Land Consultation Clinic

Visual and Educational Tool

GUIDE

ON WOMEN’S HOUSING
AND LAND RIGHTS

With financial support from

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
Visual and Educational Tool’s Guidebook for the Social Spaces’ Workers

Women’s right to land in the context of HIV and AIDS

This handbook has been designed to help the Social Spaces’ Workers who are going to use the Visual and Educational Tool (VET) as part of the activities organized by the Social Spaces (SS). Before watching the VET, it is very important that the worker adequately introduces how this tool works by explaining first why it was developed and then by pointing out its main features to the audience. It must not be forgotten that this is an educational tool which should not be used solely for entertainment purposes.

It is up to the worker to choose how to use the VET, whether by playing all of the acts at once or by watching each act or scenes separately.

Introduction – Explanatory notes to be shared with the audience beforehand

This VET was developed by the CONGEH to lead the SS’s activities. Originally, it was designed as part of a special project aiming to reduce the discrimination faced by vulnerable women in regards to their land and housing rights. All 7 scenes shown in the VET are thus linked to that central theme.

For aesthetic purposes, the scenes have been arranged in such a way that they seem to form a single story. However, it is rather multiple stories featuring different people that we chose not to differentiate since their personal history is of no interest: what interests us is
their marital and their land situation.

It is thus the worker’s job to provide the audience with context for each scene that s/he is going to use in order not to lose the individual meaning of each one. This can be done by pointing out the fact that even though it is the same actors with the same names, they all represent different couples.

Furthermore, to ensure that the audience understands the concept, it is crucial that the worker asks the audience to pay attention to the marital bond liking the main characters and the impact that this bond has on the woman’s land and housing rights.

Introduction – Who are these characters?
The worker needs to provide context for each scene in order for the audience to be able to grasp the situation that the characters find themselves in before and after the conflict. Otherwise, the message could be lost since the audience, instead of reflecting on what they have seen, might ask why they saw what they saw.

It is up to the worker to contextualise the scenes in a way that is appropriate for the whole community as well as the target audience. At that point, it could also be important to provide general notes on the life of the characters before the conflict, their health (in 2 of the scenes) or on the reasons underlying the conflict.

The following could be a good start: “You are about to watch glimpses of Yossa and Marcus’ life, 2 adults dealing with issues relating to housing and land rights. Although the 7 scenes are about different people, different couples, you can assume that the Yossas and Marcuses were all happy couples living in harmony. They might factual information than with sharing personal experiences. It is thus essential to discuss:

- The concept of equality before the law: everyone, women and men, are equal. This means that everyone, women and men, are allowed to own land, a land title, to claim their rights before a court, to inherit (for example, from a parent), etc.
- The most frequently asked questions on women’s housing and land rights.
- The various resources available in the community that can help women secure their housing and land rights – for example how to get a land title (where to go, who to talk to, etc.).
- It needs to be explained that one of the ways in which women can avoid finding themselves in a vulnerable position in terms of their land and housing rights is to obtain a land title with their name on it.
- The discussion should be concluded by identifying the legal remedies available for women who feel their rights are being violated – introduce the services offered by the LCC.

- What is the role of the LCC? What kind of help do they provide? This topic aims to introduce the LCC (and, more generally, the SS) to the participants who may not be aware of its existence. The worker should answer the participants’ questions on how the LCC works, what are the costs, etc.
encourages the participants to share their personal experiences since it has less to do with presenting factual information than with advocating for the elimination of stereotypes and discrimination associated with HIV and aids. It is thus essential to discuss:

- A (brief) review of basic information relating to HIV and aids (prevention, diagnostic, treatment).
- The link between housing / habitat and HIV and aids and why it is all the more important for HIV-positive people to secure and protect their housing and land rights in order to maintain a stable health status. It is also important to explain why people who are not affected by HIV and aids need to help vulnerable people.
- Allow the participants to share their personal experiences and to ask questions in order to discuss their views, opinions and other general ideas on this topic. The worker needs to remain in control of the discussion so as to avoid that stereotypes or other discriminatory comments be conveyed. The objective is to really engage the participants to reflect on what the stakes are in terms of HIV and aids on a personal and even a national level.

- Do you have any questions about your land and housing rights? Do you know where to find the answers? This topic aims to allow the participants, women as well as men, to ask questions about their own land and housing rights or those of the opposite sex (sister, mother, cousin, wife, spouse, etc.). Again, this topic requires that the worker encourages the participants to talk since it has less to do with presenting have had 3 or 4 kids.

Then, all of a sudden, everything fell apart. In certain scenes, you can assume that the underlying reason of the conflict is that they couldn’t get along anymore. The couple reaches, in those scenes, a turning point where this situation becomes unbearable and their relationship is broken.

In other scenes, the reason for the breakup is rather a disease: the man doesn’t want the woman anymore because she is sick and the man’s family does not want anything to do with her either because they suspect her to be at the origin of the disease affecting their brother.

Your duty, as the audience, is thus to put yourself in Yossa and Marcus’ shoes and to try to picture how each of these characters feel when going through such hard times. You also have to wonder whether Yossa has a right to housing and to land and you must try to explain why these rights might not be acknowledged and respected given, amongst other things, her marital status.”

Topics covered
The VET addresses 5 topics that are each addressed in 1 or 2 acts. It is up to the worker to determine whether it is more appropriate to present these topics before or after watching the scenes. The Advocacy Guide on Women’s Land Rights may be used by the worker if more information is needed one on of these topics.

- What are the impacts of certain common practices on women’s land and housing rights? This topic aims to open a dialogue on traditional or customary practices that prevent women from enjoying their inheritance, land and housing
rights. It is thus essential to discuss:

- **Cohabitation** (informal domestic partnerships) and the fact that women in this situation are not protected under the law because they are considered single.
- **Traditional marriage** (or customary) as opposed to legal marriage before a civil registrar.
- **Women’s rights** as they relate to housing and land in a context of customary marriage (exchange on the dominant customs in the target community and on the participant’s personal experiences) and of legal marriage (initiate the audience to the matrimonial regimes and what protection is provided by the law to married women in terms of land and housing rights).
- **Inheritance rights**, as provided by the law to married women and to girls. It should be clearly emphasised that women can inherit (exchange on the dominant customs in the target community and on the participant’s personal experiences).
- It needs to be explained that one of the ways in which women can avoid finding themselves in a vulnerable position in terms of their land and housing rights is to obtain a land title with their name on it.
- The discussion should be concluded by identifying the legal remedies available for women who feel their rights are being violated – introduce the services offered by the LCC.

### What are the impacts of partnership on women’s land and housing rights?

This topic aims to open a dialogue on the most common marital arrangements chosen within the target community as well as the impacts that these have on women’s land and housing rights. It is thus essential to discuss:

- **Cohabitation** (informal domestic partnerships) and the fact that women in this situation are not protected under the law because they are considered single.
- **Traditional marriage** (or customary) as opposed to legal marriage before a civil registrar.
- **Women’s rights** as they relate to housing and land in a context of customary marriage (exchange on the dominant customs in the target community and on the participant’s personal experiences) and of legal marriage (initiate the audience to the matrimonial regimes and what protection is provided by the law to married women in terms of land and housing rights).
- **Widowhood** and the fact that it is possible for women to obtain **usufruct rights** through a legal procedure.
- It needs to be explained that one of the ways in which women can avoid finding themselves in a vulnerable position in terms of their land and housing rights is to obtain a land title with their name on it.
- The discussion should be concluded by identifying the legal remedies available for women who feel their rights are being violated – introduce the services offered by the LCC.

### What are the impacts of HIV and AIDS on partnership and on women’s housing and land rights?

This topic aims to open a dialogue on the impacts of HIV and AIDS in terms of partnership and discrimination faced in regards to land and housing rights. This topic requires that the worker