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GIVING WOMEN POWER OVER AIDS

A TRAVELING EXHIBIT

Featuring
In Her Mother's Shoes,
a photo essay by The Seattle Times

It is our hope that this exhibit will help you begin to understand what it means to be a woman in a world of AIDS – a world where many women have little to say about relationships. About sex. About condoms. And no way to protect themselves against HIV.

A handful of scientists and advocates are racing to curb the loss of future generations from this epidemic. Their ambition is to give women a way to protect themselves.

Their pursuit – a microbicide – could offer this hope.

There is Hope

Global Campaign FOR Microbicides
www.global-campaign.org

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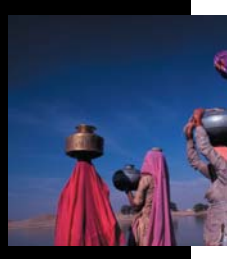
Microbic

GIVING WOMEN



Today at least 38 million people are living with HIV or AIDS; 17 million are women. Most do not yet have access to treatment. Unless HIV prevention efforts are drastically expanded, 45 million are likely to be infected by 2010. **The good news:** *Scientists are working on a new prevention tool most people have never heard of –* **microbicides.**

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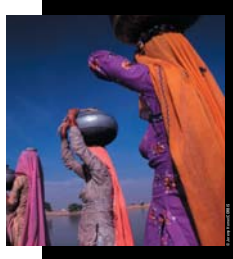
icides

POWER OVER AIDS



Microbicides (mī·CRŌ·bi·sīdz) are a new class of products under development that a woman could use vaginally to protect herself and her partner from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Microbicides would put the power of prevention into women's hands. Where HIV rates are highest, microbicides could make the difference between life and death. Across the globe, they could protect our daughters and sons from HIV or other debilitating STDs such as herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and human papilloma virus (HPV).

The problem is that they are not yet available. Just how long we have to wait depends largely on us.

It depends on political will.

Global Campaign FOR Microbicides

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Microbicides | Panel 1 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Imagine
HOW WOULD MICROBICIDES WORK?

Women are two to three times as likely as men to contract HIV from a single act of unprotected sex.

Microbicides could transform the landscape of HIV prevention, especially for women.

Scientists are currently investigating over two dozen product leads, hoping to find one that will prove safe and effective at preventing transmission of HIV and other STDs.

Microbicides could work in a variety of ways: boosting the vagina's natural defense mechanisms, killing or disabling HIV or other STD pathogens, creating a barrier that keeps HIV from attaching to cells, or preventing HIV from replicating and thus spreading in the body.

Some of the products under development would prevent pregnancy, as well as reduce risk of infection. Others will allow pregnancy while providing protection from disease. Microbicides could provide a new option for women who want to get pregnant but need to protect themselves from infection.

With sufficient resources and political will, a microbicide could be available by the end of the decade.

Microbicides are being developed in many forms: a gel or cream inserted with an applicator, a sponge or time-released suppository, or an intravaginal ring that could be used for months at a time.

2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
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2010?

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Microbicides | Panel 2 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Understand

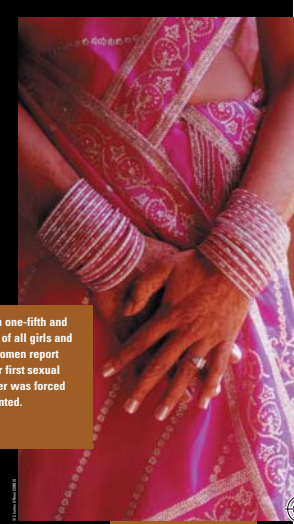
WOMEN'S VULNERABILITY TO HIV/AIDS

Why are women at higher risk of HIV infection than men? The answer is part biology, part economics, and part culture.

Biologically: Women are more vulnerable to HIV because semen carries more of the virus than vaginal secretions and a greater surface area is exposed in women for a longer period of time during sex. Young girls are especially at risk because their reproductive tracts are not fully mature.

Economically: In many places, women have less access than men to education, job opportunities, property, or credit, making them financially dependent on their partners. As a result, women often cannot afford to leave relationships that put them at risk of HIV and other STDs.

Culturally: Women do not always have control over when and with whom they have sex. Here and abroad, women are expected to be faithful but men are not. A male partner's infidelity is one of the greatest HIV risks women face.

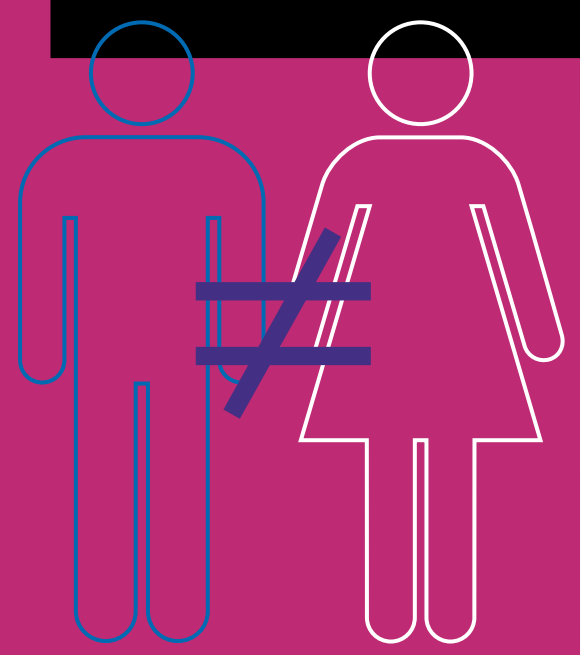


Between one-fifth and one-half of all girls and young women report that their first sexual encounter was forced or unwanted.

Women all over the globe have fewer choices than men about marriage, sex, and safety. In many societies, women and girls are discouraged from learning about their bodies and must leave decisions about safer sex to men.

Women have had such little control over HIV thus far. Microbicides could change that equation.

ANNA FORBES, WOMEN'S HEALTH ACTIVIST



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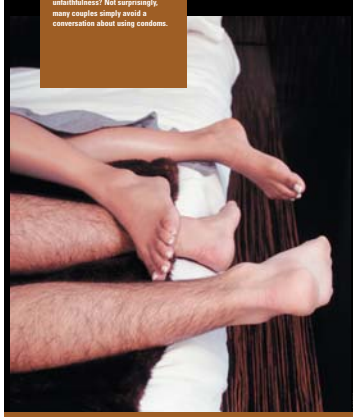
Microbicides | Panel 3 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Consider
THE CONDOM CONUNDRUM

It is human nature to want to trust someone you care about. Who wants to start a conversation that could lead to accusations of unfaithfulness? Not surprisingly, many couples simply avoid a conversation about using condoms.



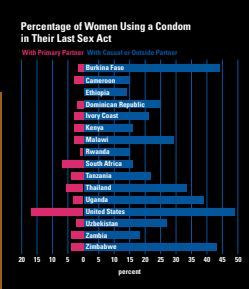
Why invest in developing new products for women when condoms are readily available, cheap, and proven to block HIV?

When used consistently and correctly, condoms provide excellent protection against HIV transmission. The problem is that people in steady partnerships – in both rich and poor countries – tend not to use them. Even people who generally use condoms with new or casual partners do not tend to use them with their regular partners. Once love and trust enter the equation, the condom comes off.

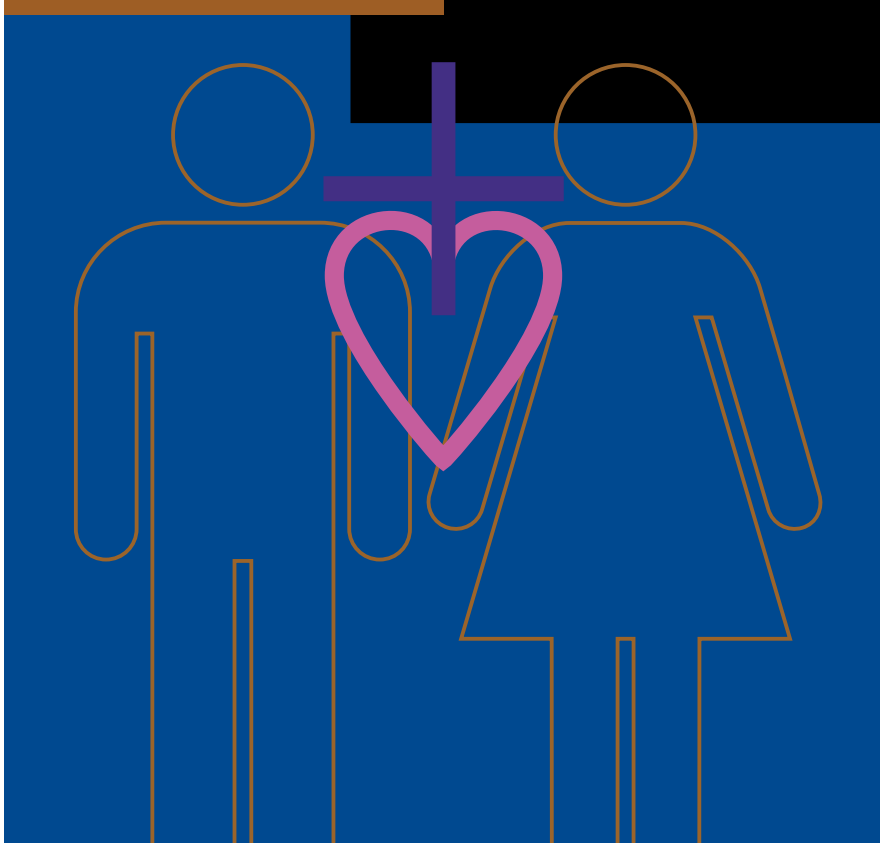
Condoms are also not an option for couples that want to have children. Many microbicides could protect women from disease but would not be contraceptive.

Sex within trusting relationships is the "Achilles heel" of the HIV pandemic and the point of greatest vulnerability for women globally.

LORI HEISE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR MICROBICIDES



Data from all over the world show that condom use with regular partners is much lower than with new or casual partners.



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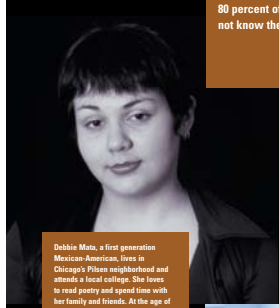
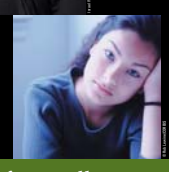
Mircrobicides | Panel 4 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Recognize
THE NEED HERE AT HOME

As many as one in four Americans have genital herpes, yet at least 80 percent of them do not know they have it.



Debbie Mata, a first generation Mexican-American, lives in Chicago's Pilson neighborhood and attends a local college. She loves to read poetry and spend time with her family and friends. At the age of nineteen she tested positive for the virus that causes AIDS. "I have only slept with one person. What are the chances? Ya know, first time, first everything."



Right here at home, sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates continue to rise, especially among young women.

STDs can have serious health consequences for women and the children they may bear. Untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea are a major cause of infertility. Syphilis can cause blindness or death in infants born to infected mothers. A high-risk form of the human papilloma virus (HPV) is a major cause of cervical cancer in women. Young women are at more risk than young men because the infections can hide unnoticed in the female reproductive tract. Having an STD increases the risk of contracting HIV.

It is likely that "combination" microbicides capable of preventing other STDs in addition to HIV could be developed.

Fifty percent of sexually active young people in the U.S. can expect to become infected with an STD by age 25.

AIDS is the leading cause of death for African-American women aged 25 to 34. The HIV case rate among Latinas is seven times higher than that of white women in the U.S. Many of these women are contracting HIV through unsafe sex with regular partners.

CANADA

EUROPE

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Microbicides | Panel 5 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Microbicides

NOT JUST A WOMEN'S ISSUE

Although access to antiretroviral treatment has drastically reduced AIDS-related death rates in Canada, the United States, and Europe, these miracle drugs have done little to stem the tide of new infections.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a resurgence of new HIV and STD infections among gay men, especially younger gay men and men of color who have sex with men.

In addition to better information about condoms, partner reduction, and other safer sex strategies, gay and heterosexual men, as well as women, could benefit from additional new tools – like microbicides – to help protect their health.

Scientists have begun to investigate a microbicide suitable for men who have sex with men. Developing such a microbicide is more difficult due to the different biology of the colon and the vagina. But this research is vitally important.

© Lowell Georgia/Corbis Image

The push for microbicides is not a gay or heterosexual issue – it's important for all of us. We all need other tools that can be used to protect ourselves and our partners.

JIM PICKETT, GAY MEN'S HEALTH ADVOCATE

© AP Photo/Jim Ruymen

Due to both stigma and biological differences, research into microbicides for men who have sex with men lags significantly behind that of microbicides for women.

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Microbicides | Panel 6 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Where ARE THE DRUG COMPANIES?

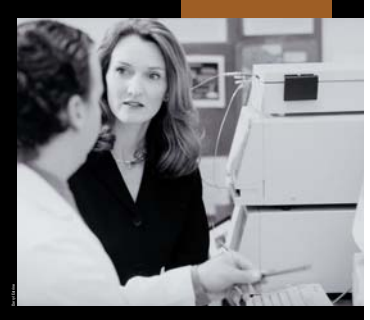
Microbicides – when available – will need to be both inexpensive and accessible to communities all over the world.

Large pharmaceutical companies, that usually fund new drug development, have shied away from microbicide research because they see it as too much financial risk for too little profit.

As a result, the task of microbicide development has fallen to scientists at nonprofit organizations, universities and small biotech companies – all of which rely on government grants and foundation contributions to keep their research going. Progress has been slow, however, due to inadequate funding.

"In 1990 people laughed at us when we talked about the idea of a microbicide. It's been a long, long struggle. But we are now at the forefront of the greatest innovation in women's reproductive health since The Pill."

Anne Marie Corner, President of Biosyn, a small woman-run company that is working on several microbicides



Developers of microbicides must rely on the willingness and determination of communities all over the globe who participate in clinical trials to test the safety and effectiveness of microbicides.

Microbicides Clinical Trial Sites

RxS?

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Progress

YOU CAN M

These women helped coordinate microbicide clinical trials in Uganda. Their personal commitment may bring us one step closer to finding a microbicide for the world. They care. Do you?

Never in human history have so many died for so little reason. You have a chance to alter the course of that history. Can there be any task more noble?

STEPHEN J. LEWIS
UN Special Envoy on AIDS in Africa, at the Microbicides 2004 Conference

www.global-c

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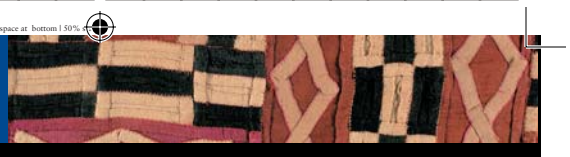

AKE A DIFFERENCE

Scientists estimate that even a 60 percent effective microbicide could prevent 2.5 million HIV infections in three years among women, men, and children in the developing world.

But these lives will not be saved if citizens do not get involved. Microbicide research depends on government leadership and investment, and public support is vital.

The Global Campaign for Microbicides is mobilizing people throughout the world to demand more resources for microbicides research and development. Together, we speak on behalf of the millions of citizens whose lives will be influenced by this enterprise – as eventual users, trial participants, taxpayers, or individuals at risk of HIV.

In the face of the overwhelming catastrophe of AIDS, it is hard to know how to respond. But making this demand to our policymakers and governments is one concrete thing we can do.

Through the Global Campaign for Microbicides, people around the world are working in their own communities to demand safe, effective, user-controlled HIV and STD prevention tools.
Check us out at www.global-campaign.org or call 202-822-0033 to get more information, sign up for our free, electronic newsletter, and get involved in microbicides advocacy in your region.

Global Campaign FOR Microbicides

PATH
A catalyst for global health

A UNAIDS Initiative
The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS

This exhibition was sponsored by the Global Campaign for Microbicides (at PATH) with support from the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, an initiative of UNAIDS (the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS)

We are grateful to the organizers of "The Faces of Aids" who generously contributed photography.

-campaign.org

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Ruth Attract | left side | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

IN HER Mother's

A STORY ABOUT WOMEN AND CI

Betty Udesen | The Seattle Times

"Ruth and her family agreed to share their story and daily life with photographer Betty Udesen and me, invited us to sit on their floor mats, eat their mealy meal, to talk 'girl talk' because Ruth wanted you to think of African women as sisters, mothers, daughter, friends. Not as statistics in a newspaper."

PAULA BOCK, JOURNALIST, THE SEATTLE TIMES

LOCALLY OWNED. UNIQUELY NORTHWEST.

The Seattle Times

seattletimes.com

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Ruth Attract | right side | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Shoes

ID CHILDREN IN A WORLD OF AIDS

Written by
Paula Bock, Journalist,
The Seattle Times

Photographed by
Betty Udesen,
Photojournalist,
The Seattle Times

When we first met Ruth in a dusty township in Zimbabwe, she was in bed, her two small children huddled by her head, her mother perched on scruffy blankets by her feet. For two weeks, Ruth had been sick. Running stomach. Headache. Horrible cough. She was 24. Her husband had died two years earlier from AIDS and tuberculosis. Her in-laws accused Ruth of killing him with witchcraft. The truth? Ruth's husband, a truck driver, had many girlfriends before and during his marriage. It was he who infected Ruth.

For many women around the world, that's life. It's also death.

Globally more people die of AIDS than any other infectious disease. AIDS has claimed over 20 million lives throughout the world since the first diagnosis in 1981.

Betty Udesen | The Seattle Times

Ruth worries about her children, Martha and Tafadzwa – especially Martha. Who will protect her quiet daughter as she becomes a woman? If there is no food, no school, no jobs, what might Martha be forced to do to survive? If she falls for the wrong man? Who will teach Martha about love?

"I wish my daughter would grow up to be a big girl, get a proper education, and get married to a husband who will take care of her.... Not like what happened to me."
RUTH CHIMUONENJI

"Who will take care of my children?"

RUTH NJAWARA CHIMUONENJI, MOTHER
OF 6-YEAR-OLD MARTHA AND 4-YEAR-OLD TAFADZWA

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Ruth 1 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

TO UNKNOWINGLY *Marry* INTO AIDS

Ruth was seventeen, Richard older than thirty when they met. She broke up with a boy from church to walk with him. He was suave, handsome, funny, a fine storyteller. Richard paid Ruth's parents a bride price of 9000 Zimbabwean dollars. Martha was born, then almost two years later, Tafadzwa. When the baby was just weeks old, Ruth and Richard came down with tuberculosis. Ruth responded to treatment, and with Tafadzwa swaddled on her back and Martha toddling at her feet, she cooked and cared for her husband for more than a year until he wasted to death in 2000.

Ruth was not just a statistic. She had a lovely smile. She enjoyed church music, poetry, sewing baby clothes, and kept a daily journal. She sold used clothes and vegetables to feed her family. She worried about her children.

Betty Udesen | The Seattle Times

Marriage is no protection against HIV.
In Kenya and Zambia, HIV infection rates are higher among young married women (aged 15 to 19) than among their sexually active, unmarried peers.
In Thailand, 76 percent of HIV-positive women had only one partner: their husband.

"Ruth didn't know her husband was HIV-positive when she made love with him."
MERCY, RUTH'S SISTER

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Ruth 2 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Touch

A MOTHER'S LOVE

Ruth was Amai Caty's sixth child, the helpful one. Amai Caty knew her daughter was infected with the same virus that killed her son-in-law, but she'd hoped Ruth wouldn't get sick. Then Ruth's cough turned to vomiting and diarrhea. She soiled her blankets. Each time, Amai Caty cleaned up. She'd learned about home-based care for "this disease that has come among us." She wiped her daughter's bottom with warm rags. She scrubbed the bedding with hot water and rocks. Amai Caty was still washing her daughter when she realized Ruth was dead.

From sunrise until the moon is high in the sky, Ruth's mother's work is to care for her family. She kneels to fuel the fire, heating bath water for her husband.

Betty Gilmore / The Seattle Times

Women comprise half of all people living with HIV/AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 60 percent of those living with HIV are women.

"I wanted Ruth to know that I loved her and would touch her."

AMAI CATY, RUTH'S MOTHER

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Ruth 3 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Listen

A MOTHER'S CRY

Listen to Ruth's mother's cry and you will never think of the number 2.2 million in the same distant way. That's how many people died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa last year. It's also the population of Philadelphia, Sacramento, and Atlanta combined. Or every soul in Barcelona, Geneva, and Toronto.

It's a number too big to get your arms around, an amount easier to calculate than to comprehend. Until you hear Ruth's mother cry. If you ever wondered whether 2.2 million deaths make any single death less painful, listen. Imagine wind moaning, tires screeching.

Ruth's mother wails, "My daughter! My daughter."

For two days and two nights, while men tend the fire outside, the women inside clap and leap and cry, their grief amplified by the acoustics of a corrugated metal roof and the sorrow of so many mothers who've lost so many daughter so far.

Betty Udesen | The Seattle Times

Multiply one mother's plea by 38 million. Globally, that's how many people are infected with HIV. 70 percent of them live in sub-Saharan Africa.

"…it's very difficult to think that just because of an accident of birth, somebody in Africa or Asia does not have access to a reasonable quality of health care."

DR. HELENE GAYLE, THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

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Ruth 4 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Mourn

RUTH'S FUNERAL

Sobs and shuddering sighs.

Wrenching ululation. Each new wave of mourners unleashes a new wave of sorrow that sweeps around the room. Many untuck small bills from the folds of their cotton overskirts and donate to Ruth's funeral expenses. Faced with such suffering what do you do?

Somewhere, amidst the swish of skirts, a child's familiar hiccupy cry. Ruth's little boy, Tafadzwa, is lost in a crush of legs. His nose is dripping and nobody has noticed to wipe it. Hopefully his sister Martha is nearby to comfort him.

Tafadzwa tries to touch his mother's face. He tosses a piece of charcoal into her coffin so her ghost won't haunt him at night. Martha comes around three times, looks at her mother on the second pass, and waves goodbye on the third.

Left: Ruth's older sister Regina is overwhelmed with grief.

Betty Udesen / The Seattle Times

Betty Udesen / The Seattle Times

Worldwide, the number of children under age 15 who have lost one or both parents to AIDS stands at more than 14 million.

"The dead? Maybe they stay around awhile.... Like a spirit you hear in your sleep as if a voice is talking to you."

RUTH CHIMOUNENJI 1.31.78 – 7.7.02

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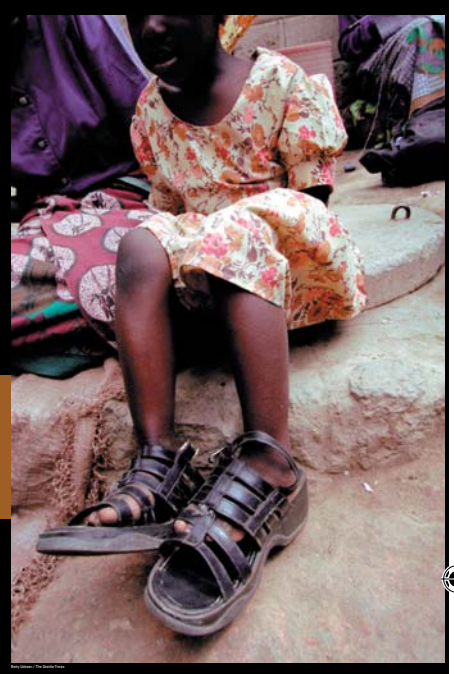
Ruth 5 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Martha

IN HER MOTHER'S SHOES

In the days after her mother's funeral, Martha plays in a brand-new flowered dress. She waggles her tongue and runs hand-in-hand with neighbor pals under the hanging laundry. She tosses stones into a circle drawn in the dirt. When the sun beats hot on her head, she snuggles against her Aunt Mercy in the shade. She notices her mother's sandals askew next to Mercy's ankles, and slips her small feet into them. They're way too big. Hopefully she won't grow into them anytime soon.



Martha is one of 11 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. As she becomes a woman big enough to wear her mother's sandals, Martha will grow up in a land where 50 percent of today's teenagers are expected to someday die of AIDS.

Betty Udesen / The Seattle Times

Young people aged 15 to 24 make up 67 percent of newly infected individuals in the developing world. Almost two-thirds of these are young women and girls. In sub-Saharan Africa young women are three times more likely to be infected than young men.

"My mother. My mother cooked my breakfast. My mother plaited my hair. My mother.... I'm forgetting."

MARTHA, RUTH'S DAUGHTER

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Ruth 6 | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Witness

A WORN-OUT MAIZE FIELD

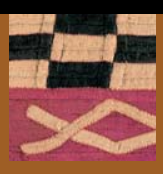
The field where Ruth is buried is stark. Shriveled maize on one side, mounded graves on the other. Each day, the mounds move toward the maize. Soon the dead will overwhelm the crop.

The field where Ruth is buried holds fifty rows. Each row holds fifty graves, except Ruth's row, which is only three-quarters filled. Standing here, where human life has stopped, it's impossible not to count time in weird ways. In two years, Martha will have outgrown her new flowered dress. In seven years her hips and breasts will swell, and she'll have her mother's lovely smile, and she'll be at that age. That beautiful, tender age that's supposed to be the start of life for young women, not the end.

Faced with life's unrelenting calculus, what do you do? Here, where the toll ticks, grave by grave, past 2.2 million, there is no gently lingering twilight, no miracle cure, no time to waste.

Betty Gilmore / The Seattle Times

In the next 20 years, if current levels of prevention and treatment don't change, 68 million people are expected to die of AIDS worldwide.



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Ruth Summary | left side | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

Care

THE STRENGTH

Admire Ruth's mother. The strength in her shoulders. The spirit in her smile. The hope in her eyes. If you were in her place – grandchild on your back, daughter in a grave – could you carry on with such grace? And if Ruth's mother were you, what would she be moved to do?

Despite terrific burdens, the people of Zimbabwe and elsewhere are confronting the challenge of AIDS with limited resources – teaching youngsters about safer sex, challenging harmful cultural practices, and caring for the children left behind. But the problem is too big to shoulder alone.

Over two decades into the epidemic, HIV/AIDS has laid waste to Africa and now imperils the Caribbean, India, China, Russia, and many communities here at home. It must be fought with the same urgency and commitment that would be unleashed against any other enemy that claimed 3.1 million lives last year.

For now, parents are dying. Teenagers will be next.

Ruth asked, "Who will take care of my children?" The fate of Martha and her generation depends on our response.

At 58, with 12 children of her own, Amai Caty now becomes mother to her daughter Ruth's two orphans. As she walks with Martha, little Tafadzwa clambers on her back. Ruth's family promised to give the children a home and food and love. Only time will tell if they can keep the children safe from AIDS.

In Zimbabwe 25 percent of the population is infected with HIV, and life expectancy has fallen to 38 years. Without AIDS it would be 70.

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Ruth Summary | right side | 35.5"x 78" visible area + .5" bleed all sides + 4.5" white space at bottom | 50% scale

AND STRUGGLE OF A COMMUNITY

Betty Udesen / The Seattle Times

In Her Mother's Shoes originally appeared in The Seattle Times on December 1, 2002, World AIDS Day. To read the full story, go to www.seattletimes.com/aids

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To help, you can contribute to the following organizations. All donations are tax deductible.

The Centre
Teaches HIV patients and their families about nutrition, home-based care, stress management, and bereavement in Zimbabwe. Provides vitamins, bedpans, soap, gloves and some medicines for infections.

The Centre c/o
AIDS Empowerment and
Treatment International
1775 T Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
E-mail:
centre@ecoweb.co.zw in Zimbabwe or
centre@aidsetti.org in the U.S.

Global Campaign for Microbicides
An international coalition of not-for-profit groups working to accelerate access to a safe, effective microbicide.

Global Campaign/PATH
1800 K Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
www.global-campaign.org
info@global-campaign.org

"I don't want to die before I turn 25. I refuse to sit down and watch my generation fall to pieces. I am going to make a difference…. Will you?"

RUMBIDZAI GRACE MUSHANGI, 15, YOUNG PERSON FROM ZIMBABWE

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