

# REACH OUT! SPEAK OUT!



This is a story about youth and xenophobia. It is intended to stimulate discussion and to promote tolerance and acceptance of refugees in South Africa.  
Please share it with others.

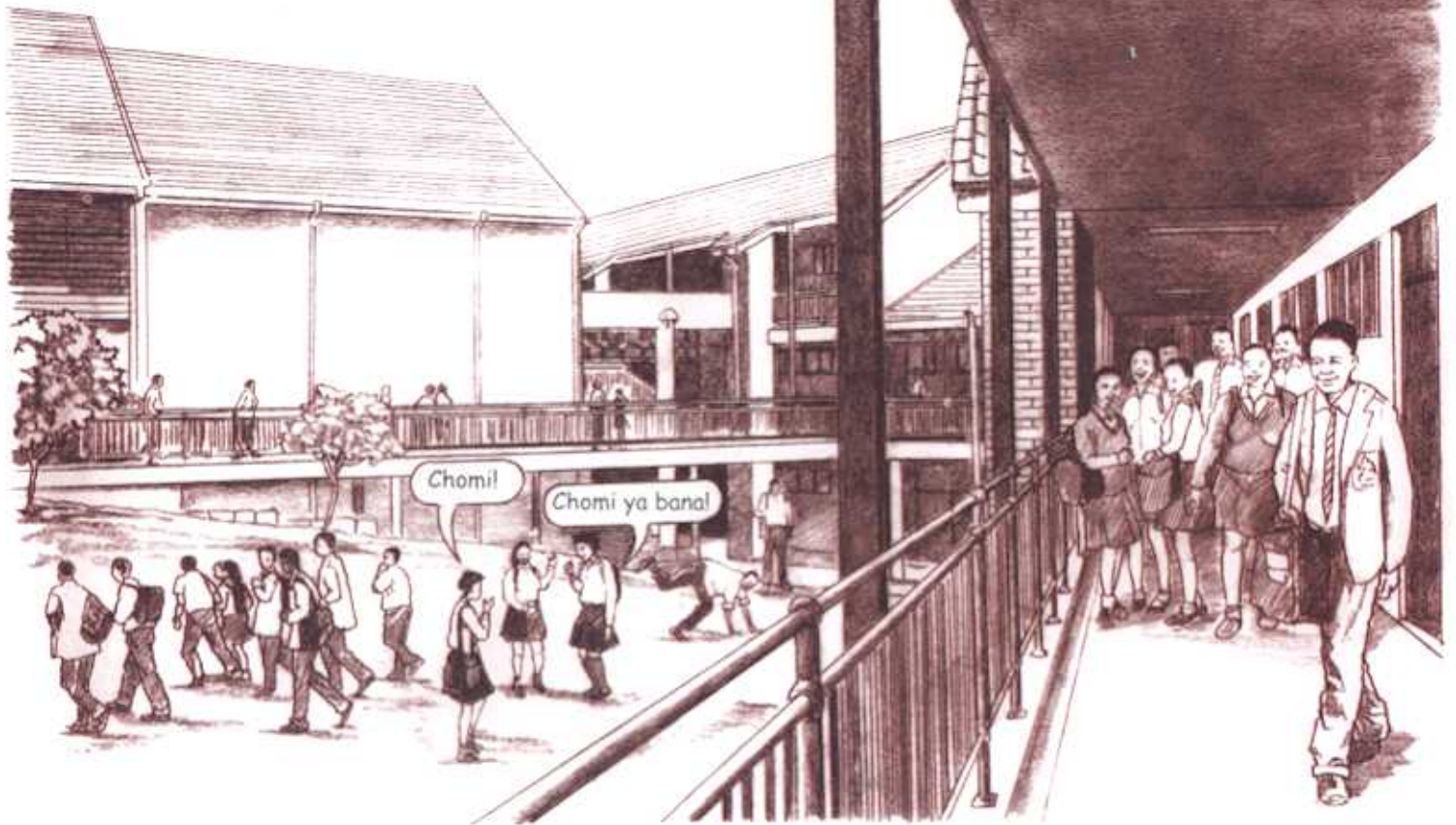
### **Technical Acknowledgements**

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The end of the day at  
Ubuntu High School.



Hey girls ... so where  
to this weekend?

There's this new club in town  
... they say it's da bomb!

You mean Sumptuous? ... ya, I  
heard things are bad there.

Exactly! That's the  
way it should be!

Ya...but I'm not sure its...

Ahhh loosen up Sam!

Ya girl, get with the programme!

Oh please, don't give me that  
p-r-a-g-m-a-t-i-c business ... it's so old!

Whatever! Saturday night is ladies night  
at Sumptuous. Free entrance and all!

Ok, sign me up!

Me too!



Problem is, we need wheels and a few good looking men.

What's wrong with Chris, Bongani and Josh? Flavours of the month, hakiri?

Yours probably, but I'm just sooo over Bongani!

Really? That's news to me.

Now that would mean?

I don't believe it! Last week you two were like so tight.

He's just rubbing me up the wrong way, y'know.

It means, o clever one, that he and I are over, as in chapter closed!

Uh uh, it's time to dump this guy. He's become all possessive and that just puts me off.

Well, what do you expect. He wants you to give it up to him before he moves on!

Why not?

Because I'm not gonna give it up to just anybody.

So what's your plan then?

I'll find somebody else.

That will never happen, believe me!

You better hurry girl. Saturday's this weekend, y'know.

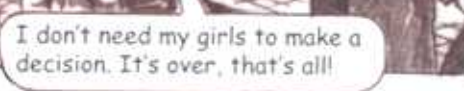
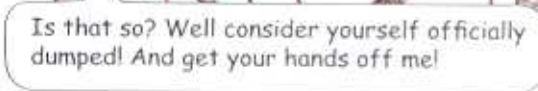
Ya, move quickly or you're gonna be hugging the club walls while we slow dance!

Speaking of the possessive devil...

Sherbet! Somebody hide me!

Too late girl ... you're on your own.









Let go of me!



Hey, what is going on here?

He won't let me go.



Cmon my brother



Hey! I'm not your brother. So get lost and mind your own business.



Leave her alone man!



Hey! What's going on here? Break it up you two.

Nothing sir...

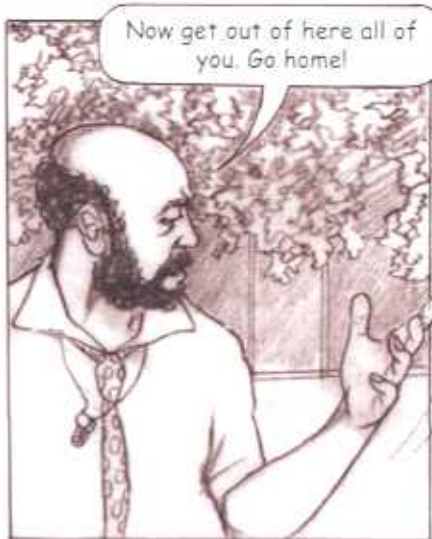
Just a game sir...



There are no such games in this school.

It's just a bit of fun sir.

Fun, my foot!

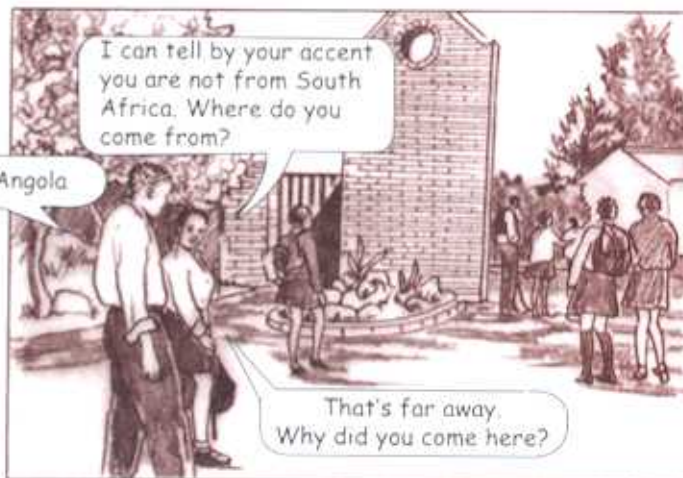


Now get out of here all of you. Go home!



This isn't over, you hear!





My father got taken away, we don't know where. He didn't come home from a meeting one day. Since then things were difficult for my family.

The soldiers came to our house all the time. They wanted information about my father.

They told my mother they are taking me to the bush to fight if she doesn't tell them about my father.









Unaccompanied minors. We are kids who are here in South Africa without our parents. Most of us had to run away from wars and leave our parents and relatives behind.

The principal knows about it and the teachers. They are kind to me and they make feel part of the school.

But not the students. They say I am a kwerekwere.



Gosh! Does the school know about this situation?

Sorry, Alphonse this is my bus. We'll talk more tomorrow, OK? Hey, thanks again for helping me.

It's no problem. See you tomorrow



The next day in class.

... and he just grabbed Bongani and shook him like a dog!

Serious?

I'm telling you, he really helped me.

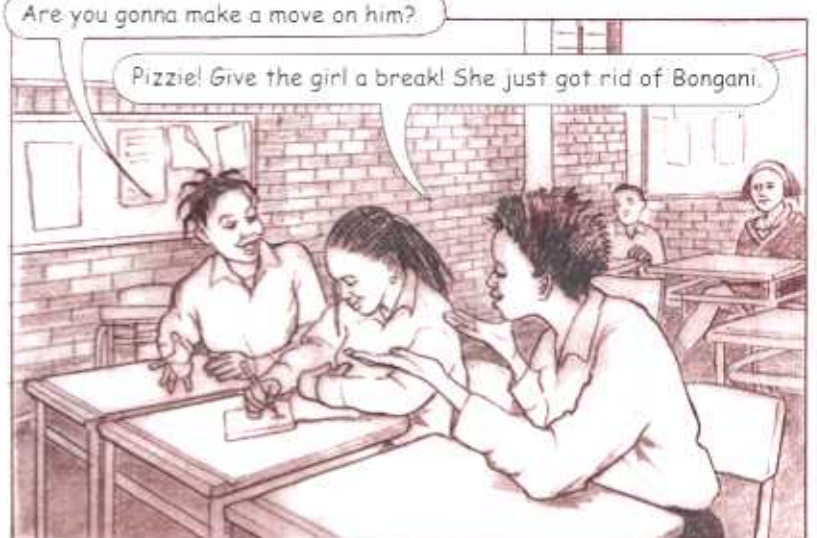


and so?

What?

Are you gonna make a move on him?

Pizzie! Give the girl a break! She just got rid of Bongani.







Look, there he is ... coming this way.



Hello Gail. How are you?

Hi Alphonse. I'm fine.

Are you OK after yesterday?



Oh yes. I hope Bongani is leaving you alone.

So far so good, thanks.



Good. See you later



He's to die for girl!

With the tush of a god!



Well hands off, he's taken!

By who?

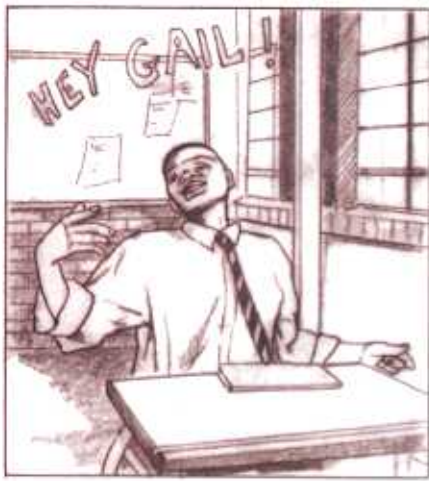
Me of course, so watch out!



Uh oh, here comes trouble!







Make sure you chain up that kwerekwere friend of yours because I'm gonna give him a black eye!



Good morning class

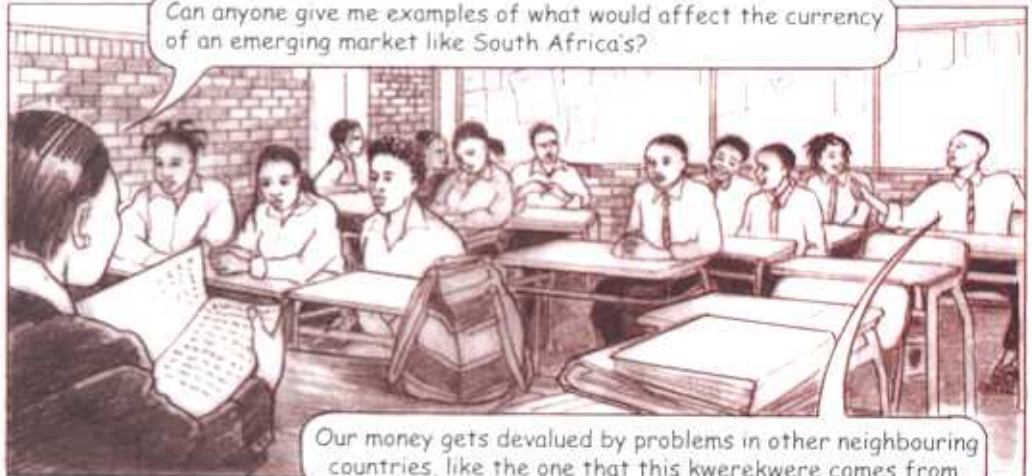


OK, listen up.

Books out.

Let's get to work

Can anyone give me examples of what would affect the currency of an emerging market like South Africa's?



Our money gets devalued by problems in other neighbouring countries, like the one that this kwerekwere comes from.



Bongani, you are out of line. I won't tolerate that language in my class.

But it's true ma'am! Everyone knows that foreigners bring crime and disease, especially AIDS. Who's gonna invest in a country full of people like that. Mccm! They even steal our girlfriends!



Bongani, I don't know where you get such nonsense. It is very insensitive and shows your ignorance, that's for sure.



Girl, do you know what you're doing?





Later at break time

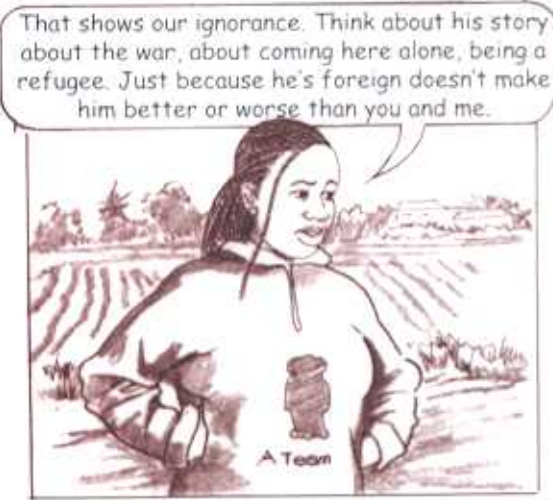
Think about it Gail. Since we opened our borders we've had more disease and more crime, right?

If I were you girl, I'd drop this guy like hot pap on a tin plate!

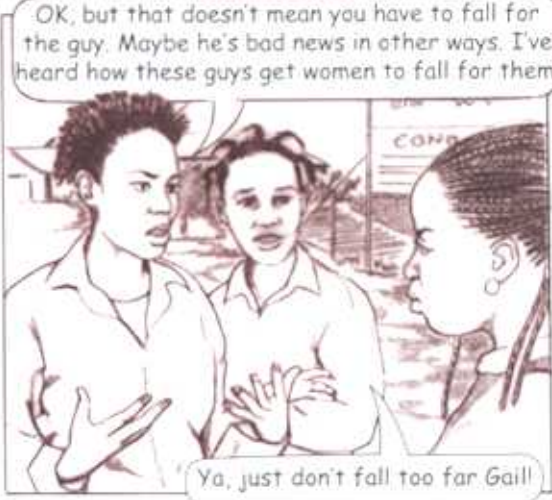


Look he only protected me from Bongani, There's nothing wrong with that!

But we've never done "the foreigner" thing before.



That shows our ignorance. Think about his story about the war, about coming here alone, being a refugee. Just because he's foreign doesn't make him better or worse than you and me.



OK, but that doesn't mean you have to fall for the guy. Maybe he's bad news in other ways. I've heard how these guys get women to fall for them

Ya, just don't fall too far Gail!



Oh you two are worse than Bongani!



Uh oh, speak of that devill!

Gail, hey Gail! I wanna talk to you.



Bongani, just go away and leave me alone please. What you said in class was terrible.



Don't be stupid, girl! Check what people say about foreigners.

Alphonse is a refugee and, if you bothered to find out, a very nice person.



I don't care what he is. All I know is he mustn't come anywhere near you!



You are the stupid one Bongani. If you hadn't acted so badly you might have less to worry about.



What do you mean?

I like Alphonse. I'm gonna ask him to come with me to Club Sumptuous with me this weekend. So there!



Over my dead body!!!

You don't own me Bongani. I can make my own decisions!



Shut up! Forget going to that club with anyone but me.

Dream on Bongani. C'mon girls, let's go!



Gail, I hope you know what you are doing!



I'm asking Alphonse to the club.

To hell with Bongani and his moronic friends!

I hate to mess up a good thing but I'd like to know if there's a link between foreigners, refugees and HIV/AIDS. These rumours must come from somewhere!



What?!

Sam's right Gail. Get some info on this before Saturday or you and Alphonse may be on your own ...

... because you know that our boyfriends are Bongani's 'moronic friends'. They'll probably keep us away from you.



And you'd let them do that?

We don't want to, but ...



I don't believe you two!

Eish! Here comes Shorty, let's duck outta here.





Miss? I need to ask you a question. Um ... is it true that refugees and other foreigners bring HIV/AIDS to our country?



Where did you hear that?

Bongani said it in class and now everyone believes it.



And where does Bongani get his information?

I don't know. But he is going around making nasty remarks about Alphonse just because he is a refugee.



Let's talk about it in class after lunch Gail. Go now, or you'll be late.

Later in Life Orientation Class

We're talking about communicating effectively today, so let's use a subject that seems to be on everyone's mind - foreigners, refugees and HIV/AIDS.



Who can tell me what a foreigner is?

A foreigner is a person who comes from another country.



That's right. Now who knows what a refugee is?

A refugee is someone who leaves his or her country.



Partly right, but anyone can leave their country. What is different about refugees?



A refugee leaves his country to come to South Africa to cause chaos and make his own life better.

No Bongani, you should get your facts straight before you make silly comments. A person who comes here to better his life is a migrant. Refugees are different from migrants. How?



Refugees are people who leave their country because of war, or because their lives are threatened, especially by people like soldiers.

That's a better description than you Gail. Refugees are people who have suffered human rights violations. They usually come here to save their own lives.



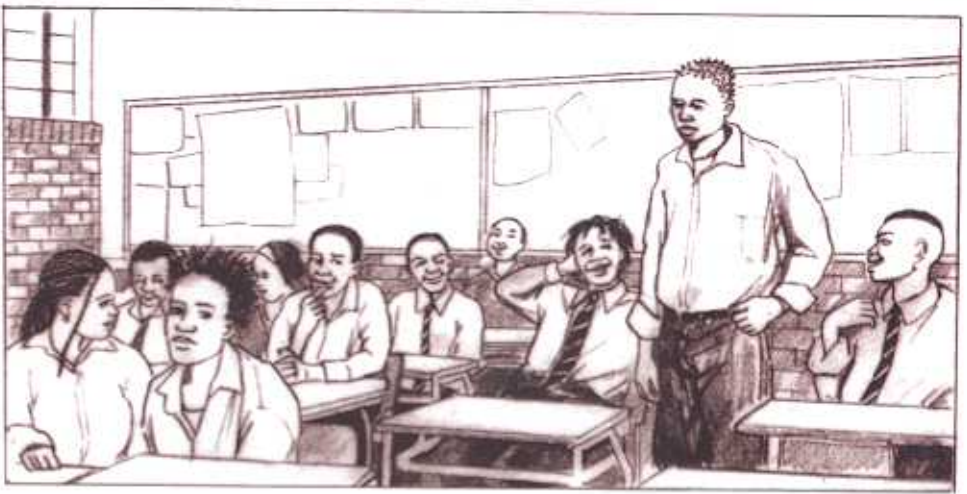
So why do they come to South Africa? Why don't they go to other countries?



Maybe because they feel safer here and have a chance to live more productively. I think Alphonse would be able to tell us more about that.







I became a refugee last year. It wasn't my choice, things just forced me into this situation.

In my country, Angola, there has been war for a long time. I grew up with fighting all around me...

Sometimes we could not go to school because schools were destroyed or the teachers got abducted or had to run away.



One day when I was eleven years old my father went to a meeting. He never came back.

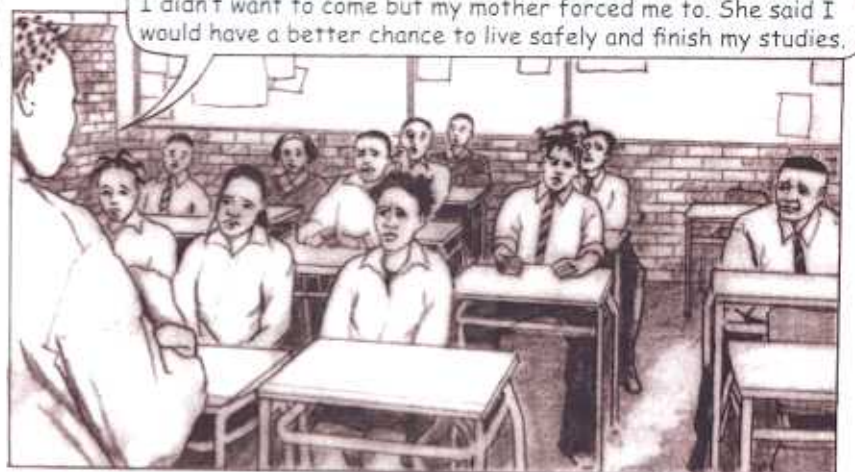
I still don't know what happened to him. Sometimes I try to put a picture of him in my mind so that I will not forget his face.

After my father disappeared, the soldiers started bothering my mother. They said she knew where he was. Sometimes they would beat her or take her away for a day.



My mother was afraid they would take me away, so she decided to send me here. She got enough money to pay for me to get a ride in a truck to South Africa.

I didn't want to come but my mother forced me to. She said I would have a better chance to live safely and finish my studies.





I did not come with a disease or to steal either. All I want is to study and when there is peace in Angola, I will go home and help rebuild my country. That's all.



Thank you Alphonse for sharing your story.



Any questions?



Weren't you scared living in a war zone?



Yes I was scared but what could I do? It is my home.



We all know that foreigners bring crime and disease here. What makes you different?



How do you know that foreigners bring crime and disease? I do not.



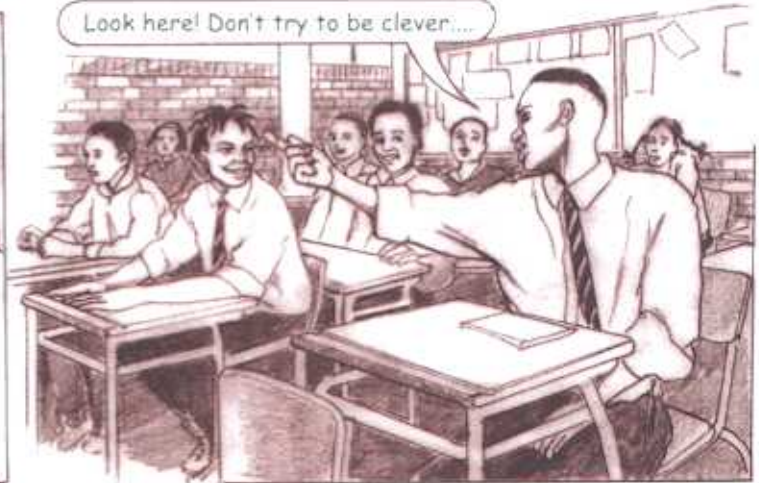
Ay, suka! Even the newspapers say that foreigners are a big problem here.



What proof do you have?



Look here! Don't try to be clever...



OK! OK! Let's calm down and clarify some things.



Myths are part of our lives, but some are cruel and very dangerous - like believing that all foreigners, including refugees, bring AIDS and do crime.



Well, my friends say all foreigners have the disease.





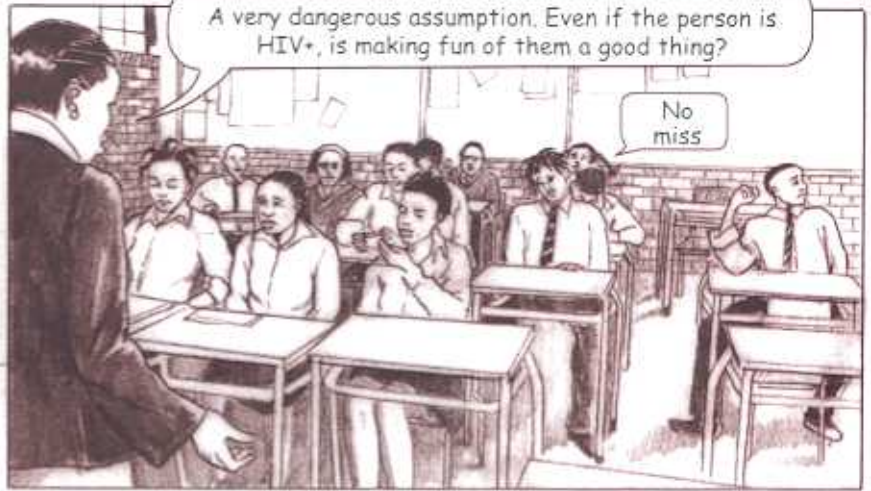
Is it only foreigners who get HIV/AIDS? What about the South African sitting next to you?



It's just an assumption Miss



A very dangerous assumption. Even if the person is HIV+, is making fun of them a good thing?



No miss

Certainly not! A person with HIV/AIDS is one of us and should be treated with respect.



But Miss, if you are interested in someone, how do you know if they are infected or not?



Well, you don't. But there are ways to deal with that situation.



Anyone?

You can ask them to go for an HIV test with you.



Or wear a condom every time you have sex!



Or just be friends and not have sex at all!



EISHHH!! HA HA!



But some of us can't do that!



We can all be responsible and practise safer sex Bongani. It is a choice we can make.



And what if your girlfriend refuses to have sex?

Then boyfriends must RESPECT that choice!



But what if you don't get that respect? What if you feel forced to have sex?



Then decide to give in or get out of the relationship, girl.



I would get out and be with someone who respects me.



Like that kwerekwere Alphonse?



Bongani, I'm not a kwerekwere. I am from another country and I speak a different language, but I am not a strange or bad person.



I did not come here to cause trouble and spread disease like you and other people think.



OK! OK! Calm down. There are important lessons we are learning here.

What are they?



You are wrong to accuse me.



Ay suka! Don't come try to be clever...





Miss, I think we must stop generalising.

Yes! There is no evidence that Alphonse is HIV+ or a criminal.

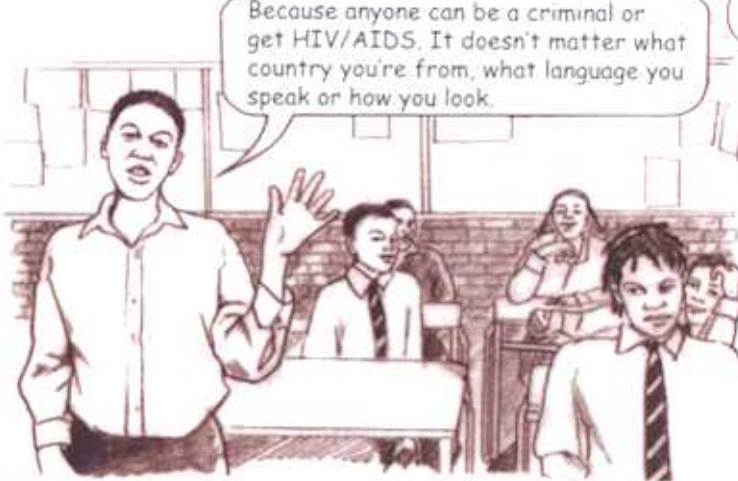
And it is wrong to think that only foreigners bring crime and disease here.



Why?

Because anyone can be a criminal or get HIV/AIDS. It doesn't matter what country you're from, what language you speak or how you look.

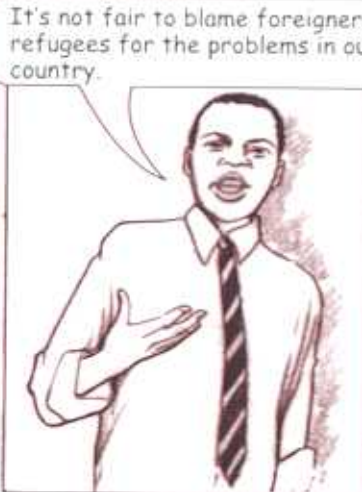
And how should we treat people?



Treat them in the way you want to be treated.

It's not fair to blame foreigners or refugees for the problems in our country.

Then who is responsible?



We all are. We need to educate ourselves to make responsible choices and decisions.

We must talk freely about HIV/AIDS, foreigners and refugees. It will help us be more tolerant.

Well class, I think everyone has learned something from this discussion.

That's all for today.





Later at second break

Eish! Bongani got dissed in class, for sure!

Ya, but I wonder if it is going to change his bad attitude.



Well it helped me to understand more about HIV/AIDS and refugees and foreigners.



So girl, are you still going to Sumptuous with Alphonse?

For sure!



What about Bongani?

I'm not gonna stop living because of Bongani. If he doesn't like it he can hang out somewhere else.



Saturday night at Club Sumptuous...

Hey guys, you made it!

Of course we did! So what's happening inside?



Um, Gail, Bongani is in there and um...

Well, I'm ready for him!



He's with somebody

Who?!!



Gloria

Gloria! What is he doing with her?





Who cares. You don't want him anymore, remember!



Ya, not when I have this fine hunk with me.

Heita! Bongani, Hoezit?

Oh, so the party is over here!



Hey Gail. I see you brought your new friend.



And I see you brought yours.

Heita! Hoezit?

Kushap! Hoezit?



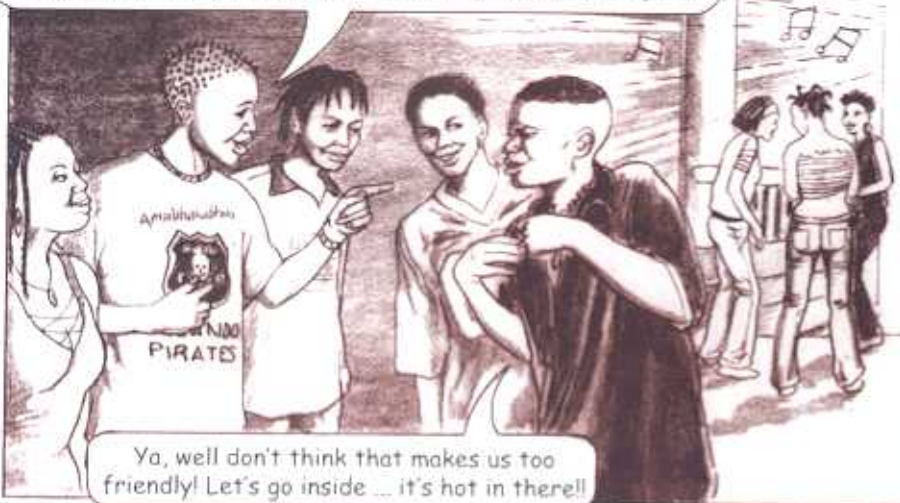
Hey lengamla iyacava!

One way to make friends is to learn to speak their language!

Sure, sure, sure, sure!



I think maybe I can even learn something from you Bongani!

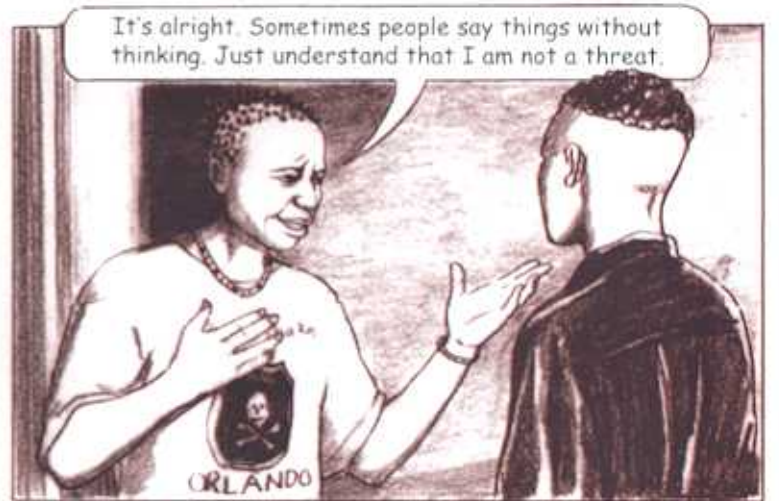
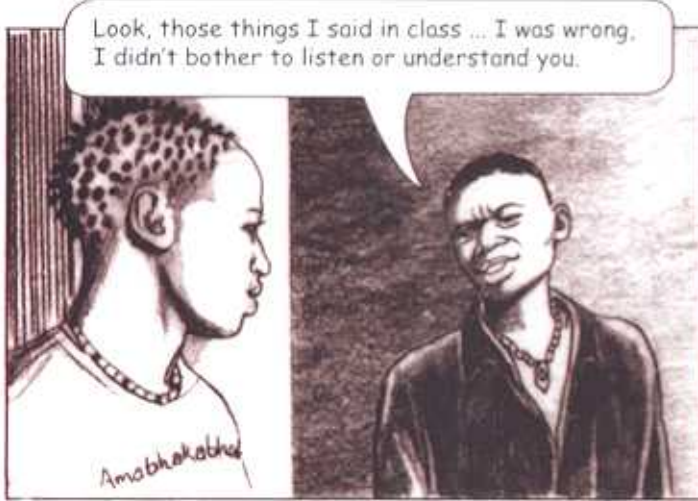


Ya, well don't think that makes us too friendly! Let's go inside ... it's hot in there!!

Alright... nice time here we come!









**Other publications about refugees available from UNHCR**



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