

The culture of HIV and AIDS



Global citizenship classroom pack
Key Stages 3-4

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HIV and AIDS: objects, images and the epidemic

The media frequently remind us of the deadly impact around the globe of the HIV pandemic. However, statistics and images do not tell the whole story.

To gain a deeper understanding into the ways in which people around the world live and cope with the epidemic, objects in the British Museum collections offer a unique insight.

The creation and display of objects and images can be a form of therapy, a way of spreading awareness and a means of economic empowerment.

We can gain a greater understanding through examining objects associated with the disease in order to learn about impact upon communities and how people across the world are standing up to the disease.

Using this pack

The activities in this pack have been designed for use in the classroom by Secondary teachers. They can be used in conjunction with a visit to the British Museum or independently.

In the background information you will find two case studies of different ways we can use objects to learn about HIV and AIDS. The accompanying Powerpoint contains a slideshow of these images to be used in the classroom and/or printed off for students' use. We suggest you print these off with the notes pages to ensure you have all the information and are familiar with the images.

There then follows a series of activities which are stand alone or can form part of a lesson. Finally, there are links to additional resources.

Controversial issues

Some of the subject matter and images in this pack are challenging and controversial. Guidance has been suggested throughout about managing this material. Experience proves that expecting mature and non-prejudicial behaviour by the pupils stimulates their interest and their level of engagement.

Aims and objectives of the activities

- to understand the different contexts of HIV/AIDS in the world
- to examine the limitations of science in tackling this issue
- to examine and evaluate alternative courses of action
- to use objects, images and articles as evidence and draw information from them

Curriculum links

Citizenship

- Global dimension
- Responsibilities and participation
- Debating topical issues
- The work of non-governmental agencies

Science

- The positive and negative effects of scientific developments
- The power and limitations of science
- Making personal and social decisions about science
- The role of modern medicine

English

- speaking and listening
- understanding others' points of view and experiences
- writing and drama opportunities

Art and design

- expressing ideas through art
- art as controversy
- discussing issues through art
- the personal and social meanings of art

Geography

- differences in development
- quality of life
- global awareness

Case study 1: Spreading awareness in Tanzania

The AIDS ribbon is one of the most globally recognised symbols of the 21st century. It is designed to show support for AIDS sufferers and spread awareness of the disease. The simplicity of the motif allows it to be worn as a ribbon, incorporated within a design or adorn other materials and objects.

This kanga from Tanzania uses the AIDS ribbon emblem to spread a message of defiance and solidarity in the face of the disease. Today, kangas are machine-



printed cloths and have several uses – they can be worn tied around the body, as a shawl or head covering or used to carry children. From the late 19th century, kangas began to be printed with Swahili sayings in Arabic and by the 1950s,

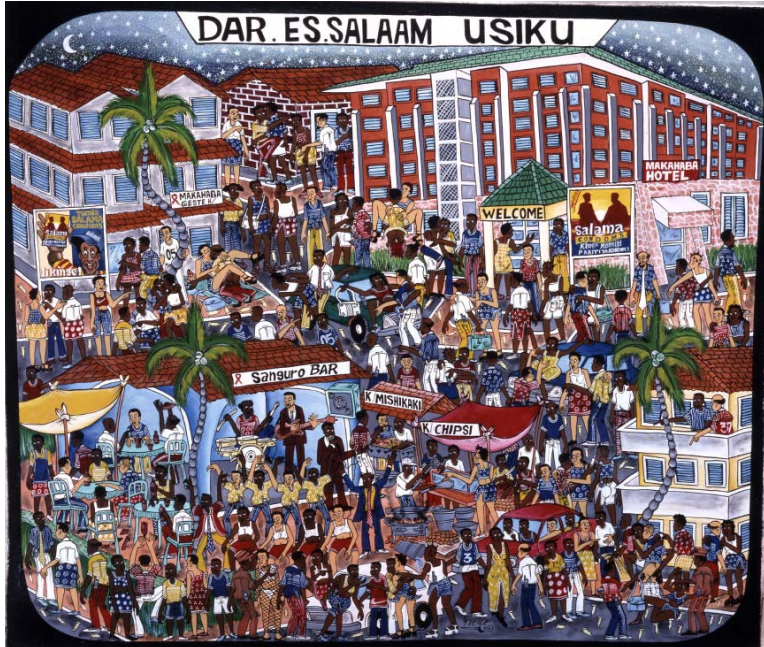
they were printed in Roman script. This continues in Tanzania where political or social messages are commonly incorporated into designs.

In the centre is a yellow ribbon over a map of Tanzania. The message in Kiswahili around the circular design means "We young people declare war against AIDS". The inscription along the lower border continues this expression of determination: "Because we have the capacity and the will to do it".

The work of Tanzanian artists also gives us an insight into the impact of AIDS upon society. This painting of an urban scene in Dar es Salaam is by young artist Issa Said Mitole. His style follows the first modern Tanzanian school of painting, known as Tingatinga, which documents Tanzanian life.

Tanzania continued

The image depicts “Dar es Salaam usiku” (at night) with an evening street scene



full of vitality and energy. In the streets, bars and cafes, people are enjoying a lively evening, with dancing, music, flirtation and making love. We can see how the message of ‘safe sex’ and AIDS awareness is inescapable, through the billboards advertising Salama condoms, which are given away free by

the Tanzanian government, the red ribbon appearing on the entrance to a bar and the used condoms scattered across the ground. The painting suggests that a vibrant city life can continue in spite of HIV/AIDS but the message must be clear and addressed openly.

Case study 2: Empowering women in India and KwaZulu Natal

A major challenge across the world in combating the spread of HIV is building up the role of women in society, in particular in communities where they lack education and the confidence to insist on the use of contraception. In some rural communities, women rely on their husbands’ city jobs to survive, but they often bring back HIV from the city as well as income in their prolonged absences from their families.

Charities and NGOs have established various projects worldwide to give women the ability to earn money which strengthens their position in society and use

these initiatives to educate them about HIV/AIDS. Both the projects featured here began as craftmaking businesses, but in both cases women began to express the pain and suffering placed on their communities by HIV and AIDS through their craft. These objects therefore give women a voice to express their situation and also an insight in how projects can begin to alleviate this.

India

The UN Global Fund suggests that India will be the country most significantly



affected by 2050/60, which in a country of over 1 billion will have catastrophic consequences. This textile made by members of Adithi, a non-governmental women's organisation which gives women money to start up businesses in Bihar, the poorest state in India. In this case they created a textile and craftmaking business. This image expresses the pain inflicted by the

HIV/AIDS on their community. It is made through traditional khatwa technique of appliqué and depicts moving images of the disease being transmitted through sex or blood transfusions, and children born with the disease. The lowest register shows medical workers administering help, while the pair in the bottom right console each other tearfully. The condoms in the border are a decorative device. The whole piece is a powerful expression of the way the disease ravages families and communities.

KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Rural women in KwaZulu Natal society have a contradictory role. While they are often the primary breadwinners in their rural homes and are role-models, strict social rules and restrictions prevent women from discussing issues of personal intimacy, love and sexuality.

Since 1999, the Siyazama project has created a business where women use their craftmaking skills to create beaded sculptures. The subject matter depicts the impact of HIV upon KwaZulu Natal communities, but also there are additional meanings. Beadwork has traditionally been not just a craft but a means of communicating messages through the arrangement of beads about subjects that cannot be discussed openly.

The sculptures also provide much needed income through the sale of these objects abroad. During the craft workshops, health workers speak to the group about preventing HIV to create an awareness of how to limit the spread of HIV amongst rural communities.

In the Siyazama figures, the AIDS ribbon features prominently, for example on this figure who has been 'crucified' by the disease. The arrangement of beads can be analysed for their meanings. For example red in its positive incarnation means love and strong emotion, while its negative meaning is anger, heartache and impatience. This figure has a cloth face and human hair. The "J" refers to Jesus, showing how Zulu society has incorporated Christianity into its traditional belief structure.



Other sculptures depict caring for the sick, remembering the dead, medical magic practices and dealing with the growing AIDS orphan problem.

Case study 3

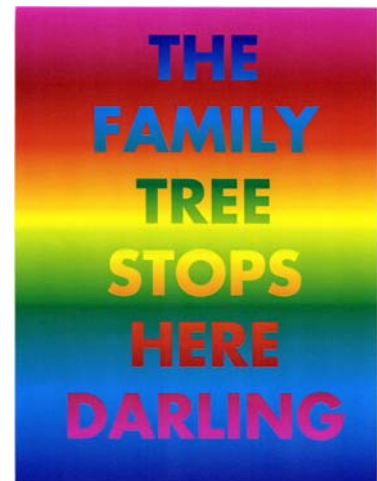
Challenging stereotypes in Australia

The first case of HIV was diagnosed in Australia in 1982 and the disease then spread rapidly by the mid-1980s to a rate of around 3000 infections per year. Through a series of successful education programmes and targeted campaigns, the infection rate reduced by the early 1990s to 500 infections per year, although it has recently risen again.

In the 1980s, the government's campaigns were shocking and disturbing, intended to create fear in the targetted communities – in particular gay and bisexual men and intravenous drug users. The hostile 'Grim Reaper' appeared in posters and television advertising. Awareness was spread in one of the most remembered campaigns of all time. However, this was achieved at the expense of the public perception of the gay community and HIV+ people, creating fear, stigma and misunderstanding.

In the 1990s, government agencies were persuaded that the gay community had the capacity to educate itself. Safe-sex education materials were developed which spoke in the language of the target communities. The language was direct and the meaning was unambiguous.

This poster is from a 1992 campaign which demonstrates this shift. The Sydney artist and activist David McDiarmid produced a series of posters for the AIDS Council of New South Wales with a focus on community, drugs, discrimination, relationships and safer sex. The posters targeted specific communities – young and older men, Aboriginal Australians, bisexuals and recreational drug users, and throughout used direct language, humour and honest treatment of real issues such as sexual attraction and behaviour.



McDiarmid worked to build an identity and to improve the self-esteem of members of the gay community in Sydney, as well as helping many at the same time cope with the crisis of death and dying in the age of HIV. He himself died of AIDS on 25 May 1995.

Citizenship/Science: introductory activity

Breaking down preconceptions

- Project slide 2 in the PowerPoint presentation.
- Give groups of students post-it notes
- For 5 minutes ask them to brainstorm on individual post-it notes the ways the disease is transmitted, ways of preventing the disease and who is at risk.
- Ask them to come and put them up on the white board on the projected slide.
- Feedback with class and ask them to check and challenge other groups to establish any misconceptions.

Science/Citizenship: Exploring objects

- Divide class into groups of 4
- Project or print out the Adithi image (slide 3).
- Ask them to identify in the picture the ways the disease is:
 - prevented
 - transmitted
 - treated
- Ask them to identify the impact of the disease
- Feedback with the slide which indicates key points.

Citizenship: Campaigning and spreading awareness

- Class discussion: ask pupils to name all the causes they know have a ribbon associated with them and what colour they are. The general idea derives the yellow ribbons displayed in the USA since the 1970s as symbols of hope for the safe return of loved ones who are away from home. .
- Ask them to list other forms of wearable 'cause' emblems and their causes (wristbands, badges, t-shirts). Use their responses to show how effective a means of spreading awareness this is.
- Discuss what makes HIV different from many of these causes. Not only does wearing the ribbon show allegiance/support for the cause, awareness is an educational tool that impacts on your behaviour, i.e. safe sex.
- Brainstorm with pupils other forms of spreading awareness and information. Show slides of the Australian poster campaign and discuss what it is trying to say. Then show and discuss the image of the kanga as an alternative.
- Ask pupils to research previous AIDS campaigns and design their own piece of campaign material – either something to wear based on these examples or a poster or billboard. Read them the Australian artist's thoughts: 'When you are doing a safe sex poster there isn't room for ambiguity. Your message has to be crystal clear ...' (David McDiarmid on his poster series commissioned by the AIDS Action Council of New South Wales, 1992)

KS4 Science: the limitations of science

- Read the article from the medical journal (which follows) about the Siyazama project
- Underline in different colours:
 - Statistics
 - Problems
 - Solutions
 - Results - is it successful?
- Problems for the future

Key Stage 3/4 Citizenship: Debating a global issue

- Divide the class into groups and present them with this task: You are members of the Global Development Fund which is part of the United Nations and distributes money to the developing world. You have £5 million to spend in KwaZulu Natal (population 9.9 million).
- Students use the information sheet (on next page) to decide how they would spend it to have the maximum impact.

Key Stage 3 Art and design: Beadwork activity

- Examine the images of the Siyazama dolls and using the classification (see presentation), ask students to suggest what messages are lying within the beadwork.
- Ask them to write a couple of lines of prose/poetry to suggest what these feelings might be, bearing in mind that women were not able to express these openly.
- Ask students to compile their own messages using the meanings associated with the colours.
- Develop ways of interpreting these colours in beadwork or another textile medium, such as embroidery, appliqué or felt, to add subliminal messages to your piece.

Debating a global issue information

Medicine - £2,500,000 to help 10,000 people for a year
Anti-retroviral medicines halt the effects of the disease in individuals. They are currently too expensive for individuals to afford. They allow people to live for longer and care for their children, but often people do not take them regularly and so they work less well. The virus often develops resistance to existing medicine.

Education programmes - £2,000,000 to teach to 500,000 people for a year.
Reaching communities through teaching and health programmes is one way of giving individuals the information to change behaviour, act safely and protect themselves. This relies on people acting on the information they receive and being strong enough to resist social and cultural pressures.

Publicity - £3,000,000 for a campaign seen by 9.9 million people. Through television adverts, billboards and posters, raising awareness about the dangers reaches thousands of people. It stops issues being kept silent and gets them into the public domain. There is evidence that despite raised awareness, people still take risks.

Research - £3,000,000 to fund a team of scientists for a year
A vaccine could be a solution to the problem. Developments in science mean that with sufficient funding a vaccine that could protect millions of people at risk could prevent them from ever getting the disease. It may take several years and the virus develops resistance and changes rapidly.

Siyazama community project - £500,000 to work with a community of 10,000 people
This grassroots project tackles the causes of the problem. It gives women a voice and an income, to boost their status. The impact is felt within entire communities. It may take several years to change the mindsets of the majority.

Free condoms: £1,000,000 to distribute a fixed number of condoms to 3 million people.
This is a simple way of giving people the means to protect themselves. There is no guarantee they will be used and women are often scared of insisting.

Resources

PowerPoint: this is available by following the Learning and then Schools and teachers links from the Museum website:

www.britishmuseum.org

Explore: objects from the British Museum online

www.britishmuseum.org/explore/introduction.aspx

Untold London resource: article about British Museum HIV related objects

www.untoldlondon.org.uk/news/ART41820.html

External links

UN Global Development Fund to fight HIV/AIDS – facts, figures, country case studies and projects

www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/aids

AVERT: international AIDS/HIV charity – this page has images of previous awareness campaigns

www.avert.org/hivpictures.htm

Terence Higgins Trust: information on coping with the disease in the UK

www.tht.org.uk

The Siyazama project website with more information about the dolls and images of the craftspeople and products.

<http://www.siyamazaproject.co.za>

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