

Zimbabwe #25

You decide to quit school and look for work and care for your mom. Because you are so young and there are so many people looking for work, the jobs that you are finding don't pay a lot. Your mom is so sick right now that she doesn't even realize that you are not in school anymore. She so wanted you to be able to get an education that she would be very sad if she knew that you were not going to graduate.

Your brothers want to quit school now too and often quarrel with you. You know how important it is to your mom that the boys stay in school so you demand that they continue. You must find a way to make money if your family is going to be able to survive.

There are only two jobs that you can find right now. One is selling cigarettes and candy on the street, but there are so many children selling them and not a lot of customers. This job has the advantage of giving you more time to care for your brothers and mom, but the money you will earn is very little. Your neighbor has a contact that can get you a job as a servant in a City Official's house. You will make more money, but you will also be there most of the day and your family has come to count on your presence at home.

To take the cigarette selling job, go to #8. To work as a servant, go to #9.

Zimbabwe #27

You have decided to stay in school. You really like school and the teachers are very supportive. You know that the longer you stay in school, the better your chances are of finding a job that will pay you more in the future. But things are beginning to fall apart at home. You have heard that there is a Community Care Program for HIV and AIDS patients. They help each other out with daily work and are supported by churches and Catholic Relief Services. This sounds great, but your mom has been very hesitant to admit that she has AIDS because once she does, she will not be able to work at all.

If your family was to join the community care program, it would make your mom's AIDS status very public. You know that you either need to ask the community care program for help, or get a job. There is no way that your family will survive otherwise.

There is a job opportunity that your neighbor has arranged for. You can be a servant in the home of a City Official. The job will provide you with the money that your family needs, but it means that you must leave school. Or you can go to the community care program for help, but you know that your mom will be very upset with you for revealing her AIDS status and ending her current employment.

To become a servant, go to #9. To ask for help from the community care program, go to #5.

Zimbabwe #8

You have been selling cigarettes on the street for almost 2 months now and you are just not making enough money. The neighbors have been helping your family by sharing small amounts of rice and flour, but things are only getting worse. You know that you will need to make more money just to feed the family. You also realize that without any medications, your mom is getting worse almost every day. You wish that you had a way to afford the medications, but you can't spend money on those when there isn't even enough to provide two meals a day.

As you are selling on the street, you are exposed to lots of different things. You recognize that the young women who are prostituting on the streets near you are making a lot more money than you are. You have even been approached at times so you know that you would be able to make some good money. You really don't want to be a prostitute, but you are running out of options. There is one other option though. Your boss has proposed marriage. You do not like this man because he is older and pretty mean, but he has said that he would take care of your brothers and mother. You know from some of the others that you work with that his wife died about a year ago, but you don't know what she died of.

If you will prostitute on the streets, go to #26. If you will accept the marriage proposal, go to #28.

Zimbabwe #9

You work for the City Official every day from early morning until almost 6 p.m. You clean the house, do the laundry, fix meals, and help to care for his sister who is dying of AIDS. Your boss comes home for lunch most days and is very abusive if things are not ready or if the house is not perfectly neat. You are afraid of him, but there is no one to tell.

Your boss' sister is in the final stages of AIDS. She is very ill and the doctor has told you that she will not live much longer. You have begun to take some of her medicine to give to your mom. Your mom seems to have more energy and is more alert when she takes the medicine. After taking the medicine for about a month, you arrive at work and are confronted by your boss. He wants to know what you have done with the medicine. You know that if you admit that you have taken it, you could be jailed. You are almost more afraid of what your boss might do to you physically. He has hit you before. You could also just run from the house. You doubt that he would be able to find you if you didn't go home.

To admit the truth, go to #20. To run away, go to #19.

Zimbabwe #5

You talk with your teacher about the community care program and she puts you in touch with the people who can help. They tell you that if your mom is included in the community care program she will have to help tend to other AIDS families when she is feeling well enough and that others will do the same for her when she gets worse. They also tell you that there are medicines available to her that will probably prolong her life. She might be able to get these medicines for free from a clinic.

They also tell you about a program that you can get involved in. There is an after-school AIDS Education Programme where they think you could help. They tell you all about the education that you would receive and the program that you would teach others, and you are very excited about all of this. You realize that this is the best thing for your family and present the idea to your mother.

Although your mother is upset about the idea of losing her job, she recognizes that this is the best thing for your family. However, because your mother won't be bringing in any money, you realize that you really should get a job after school to bring in some money. However, if you do that, you won't be able to participate in the AIDS Education Programme. You really want to learn all that you can and are excited about helping to teach others.

To get a job, go to #29. To get involved in the AIDS Education Programme, go to #30.

Zimbabwe #28

Although you decided to accept the proposal, your mom has found out about this and is forbidding you from getting married. Your mom was able to find out that your boss' wife died of AIDS, which means that it is almost inevitable that you will become infected. She doesn't want you to become infected – like so many of the young people in your country. The average age in Zimbabwe is only 37 – the age your mom is right now.

You know that if you accept the marriage proposal you will get infected with HIV. But it will give your family a way to survive, and might also keep your mom alive for a while longer because you know that you would be able to get her medication.

To get married, go to #11. To follow your mom's wishes and not get married, go to #12.

Zimbabwe #26

Although you hate selling yourself on the streets, it is bringing in enough money to feed the family and get your mom the medication that she needs. So far you have been lucky. You have only been beaten a couple of times. There have been other girls killed recently and you are getting pretty scared. You are afraid to get tested for HIV but you know that you should.

One-fourth of the adult population in Zimbabwe is infected with HIV. That means that as a prostitute on the street, you have a 1 in 4 chance of contracting the disease every time you have sex with someone.

Reach into the box and pick out a paper clip.

If the paper clip is red, it means that you have just been infected with HIV.

If the paper clip is silver, it means that you have not been infected with HIV.

But imagine that you had to randomly pick out 3-4 paper clips a day. How lucky do you think you would be?

(Please return the paper clip to the box.)

Flip the paper with **Zimbabwe #26** on it over to continue reading your story line.

Zimbabwe #26 Part II

HIV Infected:

Now that you know that you are infected, you are not sure what you should do. While you are still trying to decide, your mom dies from AIDS. It is now up to you to take care of the family. Your brothers want to quit school and go to work, which would allow you to quit prostituting. But your mom really wanted your brothers to be able to stay in school.

To keep prostituting, go to #10. To quit prostituting, look for a different job, and have your brothers work, go to #13.

Not Infected:

You continue to prostitute, hoping against hope that you won't get infected. A few months later, your mom dies from AIDS. It is now up to you to take care of the family. Your brothers want to quit school and go to work, which would allow you to quit prostituting. But your mom really wanted your brothers to be able to stay in school.

To keep prostituting, go to #21. To quit prostituting, look for a different job, and have your brothers work, go to #17.

(When you are finished reading, please turn the paper back over and move to the next station.)

Zimbabwe #20

You admit to your boss that you have been taking a little bit of the medicine because your mom also has AIDS. As soon as you admit what you do, your boss begins to beat you. It is a terrible beating and you are in pretty bad shape by the time it is over. He leaves you bleeding on the kitchen floor and goes off to work, telling you that he will be home for lunch and he expects you to have his lunch ready.

You are in a lot of pain as you try to decide what to do. You are scared to stay in the house by yourself and you think about your priest. You might be able to get some help from him. Perhaps if you went to him, he could intervene and help you figure out what to do. You are afraid that your boss will have you arrested. On the other hand, he might be even angrier if you tell someone what you have done and what he did, and things might just get worse.

To go and talk to your priest, go to #6. To continue working for him without telling anyone about the abuse, go to #4.

Zimbabwe #19

Before you can run, your boss hits you hard and knocks you to the ground. You think you might have broken your arm in the fall. He would have beaten you worse but you were able to get away from him and out the door of his house. You know that you can't go home because you are sure that your boss will go there to look for you.

You find yourself alone on the street with no money and no place to go. You end up sleeping in the doorway to your church. In the morning, your priest finds you there and brings you in to talk. You tell him the story of your mom's disease, the job, the abuse, and the stealing. The priest has two ideas. He is willing to go with you back to your boss' house to see if he can help work out an arrangement with your boss. That way, perhaps, you could keep your job. He also suggests that you report your boss to the police. It wouldn't help you financially, but at least he would be punished for what he did to you. There is a chance, however, that you might also get arrested for stealing the medicines. It is a risk.

To return to your boss' house, go to #2. To report the abuse, go to #3.

Zimbabwe #29

You are glad that things have worked out as well as they have. Your mom is getting the help that she needs and you are able to stay in school. You would have liked to participate in the AIDS Education Programme (AEP) but you really think that getting a job is more important at this time. The only job that you are able to find is selling cigarettes and candy on the streets. There are tons of other kids doing the same job and there aren't a lot of customers. You are not making a lot of money – especially for the amount of time that you spend on the street. It is getting harder and harder for you to keep up with your school work and your household chores. And your brothers are getting into a lot of trouble. There are so many youth who are orphans in your city that a lot of young people have no one watching over them and keeping them out of trouble. Your mom's health makes it hard for her to keep a good eye on your brothers and they are taking advantage of the situation. You are afraid that if you don't do something, they will get in trouble with the law, or will be harmed in some way. Even though you aren't able to be involved, maybe you can get them involved in AIDS Education Programme (AEP) – and that would teach them some good skills and keep them away from the other kids who are bad influences. Or perhaps there is nothing that you can do. You feel like you are doing all that you can right now.

To try to get your brothers involved in AEP, go to #14. To ignore the problem, go to #18.

Zimbabwe #30

The AIDS Education Programme (AEP) teaches you about caring for yourself and preventing the spread of AIDS. You are excited to be involved in this program. You become a leader in AEP and work with your peers to find new ways to bring information and education to the young people of your community.

Things at home are not going very well because your brothers have been getting into a lot of trouble. There are so many youth who are orphans in your city that a lot of young people have no one watching over them and keeping them out of trouble. Your mom's health makes it hard for her to keep a good eye on your brothers and they are taking advantage of the situation. You are afraid that if you don't do something, they will get in trouble with the law, or will be harmed in some way. If you quit the AEP, you would be able to keep a better eye on them and perhaps keep them out of trouble. Or maybe you can get them involved in AEP – and that would teach them some good skills and keep them away from the other kids who are bad influences.

To quit AEP, go to #15. To try to get your brothers involved, go to #14.

Zimbabwe #11

You get married and within a year, you are HIV+. Your husband is abusive to you. Your mother dies six months after you marry and now your husband refuses to take your brothers into the house. Although you give them all the money you can, they must quit school in order to survive. They are now working for your husband, selling cigarettes and candy on the street.

Take a *Zimbabwe Discussion Questions* handout. Go to your small group area and take some time to review the questions and write down some thoughts.

Zimbabwe #12

When your boss finds out that you are not going to marry him, he beats you badly and fires you. You are now without a job and a way of supporting your family. Your boss even makes sure that no one else will hire you. Without any way of supporting the family, you have to turn to prostitution to make some money. Within a year, you are infected with HIV. You continue to work as a prostitute because you know that there is nothing you can do now. You will die just like your mom did. You only hope that your work will allow your brothers to stay in school so that they will be able to make something of their lives.

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Zimbabwe #10

Within a year, you are HIV+. You continue to work as a prostitute because you know that there is nothing else you can do now. You will die just like your mom did. You only hope that your work will allow your brothers to stay in school so that they will be able to make something of their lives.

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Zimbabwe #21

Within a year, you are infected with HIV. You continue to work as a prostitute because you know that there is nothing else you can do now. You will die just like your mom did. You only hope that your work will allow your brothers to stay in school so that they will be able to make something of their lives.

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Zimbabwe #13

You have quit working as a prostitute. You don't want to be responsible for infecting anyone else. With the money that you and your brothers earn, you are able to get some medication that should slow down the disease and keep you healthy for longer. Your brothers are working for a local merchant. They make very little money and have to work long hours. You are working as a servant in a house. Things are hard, but at least you are able to stay together. You only have each other now, and your mom wanted you to be able to stay together. You only hope that your brothers will be willing to help you out when you get sick.

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Zimbabwe #17

You have quit prostituting and you hope that you got out soon enough. You go to a doctor and get tested for AIDS. Your test came back negative (you can't believe how lucky you are!) but you know that it will take a year before you will know for sure whether or not you are HIV+. Your brothers are working for a local merchant. They make very little money and have to work long hours. You are working as a servant in a house. Things are hard, but at least you are able to stay together. You only have each other now, and your mom wanted you to be able to stay together. It seems like her dying wish is coming true.

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Zimbabwe #6

When you arrive at the parish, the priest helps you by tending to your bruises and listens to your story. He returns with you to the City Official's house at lunch time. Your boss is very angry that you have involved the priest in this situation, but there is little that he can do. There is now a witness to his abuse. The priest works with your boss to make arrangements for you to pay him back by working overtime. You will have to work 15 extra hours a week for 2 months to pay back the cost of the medication. The extra work makes it even harder for you to help care for your mother and brothers, but at least you still have your job. Because the priest checks up on you regularly, your boss has not hit you again.

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Zimbabwe #4

Things get really bad for you. Your boss starts to demand that you sleep with him. If you don't, he threatens to have you arrested for stealing. He is threatening and abusive everyday – demanding sexual favors and extra work from you. The medicine for his sister is now locked up and you have no way to get your mother the medicine that was making her feel better. You feel trapped in this life.

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Zimbabwe #2

You decide that the job is the most important thing right now. You and your priest return to the City Official's house at lunch time. Your boss is very angry that you have involved the priest in this situation, but there is little that he can do. There is now a witness to his abuse. The priest works with your boss to make arrangements for you to pay him back by working over-time. You will have to work 15 extra hours a week for 2 months to pay back the cost of the medication. The extra work makes it even harder for you to help care for your mother and brothers, but at least you still have your job. Because the priest checks up on you regularly, your boss has not hit you again.

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Zimbabwe #3

You report your boss to the police and file a formal complaint. Things are pretty bleak. Your mom is declining because she doesn't have the medicine anymore, you have to spend some of your money on a doctor for your own injuries, and you no longer have a job. In the end, nothing ever happens to your boss. Because he is a City Official, the paperwork gets "lost." The only good news in all of this is that you didn't get arrested yourself.

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Zimbabwe #18

Tonight your youngest brother comes home very scared. He was approached on the street by a man who wanted to have sex with him. You are now scared for him too. It is hard to be the oldest! Your brothers don't have the same responsibilities that you do. Your mom is getting pretty close to death. Although she really wants you to be able care for your brothers when she dies, you are not sure that you will be able to keep them under control. You will try talking with your teacher. Perhaps she can help.

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Zimbabwe #15

You tell your teacher that you must quit the AIDS Education Programme (AEP) because of your concern for your brothers. She convinces you that you really should stay involved in the program. She talks to you about the importance of the program and all the ways that it is helping families seek support and help within your community. Families are coming forward for help more and more because of the work that you and your friends are doing. Your teacher convinces you that you are needed as much in the program as you are at home. She goes to your home and talks with your mother and brothers. Although your brothers aren't happy about it, your mom is now making them get involved in the AEP. Over time they come to like the program as much as you do. Although your mom's health is declining and you won't be able to save her life, you feel confident that you and your brothers are making a big difference in your community. It gives you hope for the future.

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Zimbabwe #14

Tonight your youngest brother comes home very scared. He was approached on the street by a man who wanted to have sex with him. He was able to get away, but he now has a better idea of the dangers of the streets. When you approach him about participating in the AIDS Education Programme, he agrees. It seems like a safe alternative. The two of you are able to convince your other brother to participate. Over time they come to like the program. Although your mom's health is declining and you won't be able to save her life, you feel pretty confident that you and your brothers are doing all you can to support your mom and make a difference in the community. It gives you hope for the future.

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