

HIV Storybook

Title: **On Ukimwi Road**

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Sara, girl, 13 years old – a somewhat rebellious & sarcastic teen

Bahati, boy, 13 years old – humane and a bit idealistic

Fatima, girl (albino), 13 years old – thoughtful, a good listener

Panel 1: Sara, Bahati and Fatima are walking home from school, they are in their uniforms, carrying their school bags, the school gate with name of school and other students are in the far distance behind them.

Panel 2: They are just approaching a huge, roadside ad which reads:

“Fight AIDS: Abstain till you get married!” Visual is that of a Christian wedding fore fronting a smiling, traditionally dressed-up young bride and groom, the bride holding a bouquet.

Panel 3: All three have stopping and are facing each other, the ad looming large above them.

Sara is speaking with a slight sneer: “What an ad! Wishful thinking; as if young people will wait!”

Bahati, wearing a conciliatory expression: “Well, some people see it that way.... But ... I don’t like it much either...”

(Fatima is just looking at the hoarding and listening to her friends.)

Panel 4: Sara looking superior, “I am telling you: this message won’t work!”

Fatima: “I saw this ad on TV too. My aunt liked it. She said it was the right way to fight AIDS.”

Panel 5: Sarah, still sneering. “This is silly! How many young people do you know who would abstain?”

Bahati, thoughtfully: “I know some, who are very religious, or have very strict parents.”

Fatima: “And some are shy and some may not have a boyfriend or girlfriend....”

Panel 6: Sara, insistent earnest: “But don’t you think this message is lost on most young people? Isn’t it time to say something that will really help people fight AIDS?”

Bahati: “Yes, I agree! I would love to know what would really help and then tell everyone the answer.”

Panel 7: A daladala appears at one end and the three friends are looking at it. On the daladala is written “Don’t slip and fall on the Ukimwi Road!”

Panel 7: Fatima is waving to the daladala.

Panel 8: Looking excited, she is saying to the other two: “Let’s go in this daladala, meet different people, and see if we can find the answer.”

Bahati and Sara are looking at Fatima doubtfully.

Panel 9: The daladala has stopped and Ahmed, the daladala conductor, about 15, is yelling: “Mwenge, Mwenge, Mwenge gari, Mwenge”

Panel 10: Sara and Bahati are saying in unison, looking enthusiastic: “OK!”

Panel 11: The 3 friends have stepped inside the daladala. Ahmed is staring at Fatima.

Fatima smiles and says: “I am an albino. Don’t worry. It’s OK.”

Panel 12: The three friends are seated in the daladala with Mariam, a nurse holding her baby boy and Grace, an old woman tomato seller with a big bag of tomatoes propped against her legs, and Rose, a lively looking, poor, young girl, about 16.

Panel 13: Fatima: “We were saying – what could really help people fight AIDS?”

Panel 14: Sara: “Well, maybe, being able to talk about it more freely?”

Panel 15: There are stunned expressions on the faces of Ahmed, Grace, Thomas the daladala driver, and even the baby’s face. *Perhaps these faces can just float in the air, in this panel?* Mariam however is smiling receptively.

And below these 5 faces are the 3 somewhat apprehensive faces of the friends.

Panel 16: Mariam, smiling: “I am glad you say that. I think it will help to talk about sex, love, growing up, all those things, more openly.

Grace wears a stiff expression and says: “What are you saying; children talking about such things? And adults responding? That is not our culture.”

Panel 17: Mariam wears a soft expression and her voice is low, “Bibi, I have heard that 50% students have sex before they get to standard 7. And I see many patients at the hospital every day – all ages – who show AIDS symptoms. We see babies like mine here, born already infected.”

Grace purses her lips and says: “It is only those people who do bad things that get AIDS.”

Panel 18: Sara: “What do you expect of young people? Is having a boyfriend bad?”

Panel 19: Mariam: “Young people have a responsibility too. And adults must help them learn to take responsibility. That’s why openness is important.”

Bahati: “I like what you’re saying. If young people could talk among themselves, and with elders, about good and bad behaviour, the situation would be better. What do you think, bibi?”

Grace is silent, but her expression is more thoughtful.

Panel 20/ could be a split panel where: Fatima is yelling “Stop. Stop.” A young girl, (13) Augustina, a friend of the three friends is climbing into the daladala, with her friend (15) Rahul, a musician who carries a small drum.

Panel 21: Augustina: “Habari! Where are you going?”

All three chorus, looking excited: “We are looking for answers to the AIDS problem!”

Panel 22: Fatima; “So what do you two think will help?”

Augustina points to the window: “I think the answer is there on that billboard.”

Panel 23: The billboard can fill the whole panel. It shows a young man at a computer keyboard, smiling as he works and a young woman holding a diploma scroll in her hand, with the legend: Bright Future’s computer diplomas guarantee you good jobs for life!

Panel 24: Sara: “What do you mean? How will a computer course help fight AIDS?”

Augustina: “It will give you skills, and a job. You will feel good.”

Panel 25: Ahmed: “But that’s for the rich! What about a poor boy like me?”

Rose, says suddenly: “You can still do things. I could not go to secondary school, and have no job, but I am not afraid of anyone!”

Panel 26: Mariam: “She’s right! You don’t have to learn computers. You could try to learn a simple trade...with help from family or even the government...”

Grace, looking suddenly animated: “I used to have a poultry business. Started it on my own, with a little bit of money from my uncle, and raised my five children on it... And I always speak my mind too!

Panel 27: The daladala stops and Abdallah, 40-ish, gets in with his son Yusuf, 8.

Panel 28: Rahul: “And do you know my solution? Making music that’s cool!”

Panel 29: Rahul plays the drum. People listen with enjoyment.

Panel 30: Abdallah with an indignant expression: “What are you saying? It’s this music, and dancing, partying and drinking all night that causes AIDS!”

Rahul, loudly: “No, it does not!”

Panel 31: Abdallah is saying: “Yes it does, I have known young people like that go really bad... I will see that my son does not go that way.

Rahul, also still heated: “And I know young people who would be in a mess right now, if they had not found a creative way to express their problems!”

Panel 32: Mariam: “Be creative, but be responsible. Think! Don’t just follow your classmates mindlessly.

Sara: “But are all grown-ups always doing the right things?”

Panel 33: Abdallah: You are right. Not all grown-ups act grown-up! They need to change too.

Ahmed is grinning delightedly and dreaming of being a roadside music cassette seller. (Blurb of dream above his head.)

Panel 34: The daladala has come to a stop. Thomas the driver is saying:

“Please come out! I want to tell you something.”

People look puzzled; Mariam is frowning and saying:
“I hope no flat tyre. I’ll be late!”

Panel 35: Everyone is outside, the car is parked beside a plant nursery and Thomas is pointing to the front of the bus, which is visually exaggerated, and which reads: Don’t slip and fall on the Ukimwi Road.

“I painted that sign a year ago when I found that I was HIV positive.”

Panel 36: Widened eyes, sympathetic shocked faces forming a semi circle.

Panel 37: “I am so happy you travelled in my daladala and came up with these solutions. I think we should put them on the bus for everyone to see.”

People’s faces are breaking into smiles and there’s a collective: “Let’s do it!”

Panel 38: No dialogue. Everyone is shown with cans of paint and brushes in hand painting. Baby can be painting his own face, Rahul could be painting a tree...

Panel 39: Larger panel with close-up of the bus with the following words painted on it:

The word AIDS is painted big and then crossed out; under it is written:

Learn skills, feel confident, make money too!

Be creative and artistic – dare to dream.

Wait if you can; but never do it without a condom!

Talk to friends, neighbours, teachers, parents, relatives; openness = health.

Adults: speak with good actions not empty words.

Encouragement = Life.

Be expressive, and responsible. Think for yourself.

Be strong. Stand together.

Panel 40: Larger panel. All the characters are standing in a semi-circle, shoulder to shoulder, (holding hands?) looking at the reader saying “Don’t slip and fall Ukimwi Road. Look after each other till the very end.”