

Protection: Men and condoms in the time of HIV and AIDS

[Transcript]

Text on screen: DUBE Amateur Boxing Gym | Soweto, South Africa

Ngwenya: Boxing is beautiful because of the discipline part. Boxing teaches you how to handle yourself. It keeps your body and mind healthy. You train to know how to defend yourself. It's not a brutal sport at all. Because when you move around the ring it's as good as dancing. You've got to move and know the shape when moving around. It's exactly like dancing. I came to this gym in 1958, boxing I was really great. Many world champions came from Soweto. Here's Anthony Morodi, an old boxer used to box at our gym. Here's Baby Jake Matlala, he was a fantastic boxer. I was his trainer, he became world champion. Boxing gave us pride under apartheid – we used to boast about how we perform we were right on top.

Text on screen: Downtown Johannesburg

Mthlane: I am training hard towards an upcoming fight. I've made all of the necessary preparations.

Text on screen: Moruti "Babyface" Mthlane

Mthlane: Friday the 20th is going to be one of the big nights of my life, I will be fighting for the world title.

Text on Screen: Durandt's Boxing World Professional Boxing Gym

Mthlane: When training my body gets a man's shape. Women love a strong, manly body. You must not drink or be overweight. When I walk around I feel my body is perfect. I feel invincible.

Ngwenya: This is my place in Orlando West. Those are my grandchildren. My daughter bought me some new trainers for the gym.

Mthlane: We are used to seeing the women, but we just look at them and go on training. We don't even talk to them. I have a girlfriend I live with my girlfriend. I believe she is going to be my future wife.

Nothando: I always feel happy with him. He is humble and he knows how to make a woman happy in every way.

Mthlane: When Nothando and I started dating I explained my profession to her, I was very happy that she understood. It's important to not have sex for some time before a fight. So

that you can stay focused. Sex before a fight is not good. It depletes your energy. Even if you have trained hard your body will be weakened.

Nothando: If you understand why you've stopped and know when it will happen again, it's not like stopping forever. You know it will happen again.

Ngwenya: Throughout my life I was devoted to sport. My body is starting to change and is no longer as before. Muscles are starting to shrink a bit. But I still feel fit: I can still walk and talk. To me it's just a part of nature.

News report text on screen: South Africa continues to have the highest number of people living with HIV in the world. This country has 5.7 million people with HIV out of 22 million in Sub-Saharan Africa

Ngwenya: You've got to learn how to discipline yourself, stick to the gym. Always do exercises and eat correctly. In my mind I still feel as strong as when I was young.

Person 1: Most of the people say that I am too harsh with the boys. You've got to be strong in order to get them to do the correct thing and to listen. You can't shout at the boy while he's fighting. But here at the gym I have to be strict and shout at them. Coaches always advise their athletes when to eat and how to eat. But condoms oh no. I've never said to my boxers, you must use condoms. The use of condoms is well publicized. There's no need for me to speak to them about a condom.

Sowetan Journal Poster: We're losing aids war – Zuma

Man 2: All fighter are tested for the HIV virus. It's watched very closely. By our organization and by the commissions worldwide. To invest all of the time that you have building an amateur career of 10 to 12 years, into turning profession and then to have that professional career taken away from you because you have entered into unsafe sex. Not only do you get the blow of testing positive for HIV and that you are going to die, but your future of making money is history.

Mthlane: Once I become world champion ill be able to buy my own house. Here I am just renting. When you're a boxer, just like any sportsman you must protect yourself when it comes to sex. When we started having sex we used condoms, condoms protect you from getting HIV/AIDS we later went to get tested and neither of us had the virus. Now, as hard as it is we're not having sex – otherwise I'll get hurt in the fight.

Ngwenya: My job is to clean it, not to break it. Whatever you aim to do, you must be careful. Those are naughty kids. They must of slipped out from their classes. These are the kids who are roaming around doing mischief. They are either looking for drugs, or for mischief elsewhere. Most of the people who die of AIDS are youngsters.

Lindiwe: He has never spoken about the pandemic, or how we conduct ourselves, if he was here he'd probably say he did that once or twice. I've never heard him say Lindiwe do you

know of this pandemic? Are you taking the right precautions? Are you abstaining? Are you using the condoms? He has never given me that education.

Ngwenya: No, I don't think it's right. I've never talked to my kids at all about AIDS or sex. I believe that it is if I am promoting my kids to go out sleeping with boys or sleeping with girls. I don't think it's correct at all. In our culture we don't discuss sex without kids.

Women: I had one relative of mine who died of it. It ate up his whole body, it was as if it was an animal. Eating all the parts and leaves you with nothing.

Lindiwe: The whole HIV/AIDS thing, I thought it had reached its peak and was decreasing but now it seems like just when you think it's over you keeps seeing new people: I didn't think he's infected she's infected.

Elkana Ong'esa: A long time ago, the earth was formless. It was dark and completely empty. One day something came into being. It started getting light. Things started to appear. Trees and other things appeared, creatures appeared. Human being came into existence. Here was a man. This man discovered he was alone in the entire world. It all appeared too vast for him. He saw things around him but nothing that resembled himself. He started wandering and reached one big stone. He was alone, surrounded by other creatures/. He wandered further and came to a new place. Where he could see the mist ascending to the sky. He saw this and finally named it "clouds". This cloud stretched from the earth right up to the sky and where this object arose from. He found another creature one that resembled himself. He called it "woman". They made their acquaintance. They came together and he knew he had finally found a companion creature. One who resembled him. They came to know each other. Finally, they loved each other and brought forth children. This is one of the stories told by our ancestors a long time ago. It tells how the Kisii people came to be. It is a long story and I cannot tell of it.

Text on screen: Kisii Province, Kenya

Elkana Ong'esa: Where we are in the village of Tabaka. Without question, we have seen things changing here very quickly. People are living a kind of life where many harmful things happen. My name is Elkana Ong'sea a native of the Tabaka area. Our main work here is carving soapstone. We work with the soapstone we find it in this area. This is the only place in the world where these stones are found. Stones are sold inside the country. The rest are sold abroad in countries like America and in Europe and Asia. All of those countries buy sculptures here in Tabaka. Of the money coming from selling soapstone some is used for hospital bills some is used from building homes. We do a lot with the money from sculpture sales. Sculpting helps people in many different ways. Unfortunately some of us have been affected by disease from AIDS, and many have died, taking their skills with them. We have as a result lost these skills. I myself speaking as someone from this area I also lost my beloved child. At the time I did not know what was happening, until my child told me and her mother. "Unfortunately I have contracted AIDS, and my life is in danger, I feel ashamed because my life is now ended before its due course". As for me, I asked myself: We are losing our beloved child. How can this be when she is married with children? For sure I

don't know – I ask myself so many questions. But I have no answers and cannot see who will answer me. Perhaps my payer is, that everyone young and old, parents, all educated one another. That we all know there is immense danger. In the reality of AIDS.

Text on screen: Tabaka Mission Hospital

Elkana Ong'esa: What I want to tell you is this. Tomorrow we are having a Baraza community discussion down here. We'll be talking about AIDS.

John Ong'esa: My name is John Ong'esa. This is my main job for feeding my family. This is my main wife feeding my family. My wife here she does sandpapering, after which we have the finished product. I am married with two kids and have some orphans here, children of my cousin who died. Also my sister whose husbands died. My brother has died from HIV/AIDS. I don't know what I'll do, because now I've gone without daily basics – I have no food and my children are suffering. Today I will be asked for nursery school fees. I have no money to pay. So I don't know what I'm going to do. Maybe I will drink beer – changaa - the whole day so that nobody can ask me anything. They will see me as a nuisance in the community. These things are hard to decide about.

Village Woman: You advise us to speak to the children about these things, the young ones who go to school. If a woman like me tells a young child to use a condom if you have a lover, if you teach a boy or girl that, where am I leading this child? Am I telling them it's ok to male love whenever, or what? If we give them such advice they will have careless sex and contract AIDS, that generation will be wiped out.

Elkana Ong'esa: Mama has asked whether by advising our children to use condoms to prevent AIDS, we are allowing them to go and have sex left, right and center. What are we telling them? Let me hear what you think? Anyone feel free to respond. Let me hear from the young man.

Young Man: You know we cannot sit and do things in the way there were done in 1964. It is 2009, life itself is not the same today as it was yesterday. I don't support children being encouraged to have sexual relationships. But it has come a time where even if you want to forbid them they will still go and have sex.

Old Man: An old man cannot simply speak to his young daughter about these issues. I don't know if it is because I have a thick head that I cannot do that. Do you understand? When a boy left home, the older men took spears and sang for him. They told him he was leaving childhood behind. That he would fight wars against the Luos, and Kipsigis. That he had to become a man, that he could defend his people, today I do not see this type of man. Do you understand? Now we have reached a point where mothers and youth speak about condoms. Promiscuity never existed amongst the Kisii. But not this condom mean promiscuity is acceptable. If you tell a thief not to steal during the day, you have advised him to steal at night. Condoms are bad and they teach children wrong values. And everyone hear this: We have our traditions.

Elkana Ong'esa : I do not know what tomorrow will bring. Or how life will be. The village has become one where half the people seem to be ill with AIDS. What is life going to be like for us. This issue weighs strongly on my heart, when I sit alone my heartaches. This life is not a good life, who will be there to help the village? Who will lead the people tomorrow if all the children are dead?

David: My name is David Ochieng, I am from Kisumu. U would like to tell you mothers, fathers and elders if you stop me from carrying condoms or refuse to teach me about the AIDs or disease. Or when you start praying at night. Bless David let him not have a girlfriend. Let him not be HIV positive you will be praying upstairs while I have a girl with me downstairs. I will already get the disease like this if I don't use a condom. Mothers, fathers and elders are supposed to teach the younger ones. If you refuse to teach them about HIV/Condoms, they see someone with a condom, they will say, I saw so and so with a condom in their pocket. But father will say, you are using the word condom here- you want me to beat you ?As a result the child will be a scared to talk about condoms. It is then that your child will go and fool around away from home, and come back HIV positive. So we ourselves are spreading the disease. Let's not be afraid to talk about HIV and condoms. Let's go to the children and teach them so that they know.

Older Man: Who is it? Who is it that invented this condom.

Elkana: The man who first made it was called condom. He named the product after himself.

Older Man: So he is the one bringing problems to people. He should know we are human beings, and that when your head spins you remove the condom. We know all this and yet we still barge in there like a goat which doesn't know what it's doing. Despite all this hype about condom it could still break!

Pastor: I've said several times that HIV is a virus and not a moral issue. When people understand this they'll be able to get the truth and the truth will set them free. Talking about what is right or what is wrong or what is sinful will not save our life what will save our life is what can save our lives and the lives we love is the everyday practical step we take without people. I know I may live long but I also know there will be times when I am very ill. The children know that both of their parents are HIV positive and this troubles me a lot. It would be good if they could continue school and get a good education. So maybe they could make their own living, which would be ideal. Even if I die one day I will know I tried.

Young Women: When we speak about AIDS I am lost for words because I have lost so many. I have lost sisters brothers, a husband and so on and so on—all because of not knowing. If they had known about condoms they would still be here. In my family I have eight orphans. You see? As human being we have been deferred so what can we do? It means that we must practice prevention so that or lives can continue. Whoever refused to use condoms I am telling your... my brothers and sisters will simply die. I myself use them and why? Because I have AIDs and am HIV positive that is why I use condoms. I still have

emotions of life of a woman. My husband is dead but I still need a lover. And if I find a lover I must use a condom. This is from one woman to the next. Or I can give him the male one when the light is on so that I can see whether he puts it on or not. And that its not been opened before I must check the expiry date. If you use one that is expired, it is not good. Let me explain the value of condoms to you. It has been five years since my husband died, but when you look at me now I look fine, and yet I am HIV positive. Life is there! I have lost people because of not knowing. Look so you can learn. There's not use in lying- anyone who say that the words of Jesus can heal AIDS are lying to you. AIDS is not curable but you can prevent it. You can practice safer sex to prevent AIDS.

Images on screen: War clips

Advertisement: 'HIV is Preventable'

Advertisement: 'Take the lead to stop AIDs. Get Tested for HIV Today.'

Amara Conteh: When I started life before I was playing football in the morning I used to wash taxi's, then in the evening I would go to the field and train. This is where one of my girlfriends lives (chuckles) her name is Kadija. She lives up the street. This is where my girlfriend Titi lives - they call this place Red pump. She sometimes tells me that if she sees me with another girlfriend shell kill me. That was Mary.

Teeleema's Mother: Many of Teeleema's friends were very young during the war. But most of them grew up in the house of rebels, where they saw people victimizing and mistreating adults. Nut with so many psycho-social counseling going on with children affected by war and other things we are coming out of that era now.

Chief Ali Conteh: I am Chief Ali Conteh, I was born on 12 Bolling street in the year 1940 I was a seaman before but now we are jobless, my son Amara is not like the others, I am proud of Amara. He was with me until the death of his mother.

Taleema's Father: After the war I was running a commercial sex worker program, I was promoting condom use, when I started practicing in the clinic again we found that married people came up with more sexually transmitted diseases than so-called sex workers in the street. Because of the knowledge we had imparted to them about condom use.

Amara: I have a Valentine's Day flower given by my girlfriend it was Kadija, we had sex and stayed on the room the whole day. I make love, have sex, some of them ask me to use condoms I tell them that since I've never used one before I won't do so now. I don't want any problems to be arising, so I don't use condoms with any of them. Aminata tried forcing me to use it I asked her if she was sick and she said no. Then I said I will not use a condom and then she refused and walked out.

Taleema's Mother: We are now in the age of HIV and AIDs and other sexually transmitted infections, the way children behave nowadays, there days are different then our days. We

had a lot of support from our family but now you need to push a little further. I have to tell Teleema look, I am not saying your cannot ever have girl, but not at this point in time.

Taleema: I don't have girlfriends because of my mom, she is very strict she's always warning me, she always wants to know what I am doing all the time. Anytime I am speaking on the phone she wants to know whom I am speaking with I am not pleased because I have no privacy.

Text on screen: Men's Cross Sunday Service

Amara: I use my manhood to f***. I won't use any condom to f***. I will not use handicap for sex. I will not wear anything on my private.

Amara's Friend: There are so many type of condoms, when I use them it's like flesh to flesh, some people don't believe HIV exist, unless they get tested and are told they have HIV. They say on the radio that HIV is all over the world, so they brought condoms for people to prevent it.

Amara's Friend: I don't think HIV exist, I have never seen an HIV patient.

Amara's Friend: I read in a book there are too many births in Africa, I read in a book that there will be a time of food shortages, so they speak of HIV to stop further births.

Tameela's Father: The war was about survival of the fittest, if you have food and money you are totally over control about sex. Most women were not simply promiscuous, they would have 5 to ten children when they lost their husband to the war she just had to move in do anything possible to get food for the children.

Taleema: My mom was also young and also had boyfriends- I know that, she does not want to disclose it to us. I am very sure that there is HIV, I am aware of that. I think it is very serious... HIV is very serious. I don't want to have it I'm very afraid of it, that is why I would use condoms, but I have never had sex before.

Amara: I was thinking how I would never see my mother again. I won't have a mother again. From that moment on I never felt comfortable with myself. I won't play or laugh to anybody except my mother. Because the kind of fun my mother gave me, I liked it so much more than anyone else. I could not have fun with anyone else again apart from my mother. When my mother died, I so missed her. I miss her so much. She was heavily pregnant when the war started. When she wanted to come to the house the rebels attacked her. When she ran inside the rebels followed her. She fell over on the bed and had a miscarriage and was not able to get up again and died. Most of them don't come here anymore. Only Mary does. Mary cares much more for me than others do.

Chief Kanteh: You shouldn't bother so much with what everybody says- forget them. You shouldn't be looking at everything and be annoyed so easily. You're the guy I gave birth to, you're still here with me, ever since you were young, and you will continue to stay here.

You have to grow up. Be serious- do something that will make you successful in future. Amara is a good son to me. He always spends time with me every day, I don't tell him to do this or do that. That is not my business, but he has to protect himself to avoid AIDS. The whole world is talking about HIV/AIDS and we have to believe it now. I only believe I have to protect myself from HIV- nothing more. So Amara has to believe. It's better for me to see that before I die, Amara comes to such a position.

Amara: My father cares for us, he has taken care of us since we were little. Since I listen to my daddy and he says I should believe it, I will believe.

Taleema: As a little boy I said I don't want any girlfriend, but now there's been a little change. Her name is Joy. She's very pretty. One day I was just playing and she passed by I was looking at her, and she was looking at me and I thought let me speak to this girl. I spoke to her and told her that I love her. She also told me that she loves me. She's always advising me to study and to take my studies seriously. I think she is a very good person. I've never kissed a girl.

Amara: Football will allow me to do anything I want in my life. I won Best Player award, I was Highest Goal Scorer, Best Attacker. If I was a big star I would be able to do anything I want in my life. Some of my friends advise me that when you play football you should not have a lot of women. They say your football career will go down. So I should find a good wife, and she should be the only one, and no other girl. So that's why I have chosen Mary as my wife. I don't want any other wife but her.

[END]