



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Week of 7 June 2004
Programme No. 908
Length: 3'41"

UNICEF SUPPORTS LESOTHO YOUTH CENTRES

VIDEO

YOUTH DANCING (10.5")

AUDIO

NARRATION

The Gum Boot dance is a popular tradition in Lesotho in Southern Africa. These young people are performing for a crucial cause: combatting HIV/AIDS.

PEOPLE (14")

The kingdom of Lesotho is one of the African countries hard hit by the AIDS pandemic. More than 25% of its one million adult population are HIV positive. Most of them are relatively young.

YOUTH MEETING (12")

Five years ago, a group of youth in the city of Mohale's Hoek, 100 km. south of the capital Maseru, decided to organize themselves to fight against the disease.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES (14")

With support from the local community, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, helped the group set up the Selibeng Youth Centre. Combatting AIDS was not the only motive, says coordinator Seipati Maphatsoe.

MAPHATSOE:

SEIPATI MAPHATSOE ON
CAMERA (11")

"We established this group because we didn't want the youth from Mohale's Hoek to go with crime. We want them to go on with different activities."

CHURCH/MEMBERS READING
(12")

NARRATION

An old church is the base for their activities. The small library is a major source of information on AIDS and other subjects of interest to young people. The centre also organizes English lessons.

UNICEF CAR AND OFFICIALS
(17.5")

International organizations are providing significant support. On this day, UNICEF officials bring up-to-date information material on HIV/AIDS for members of the group to distribute. The UNICEF Representative in Lesotho is Bertrand Desmoulins.

BERTRAND DESMOULINS ON
CAMERA (13.5")

DESMOULINS:

"They are very good also in sensitising their own peers and the adults of the community by having young actors among them and developing drama which highlights the issues of HIV/AIDS."

DRAMA (14")

NARRATION

As well as talking to people and handing out information, the group employs the artistic talents

of its members to highlight the evils of the disease. The main bus station in town is one of the venues for their performances.

TIN HOUSE (14.5")

The group is also aware of the need to preserve the environment. A German volunteer teaches them how to use empty tin cans as construction material. They built this room to be used by HIV positive teenage mothers and their babies.

SOLAR COOKER (17")

They are also shown how to harness solar energy. Making solar cookers from simple materials can replace firewood and save some of the trees, which have been disappearing fast in Lesotho. The group is proud of its activities and has a message for the country's younger generation.

MAPHATSOE:

SEIPATI MAPHATSOE ON
CAMERA (12.5")

"We can say to the youth who are not doing anything, just don't sit there and fold up their arms. You have to stand up and as youth you have to work hard to secure your future."

NARRATION

BASKETBALL (8.5")

Sport is another popular activity. UNICEF built this basketball court for members of the centre, as well as other youth groups.

T-SHIRTS (12")

To generate income to support their activities, the group makes T-shirts. They sell them to local people and tourists. The prestigious Hotel Mount Maluti is one of their customers.

DANCING (15.5")

The need for youth friendly services in Lesotho is growing rapidly. The success of the Selibeng Youth Centre in Mohale's Hoek is serving as a model for the rest of the country.

LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Kamil Taha for the United Nations.