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Sh6 million for Aids patients

Egypt has donated more than Sh6 million for nutritional support to HIV/Aids patients.

Egyptian Ambassador Saher Hamza handed over the donation to World Food Programme country director Burkhard Oberle.

The ceremony took place at Dagoretti Children's Home.

A fresh way to see HIV/Aids

Just when you thought everything that was to be said about HIV and Aids had been said, something usually comes along to change all that.

As Kenya joins the world in marking the 20th anniversary of World Aids Day in two days' time, there will be self-recrimination as well as self-congratulation aplenty. Perhaps most important this time will be to do less preaching, fewer acts of symbolism like public testing and more listening.

All sorts of things have thrown at HIV and Aids - including medicine, judgment, blame and stigma. What the world at large and this country has done little of is to take time to understand this epidemic. HIV and Aids started out as health problem. Over time, we have come to accept that it is more than that. Stephanie Nolen's *28 Stories of Aids in Africa* would be a useful place for the content to start this journey of discovery. In this book that teems with empathy and human fellow-feeling, Nolen has collected tales of individuals who have been handed the cross of a disease without a cure or much sympathy.

In Kenya's case, Nolen examines two cases considered iconic of the country's

Aids crisis: The story of Agnes Munyiva, one of the commercial sex workers in Nairobi's Majengo slum who somehow do not contract HIV despite repeated exposure to people infected with it. Through her, the tough choices she has to make between selling her body to keep her children alive and risking her own life as well as her despondent acceptance of the hand fate has dealt her.

She remains uninfected, generously acquiesces to the demands of researchers hunting for a vaccine but was still plying her trade by the time the book went to press.

The second story is that of Mohammed Ali, the truck driver who spends many days on the road in different places across the great Lakes region. He returns home to his wife once a week. Frustration and loneliness are the margins within which his life is lived. In short, the HIV and aids story is heavily textured and nuanced. What you see is not necessarily what you get.

In telling these 28 stories of courage, perseverance and hope in the face of despair, Nolen points to the need for a more holistic approach to dealing with HIV and aids beyond preaching and law.

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