, I'm feeling like something like alone. I feel like lonely and I feel there's still something like maybe not to disclose my status. And I just feel as if I'm lonely in a group of people negative, HIV negative.

NILOW: I made a big difference in a number of young people's lives. They have changed their way of behaviors. They have, some of them especially active, and it has touched them in a way that they decided to abstain. Sort of like delay sex and the response I get from young people it really shows that I'm making a difference in a number of people's lives.

And I'm proud of that.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Hydeia you've done a lot of this. What do you think?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: I believe that I have changed the way that people think about HIV/AIDS because I've had people that came up to me and said I would never to talk to somebody who had AIDS and now I want to be your best friend. So I think I have changed a lot of people's outlook on HIV/AIDS. And you can answer that question yourself because how did you feel before you came and how do you feel now?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Well just a moment. Can we ask that young man to answer the question he just asked? How have you been influenced by this discussion? Do you want to take the microphone and tell us how?

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MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: You don't have to if you don't want to.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Oh why not?

FEMALE VOICE 6: Yeah I have because I thought that just because some has it you shouldn't be like around them. But now it's just like they're just like you.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Ok. Next door here. Right next door this...

FEMALE VOICE 7: Before you got infected with HIV what was your outlook on AIDS and HIV?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Before you got infected what did you think of it? What did, before you got infected how did you feel about HIV/AIDS? What did you think about people who had it?

ANDRINA: Before I was infected I was thinking that HIV/AIDS is for people who are married and it's not for maybe the young people. And I was not even interested to go for testing. And I wasn't even thinking about it. I was just thinking that maybe HIV/AIDS is for the married people. That's all.

NILOW: On my side to tell the truth I knew about HIV before I got infected. I was a youth activist. I started at a very, very young age as a youth activist and as a campaigner promoting the using of condoms, young people to take control of their lives. People in my country call me a (unintelligible)

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but I tell them that I'm not a preacher. I am a provoker.

So I knew about HIV and I just afraid to follow the steps that I was telling other people. However on the other side it's like the man that infected me or the guy that infected me the love that I had for him fooled me. I felt like, the words were inside, (unintelligible) to just use a condom. But I failed to tell him that let's use a condom. I felt like if I tell him maybe that will be the end of the relationship that he would say ok, you go buy a condom.

And you know I was just still young to say no and let me no mean no. So that's what happened.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Is that using, that's the way most young girls and women would feel.

NILOW: In my, in the community where I come from I know I believe it is the same thing that still other young people are going through. One really wants to say no but you just can't control the men, sort of, yeah. One kind of let no mean no; in they say in my country they say when a man, when you tell a man that no then the man thinks that then maybe and maybe means yes. So it's...

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Let's come back. Right on the aisle here. I'm sorry, ok, go ahead. Whomever you've given the microphone to so I can't see at this point. All right. Hi. One here and then over here, this side first and then we'll come to this side. Go ahead.

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FEMALE VOICE 8: At what age are people most vulnerable to die because of HIV or AIDS?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Could you say it just once more?

FEMALE VOICE 8: At what age are people more vulnerable to die because of HIV or AIDS?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: More vulnerable to die.

FEMALE VOICE 8: Yes.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: I'm going to answer that question. I was diagnosed when I was three. And they said that I wouldn't live to be five and I'm 19. So there's really no age that, they can't tell you when you're going to die. I mean doctors have told me many times that I was going to die and I'm still here today. And I feel that if you believe in yourself that you're going to make it and taking care of yourself then you'll make it.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Go ahead on this side. Who has the microphone over here?

CYNTHIA: Me.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Please.

CYNTHIA: Ok. Hi, my name is Cynthia. When you found out that you were HIV positive did you hold back telling anyone?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: When you find out, when you found out that you were HIV positive did you hold back in telling anyone? Did you come out right away? What went through your

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mind?

NILOW: On my side I didn't hold back because I say a person living with HIV is a person with HIV needs love, needs care. You need support. So I couldn't find the need of me holding back sort of like let me tell, let me not tell because I knew I need love, I need care. And how will people know that I need, they need to give me all these things if I didn't tell them. So I couldn't find any of me holding back. So I told my mom. I took my mom for counseling and then she was told it could be done.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: What happened between you when you told her?

NILOW: She only proved to me that although I'm positive there was no difference in treatment. However showed me more love, more care and more support than she used to do before.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Really? Andrina (misspelled)?

ANDRINA: On my side I did not disclose my status until I had by, until I was on treatment because my mother was like, when my child was six she was like go away with your AIDS baby. Something like, just talking, something I disclosed to her but she was just talking like a joke, something like that. And so I didn't disclose my status to anybody until I had my, until I was on treatment then I disclosed my status to my brother and my sister.

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MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: How did they accept it?

ANDRINA: The brother of mine was the one who was buying medicine for me. And he was encouraging me that I should not think about it seriously and I have to withstand.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Next question?

FEMALE VOICE 9: Hi, how did the lives of your sons, do they impact your lives with having HIV or since they are infected with the disease?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: That's a good question. Tell us about your sons. One is three years old. One is four years old as I remember.

ANDRINA: Ok, about my son I can say that he's just ok. He's not on treatment. And he doesn't look like as if he's sick. I mean sometimes if I happen to disclose my status to my, some of my relatives and some of my friends and say it can be how come your son look like the (unintelligible) something like that. But he's big chested but I'm checking out a second doctor just for a check up.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Has he been healthy all his life?

ANDRINA: Yeah.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Nilow (misspelled)?

NILOW: My son is healthy. He's (unintelligible) clinic every month to see a doctor. He sees a doctor, consult a doctor every month. And well he experienced some sickness sometimes but take him for to see a doctor and get well.

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I make, I mean, I make his life happier. I have to keep him going and I'm having hope that I will see my son one of the days in the attending school. The only thing is that the father is still in denial whereby even told us have to stay far away from him, let's not stop off at his house. So (unintelligible) he's growing up in the hands of the mother, only the love from the mother and not from both parents.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: All right is there someone over there?

SIMONE: Hi. My name is Simone and I'm from, actually, a high school. I had a question, I actually had two questions. One is, gosh everyone's turning around, all right one is the fact that, you know, you come out and you've sort of been discussing this issue in your own countries I mean it's extraordinary. But in terms of men how prevalent, like how common, is it that men can come out and also discuss the issue? Because I'm sure like, you know, it's sort of all the big problem. And you know men and women are you know everything's sort of feeds into it all at once. So I'm just saying like in terms of men how common is it for a man to come out and say that he has AIDS and to educate the population?

And also I mean in terms of religion how has religion affected the use of contraceptives in your country. Sorry.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Those are really good questions. Ok. Tell us about men and their public position.

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NILOW: On the a side of the men I will ask the audience if you can just give time to a man. There is a man here who is positive. I met with him in Kenya. We attended the leadership workshop. Musi (misspelled?) can you please tell us on the side of men?

He is a man living with HIV.

MUSI (MISSPELLED?): Thank you. This is a very challenging question I must say. I come from Swaziland. I met there in Nairobi this year. I'm also living with HIV.

I just found out my HIV status in 1992. In my country I was the second person to come out in the open. And since then there are quite a few men coming out disclosing their HIV status. And a lot of women who living with HIV and are ready to come out in the open but in many cases most of these women are in relationships with other men who are mostly in denial. It is very, very difficult to get men to open up about their HIV status.

And that is where the challenge is. In many cases women when they get involved in relationships 90 percent I'll say they're mostly steady or faithful in their relationships whereas men in many cases it is socially acceptable, especially in the country that I come from, whereby men will have several girlfriends even if that man is married. He will also have extramarital affairs whereas when it comes to women it is not acceptable. And in many cases those are the men who bring the

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HIV virus to their women. And their women have to suffer a double burden.

I also got married just this year in November 1.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Just so the audience knows a very significant majority of the infections in Africa are amongst women. Women are more vulnerable than men to the infection. Men spread the infection widely. And a majority of the infections, somewhere between 58 and 67 percent of the infections, are women.

So women also tend to be more public when they decide to declare. For instance in Nilow's (misspelled?) case the, her organization is headed by a very, very strong young woman named Emma. And wherever I've gone it's interesting. The groups of people living with AIDS tend to be led by women. And women are extremely courageous and public.

Thank you so much for saying what you said. And congratulations on your marriage. Anyone on your side Liza or? Oh, all right, ok, seems as though every, oh I'm sorry. There was an excellent question about religion. Who would like to answer that?

The question was in what way has the religion affected the use of contraceptives?

ANDRINA: Like in my country there are, most of the cleric are (unintelligible) organizations and not only faith based organizations but the churches do not allow the use of

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contraceptives, especially to the youth. I hear that there's only one church, a Catholic church, but it's not only the (unintelligible) churches but in one area they are, they allow us to use the condom. But that's the only church I know that they allow you to use a condom in my country. But they say that they believe that sex before marriage is seen so the country encourage use a condom. Thank you.

MR. STEPHEN NILOW: Want to add anything else?

NILOW: In my country now at this stage church or religions are, we are working hand in hand with them. We tried our best in (unintelligible) HIV to put pressure on them until to this point that they came to agree with us that we have to work, or we have to give, we have to speak the same language. One cannot, I cannot go to school and tell the kids don't use a condom and one is saying no, you can use condoms.

So we came to that place that until we get churches of religions to come and work hand in hand with us. And by this time they are talking about condoms, they are talking about all the other things that they were against, they are now talking the same thing that we are talking as people living with HIV. There's organizations giving awareness on HIV and AIDS.

So think they're really working with, I can't really say a lot on that question.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Who else is next? Yes, right at the back.

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EDDIE: Good afternoon. My name is Eddie. I attend Bengal High School. The question I wanted to ask if has there ever been a point in your life after you're infected that you felt like giving up or you thought there was, life wasn't worth living?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Did you feel real despair at some point after you learned you were infected that life wasn't worth living? That you'd like it to be over?

NILOW: Did you hear the question?

ANDRINA: No, I didn't.

NILOW: Was there a point that you felt like when you found out your status (unintelligible).

ANDRINA: Ok.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: That's for anyone, anyone of you.

ANDRINA: Ok. To my side I was disappointed about my status but I was disappointed about my son's status because I (unintelligible) for a chest later on I do think when he was three years old and when the doctor told me that your son is HIV positive and I was disappointed. And I even cried. My on my status I wasn't too much disappointed.

NILOW: I remember a time when I first like regretting, as I said maybe the side of ten minutes when I got my results I felt like why did this happen to me. But I think it was caused by not having enough counseling. But later on I get enough, when I got enough counseling it made me understand what it

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means to be positive, how one can live and how one can cope with HIV.

So I have no regrets.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: I never felt like that, I thought life is such a beautiful thing and I was raised not to feel any resentment or feel sorry for myself. So I've never felt like giving up. I always wanted to continue like I go to sleep. I'm just waiting for tomorrow to come because each day brings something new and beautiful to your life.

So and I never felt like giving up. Some of my friends have. They've been real depressed but you always got to remember life is a gift. And what you do with that gift is up to you.

AYANO (MISSPELLED?): Hello. My name is Ayano (misspelled?). I attend East Side Middle School. And I wanted to ask if you don't have protected sex because you want to get pregnant is there any way that your child wouldn't get affected by it?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: That's, actually that is a question that is often asked. If you want to get pregnant is there any way that you know that your child wouldn't be infected.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: There's medications that you can take so your baby won't be born with AIDS. If I wanted to have a baby now there's medication that I'd be able to take so my baby wouldn't be born infected with HIV/AIDS. So there is

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medication available for women that are pregnant and HIV positive.

NILOW: To add on that it's, there is a (unintelligible) on my mind that when you want to get pregnant, you want a kid but ok there is medication. But who is the person that's going to impregnate you? Are you not going to infect that person? Think about it.

ANDRINA: And to add on that in the country there's this prevention of mother to child but it still is 50/50. You can prevent it but still you can infect the child also.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: See there's a wonder drug called Neviraphine (misspelled?). And if the mother takes the tablet during the birthing process while she's giving birth and the baby takes the liquid equivalent in the first 48 hours then the transmission of the virus from mother to child is reduced by around 50 percent. But there is still a real possibility that a child could be HIV positive at birth. But there is a very significant possibility that the child will be HIV negative.

It is, as Andrina says, a sort of 50/50 proposition.

Who next? Sure.

LAURA: Hi. I'm Laura and I just wanted to ask do you ever have some sort of anger towards the person who got you infected with HIV/AIDS?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Good question. Let's ask Andrina (misspelled?) and Nilow (misspelled?). Do you ever feel anger

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towards the person who infected you?

NILOW: On my side the anger that I'm having over this person is not anger of saying he infected me. He's a part of my life. He did what, I think since it has been, I have to assess and I only get angry because this guy is in denial and I'm seeing him still with other women.

And I have, of course, a big question mark that he might end up infecting my sisters or my brothers. I don't know the ladies that he's sleeping with, whom are they sleeping with; maybe they might be with my brothers. And you know that's the only anger that I'm having that he might end up infecting my own brothers. And he's infecting other young people. And I really care about other young people's lives. So that's the anger that I'm having.

We have to cope with each day. Don't need to blame each other, who infected who. It happened and there is no other way to let it go. But it's only (unintelligible). So there's no need to (unintelligible) him for what he did. But it's for what he's continuing doing.

ANDRINA: On my side I was, I guess I was angry and later on I forced my boyfriend, the one who infected me was the son of my Prime Minister's father of my son. And I encouraged him to go to the doctor. And at best he was in denial but now he's on treatment and we are still together.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Nilow (misspelled?) you know that

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the man who infected you likes unprotected sex. You didn't want to raise a condom with him because you felt awkward about it. And you knew he wanted unprotected sex.

How do you feel when you see him moving around the community having relationships? Do you ever feel any kind of need to warn people, to tell people? Or is it just something that is private?

NILOW: I do warn people. I do talk out in public. I have, I was made recovery in all these things and but still there are other people that know that man is the one who infected her. But they are still running after the men. I don't know what's so special in the men.

On the other side people are also ignoring and it also frustrates me. So there are times in my country it's very, it's against the law to say somebody's name like he is the one who infected me.

I have been interviewed by media, by different newspapers, I mean different people about this. And they're really push me to mention the guy's name but I can't make it because of the law.

And there are times when I see him with a lady and I feel like standing over him and crack his (unintelligible). You know that anger but there is nothing I can do. It's the only message I give them is that they must take care of themselves.

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MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Who else? Next? Right over there.

STEVEN: Hi. I attend Bengal High School. My name is Steven. I actually know somebody who is HIV positive. He's my gym teacher. And he had a lot of things where he wanted to become in the future. But I just want to know that HIV positive affect all your dreams, like what do you want to become in the future.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: What do you want to be in the future?

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Oh. What do you want to be in the future? Was that the question essentially? The microphone's a little close to your mouth so that it's muffled.

STEVEN: I just want to know that HIV positive affect your dreams, what do you want to become in the future.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Yeah. How does it affect you? What does it affect, when you think about what you want to be and the dream that you have for yourself how does HIV affect it?

ANDRINA: On my side I think HIV has affected of course my education. Because the time I knew that I was positive I was, that time I was studying something like computer programming. I left school. I was thinking that there's no need for me to go to continue and to for my education. So I stopped schooling and after I started taking the treatment I go back to school again. But it has affected me about my

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education because I was supposed to finish about my programming but I just did like introduction.

NILOW: HIV did not affect my future. It's only changed my way of living and even in a better way it's opened my way of my eyes to show me how I must live, how one needs to live life. And because I don't, as I said, I'm a human being. The HIV is in my blood not on my mind. I can study. I can do what. So it's only that it hurts my plan or my future dreams to become. I think like my mom but now I decided to follow something like social worker, yeah. I'm more committed in the field of HIV and AIDS now. So that's the only way that has changed. But it didn't like stop me to go for (unintelligible). I can still do it because I am a human being, a normal one.

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: I really don't know what I want to study when I get into college. But I'm going to college. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up yet. So it hasn't, there's nothing really that I can't do. So you know it hasn't stopped my future in any way.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Good. There's one more question so you've made that choice. Go ahead. Well that, you've asked a question, no? I'm sorry. Yeah, ok, go ahead.

WHITNEY: Hi. My name is Whitney. How did being diagnosed affect your relationship with your parents?

MS. HYDEIA BROADBENT: My relationship with my parents

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is strong. They are the ones that kind of told me as I was growing up. They raised me to be proud of who I am, not to be ashamed of that fact that I'm infected with AIDS. And they taught me that AIDS is a part of me. And if someone doesn't like me because I'm infected with AIDS it's their problem because I'm not going anywhere. So I have a really good relationship with my parents.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: You've already told us I think Nilow (misspelled?) that your relationship with your mom was strengthened. What have you to say Andrina (misspelled?)?

ANDRINA: At best my relationship with my mom was not good. But now in the year 2003 at least the relationship is a bit better.

MR. STEPHEN LEWIS: Andrina (misspelled?), Nilow (misspelled?) and Hydeia I think you will agree our three remarkable young women. And this has been a terrific conversation.

I want to thank all of them on your behalf. I want to thank you on our behalf. And I want to mention to you that in Africa the highest rates of infection is in the 15 to 24 year old age group. That's where the infections at the moment are strongest. And that's why this panel has been so important. Thank you for being here. Thank all of you.

[END RECORDING]