



Watoto Bomba

**Feedback study on the impact of the
Watoto Bomba booklet in Dar es Salaam
& Iringa**

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Report summary

This report is a summary of the follow-up study evaluating the Watoto Bomba publication. Watoto Bomba is a book designed to provide children ages 10 to 14 with useful information on a variety of topics on health and lifestyles such as puberty, gender discrimination, and HIV/AIDS. It was published in 2006 by Femina HIP with financial support from both FHI (Family Health International) and RFE (Rapid Funding Envelope). Approximately 90,000 copies have been printed and distributed to date.

This evaluation was designed to assess readers' responses to the book, to explore both the positive aspects and possible areas of improvement for the publication, and to gauge what readers were learning from the book.

Data collection took place in Dar es Salaam and Iringa to allow the evaluation to explore differences in benefit / output between rural and urban youth. The evaluation included both individual interviews (IDIs) with staff members in partner organizations distributing the book and focus group discussions (FGDs) with primary school students who have read the publication. The data included in this report were drawn from three IDIs and seven FGDs.

In general, the book appears to be successful, with children expressing an understanding of the content and an appreciation of the information in the book. Particularly promising is the emphasis the youth place on using the book to educate their fellow children, suggesting that the book is encouraging a new generation of peer educators. In addition, the study shows that the book has been well received in local communities.

The study does however also reveal some less positive findings. Some topics were clearly more enticing to children than others and smooth and effective distribution in rural areas seems to be a challenge.

Below is a summary of the findings from both the IDIs with staff members of partner organizations and FGDs with children in Dar es Salaam and Iringa respectively. Finally a comparison between the findings from the two regions is presented.

Introduction to the Watoto Bomba Study

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Watoto Bomba book and the distribution strategy.

Through the study Femina HIP wanted to collect information on how the book is being used and to what extent the target group benefits from the content in the book.

Specific objectives of the study

- To evaluate Femina HIP distribution strategy (using partner organizations) and to assess whether the book has reached the intended target audiences [**Reach**]
- To assess how relevant or appropriate the book is to the target audiences [**Relevance**]

- To assess to what extent the available books are being utilized and to assess the quality of information materials in the book **[Efficacy]**
- To assess the impact of the book on the community **[Impact]**
- To assess demand for the book **[Demand]**

Scope of the study

The study was conducted in two Tanzanian regions, Dar es Salaam and Iringa.

In Dar es Salaam the research was carried out in each of the region's three districts, i.e. Ilala, Kinondoni and Temeke districts. In Iringa region research took place in Makete and Mufindi districts.

Dar es Salaam and Iringa regions were chosen because a large quantity of books has been distributed in these areas by Femina HIP partner organizations FHI (Family Health International) and TYC (Tanzania Youth Coalition).

Sample size

The three IDIs with Femina HIP partner organizations all took place in Dar es Salaam.

FHI and TYC helped identify children to participate in the FGDs. A total of 55 children were identified; 36 from Dar es Salaam and 19 from Iringa. In Iringa FGDs were organized by the help of Usawa Group and SUMASESU respectively; both FHI partner organizations.

The children who participated in the FGDs all had access to Watoto Bomba. Either they had the book themselves or they had shared it with family or friends.

The interview guides used for FGDs in Dar es Salaam and Iringa respectively are attached at the end of this report. As a result of lessons learned from the Dar es Salaam FGDs a new version of the guide was developed for the Iringa study.

Roadmap

In the following, the study's findings are presented. First, the evaluation of the distribution strategy is presented followed by the main conclusions from the IDIs with Femina HIP partner organizations. The study then proceeds with an analysis of the FGDs from Dar es Salaam followed by an estimation of children's reading techniques in this region. This is followed by an analysis of the findings from FGDs in Iringa and an assessment of reading techniques in this area. Finally, a comparison of the effect of Watoto Bomba in urban vs. rural settings is offered and the study's conclusion is presented.

Distribution Strategy

The distribution strategy depends on the area and the organization distributing the book. The study shows that the demand for the book is high but that distribution has proved weak in certain areas.

In Dar es Salaam Temeke Municipal distributes Watoto Bomba to local government offices. The book is also available in schools and various NGOs. This means that children in Dar es Salaam have a relatively easy access to the books.

In Iringa distribution is done by FHI partner organizations.

SUMASESU is working in a number of villages in Makete, Iringa, and distributes their books systematically so that each household receives a copy. This ensures that children have access to the book and that they can easily share it with elders. Books are also distributed to schools and kept in school libraries.

In Mufindi, the distribution done by the Usawa Group has faced a number of challenges and not all books have reached the target audience. The books are distributed at the market areas where some people are using them for wrapping their goods. Apart from the few children with relatives working at the market, children are not receiving the book.

These findings underline how challenging it is to manage the distribution when it is conducted by a partner organization of a partner organization as has been the case in Iringa. It is therefore recommended to have an explicit understanding between Femina HIP and the partner organization – in this case FHI; on how to conduct the distribution in order to ensure smooth and effective circulation.

Interviews with Partner Organizations

The organizations interviewed for this evaluation included Family Health International (FHI), Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC) and Temeke Children's Council (TCC). These organizations were chosen because they all received large numbers of the Watoto Bomba publication for distribution. All three organizations serve both children as well as a broader section of the population, including adolescents and adults. All organizations received their books directly from Femina HIP, and the number of copies received ranged from 1,500 to 8,500. Distribution appears to be occurring through schools, at organizations' events, and through street outreach officers who bring the materials into the community. In general, all organization members expressed that they need more copies to meet the needs of their population, and one member suggested at least 2,000 books should be available for each event.

Unfortunately the evaluation was not able to examine in detail how the organizations use the book beyond using it as a starting point for discussion with children on the issues in the book. However, the organization members all felt that the book was needed by their target audience, noting that the children were very excited about the material and were returning to the organizations to ask questions. Organization members also recognized that the book could be useful to older individuals as well.

For the most part, the organization members felt that the book is easy for children to understand because of the simple language used, the many pictures of children, and the bright colors all of which appeal to children.

However, when asked to criticize the book, one organization member stated that he/she felt it was too complex for children and should be shorter and simpler, perhaps with fewer topics. The other two organization members stated that they had not read the book for a long time and therefore could not critique. Though the organization members emphasized that the kids liked the book, one noted that because, "Tanzanians do not have a reading culture," many people would simply flip through and look at the pictures

and would not actually read the content. They did note, however, that people of all ages could benefit from the book if they were encouraged to read it.

In general, organization members gave only cursory responses to the interview questions, and these answers have been summarized here. In future IDIs, it would be advisable to develop a set of probing questions to encourage the staff members of partner organizations to provide more detail as to how the book is used by their organization.

Focus Group Discussions with Children in Dar es Salaam

The FGDs in Dar es Salaam gave a valuable insight on how children perceive Watoto Bomba, how they benefit from it and how they use it. In general Watoto Bomba was welcomed as a source of information difficult to access elsewhere. Children valued that the book provided them with knowledge on sensitive topics that can be difficult to discuss.

The qualitative responses given by children were coded both for the major themes of the book and for the lessons children reported learning from the various topics. The children's responses are summarized below according to the topics the children found most relevant. A more detailed discussion of their responses to each individual question can be found in the report 'Watoto Bomba Evaluation – Dar es Salaam Region'. Though the children's answers provided insight into their perspectives on the book, some of the questions appeared repetitive. Accordingly a new interview guide being developed for the FGDs in Iringa.

➤ General findings

In general, the children seemed to benefit the most from the topics on puberty and gender discrimination / sexual harassment, followed closely by the topics on disability, bullying and HIV/AIDS. Children also mentioned cross-cutting themes such as respecting parents as valuable and they recognized the characters in Watoto Bomba as role models. Furthermore, Watoto Bomba seems to have erased some common misperceptions, particularly about HIV/AIDS but also about puberty and the meaning of menstruation.

Children were asked to range the topics in Watoto Bomba according to which they had read, which they liked the most and which they found the most educational. The findings are illustrated below.

Most read topics (In order from most to least read)	Most popular topics (In order from most to least popular)	Most educational topics (In order from most to least educational)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Puberty 2. Bullying 3. Gender discrimination / sexual harassment 4. Disability 5. Safety 6. HIV/AIDS 7. Human Rights 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying 2. Puberty 3. Disability 4. Gender discrimination / sexual harassment 5. HIV/AIDS 6. Safety 7. Human Rights 8. Changes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Puberty 2. Gender discrimination / sexual harassment 3. Disability 4. HIV/AIDS 5. Bullying 6. Safety
The topic on changes was not mentioned	Topics 1 through 5 were significantly more popular than topics 6-8	The topics on human rights and changes were not mentioned as educational

The children emphasized the importance of the book for educating children in general and on specific topics, including puberty, HIV/AIDS. The children felt that they learned how to protect themselves and gained a broader understanding of life in general. They noted that not only children, but also parents could learn from the book, and that the book can help to change bad behaviors.

The FGDs revealed four main reasons for why children like Watoto Bomba:

- *Education:* The children reported great appreciation for the information provided in the book because they felt they could trust it and because it gave them a starting point for discussion with their parents and friends. They also report using the book to educate others, which is a particularly encouraging finding, suggesting that the book is not only educating youth but also encouraging new peer educators.
- *Openness:* The children reported liking the book because it was open about topics, such as puberty and sexual harassment, that they are thinking about and dealing with but do not understand. They appreciated that the book allowed them to discuss these issues.
- *Role models:* The children indicated that they saw the characters in the book as role models for their own lives. The most popular stories (in order from most to least) included Salum & Skadi, a lesson on bullying, Salome, a lesson on puberty, Asha, a lesson on sexual harassment, and Bahati, a lesson on bullying teaching self-control.
- *Format:* The children reported that they really appreciated the individual stories as well as the pictures. They also liked the book because it is attractive and interesting to look at. This feedback is encouraging, as it suggests that the format is appropriate for reaching the target audience.

Below the main findings of the study are presented under the following headlines: Puberty, gender discrimination / sexual harassment, disabilities, HIV/AIDS, bullying, and

safety. These headlines represent the topics that the children found most interesting and educative.

➤ **Puberty**

The theme of puberty was well received among the children. They appreciated the information provided in this section because it represented reliable information that they could not always access elsewhere. The children also appreciated the information on puberty as a starting point for conversation with their parents.

The children reported that the chapter put them at ease regarding the changes of puberty and helped them to know what to expect. They gained a better understanding of what is normal development and not a sign of sickness. The children liked the story of Salome, who began her period in class; because it showed them how the different stages of puberty occur.

When discussing what they learned about puberty, the children's comments included the benefits of knowing "where I am going," in their own development. The children also showed recognition that with these pubertal changes may come "bad character" that might cause risky sexual behavior, which they stated should be avoided. Another student mentioned that they appreciated having an alternative to parents for learning about these issues.

➤ **Gender Discrimination / Sexual Harassment**

The topic of gender discrimination and sexual harassment was well received by the children who liked the fact that Watoto Bomba discusses an issue that is normally very sensitive and difficult to talk about. The children also appreciated that Watoto Bomba encourages openness around the topic. In addition, children mentioned that being able to read about these types of topics, instead of having to discuss them orally, made them easier to understand, as did the personal examples in the book.

By reading about sexual harassment the children learned how to identify it. Furthermore, the children said that they had learned that they should report sexual harassment to their parents or to authorities.

Children said that the stories in Watoto Bomba about sexual harassment helped them to identify if they were being sexually harassed. At the same time they reported, that the stories could help children gain confidence to address the situation and encourage openness on the topic.

The children reported learning a lot from the story of Asha, who was sexually harassed by her uncle. In particular they stated that they liked the story because even though Asha's mother didn't believe her, Asha did not give up and continued to report the harassment to the authorities, and in the end she was successful.

On gender discrimination the children stated that they had learned that mistreating women, including rape, is not acceptable. They emphasized the importance of being open about these issues and to tell a friend or adult if you or a friend is having problems relating to gender discrimination.

➤ **Disability**

The message that seemed most relevant to the children on the topic of disability was the importance of not discriminating or stigmatizing people with disabilities but including them in the communities on equal terms.

One child very poignantly expressed his prior tendency to stare at the disabled, and albinos in particular, but said that after reading the book he realizes that they are not bad people but are, "just like us."

The children valued that this group was included in a book about children in general to acknowledge their unique challenges.

The children also reported liking the pictures and testimonies of the disabled. They appreciated that children with disabilities were included in the book and recognized as a group with special needs.

Furthermore, the children discussed the issue of parents neglecting their disabled children. The children recognized that this is wrong and that disabled people should be accepted, respected and involved. The story of a blind boy who could draw was very entertaining and educative.

➤ **HIV/AIDS**

Even though HIV/AIDS was not rated among the most popular or educative topics, the children learned some important lessons from it.

First of all, the children reported learning how the disease is transmitted and how to protect one self. Children understood that having unprotected sex puts one at risk but they also learned about ways that one cannot get the disease (e.g. eating with PLHAs).

Secondly, children reported learning not to discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS and some stated that they found this lesson particularly important. In connection to this, children recognized the importance of caring for those affected by the disease.

Finally some children mentioned that the information on HIV/AIDS gave them valuable advice on how to manage sexual relationships after puberty.

Despite HIV/AIDS not being among the most popular topics in Watoto Bomba, evidence suggests that it is an issue that concern children. In the national survey 'Views of the Children 2007'¹ Tanzanian children were asked to identify issues about which they were interested to receive information. HIV/AIDS was among the 26 issues brought up by the children.

Watoto Bomba's chapter on HIV/AIDS was in general well received and the FGDs revealed that children had learned some very important lessons on this crucial issue. One child reported learning about HIV/AIDS for the first time from the Watoto Bomba. Findings like this underline the importance of providing children with reliable and precise information about the epidemic and highlight the need for more education even in urban settings.

¹ 'Tanzanian Children's Perceptions of Education and Their Role in Society, Views of the Children 2007' (p. 22)

➤ **Bullying**

Bullying was the most popular topic to read about among the children in Dar es Salaam. They saw it as very relevant, probably because it is present in their daily environments.

The primary lesson learned was that bullying is wrong and should not happen. You should respect one another and not mistreat others because they are different from your self.

In connection to this, children recognized that it is not your own fault if you are being bullied. At the same time the children reported learning that the proper response to bullying is to report it to the teachers.

Broader lessons related to bullying included the need to avoid conflict and have self-control, that is, not to lash out if you are being bullied. Furthermore, the children also recognized that those who bully other children may have difficult lives and personal problems that lead them to do so. Therefore, they also need sympathy.

➤ **Safety**

The topic of safety was only mentioned a couple of times by the children, but lessons learned included the importance of keeping dangerous things away from children and being careful when crossing the street.

Children's Reading Techniques, Dar es Salaam

The study reveals that Watoto Bomba is used in a variety of ways: Children read the book on their own, together with friends and siblings, use it as a tool to educate peers, and parents read the book to get guidance on how to discuss delicate issues with their children.

The children report primarily reading the book in their free time, both at home and at school. They read it after finishing their duties, when they want to relax. When teachers are not in class, children use the chance to read the book and discuss it with their peers.

Though Watoto Bomba's target group is children aged 10-14, adults also take their time to read and share information in the book with their children.

When asked how they use the book, the most popular response was to educate other or to teach or learn about the topics. This is very encouraging in that it suggests that the book is helping to grow a new generation of peer educators.

Who do they read Watoto Bomba with?

Children share Watoto Bomba with siblings and friends but also with parents, other family members and neighbors.

Of the six children who reported sharing with adults, four emphasized that the book was also beneficial to parents, either to learn themselves or to use as a starting point for discussing these issues with their children. The five children who reported sharing with siblings discussed reading with both older siblings and using it to teach younger siblings about the topics in the book. Friends with whom they shared the book included both

classmates and fellow members or sports teams (e.g. football). Only one child mentioned sharing with neighbors.

When asked how many children can share one book, responses ranged from 3 to 8 children, with an average of 4 children reading each book. Only one child stated that sharing was not necessary because each child had a copy. In addition, one child voiced the opinion that more children could share one copy of the book in the villages than in the city, though he/she did not elaborate why.

The majority of children read the book together with peers and siblings and discuss what they read. Children also mention reading the book with parents, elders and uncles/aunts. This finding is very positive since experience shows that you understand the messages you read much better if you also discuss them with others.

Most children feel that they have somebody they can ask if they have questions about the content of the book; siblings, friends parents, etc. In most cases children are freer to talk to their mothers, which may be a result of mothers being closer to their children and spending more time with them. Some children ask their teachers in school; especially science teachers (e.g. the meaning of menstruation which is connected to the topic of reproduction in science class).

Is Watoto Bomba easy to read?

The majority of children finds Watoto Bomba very easy to read and understand. Many children even report understanding the book well enough to feel confident to assist others in reading it and to explain the content.

The main reasons for Watoto Bomba's reader friendliness are:

- Language: Watoto Bomba is written in Kiswahili. This is the language that most children feel most confident with and find easiest to read and understand.
- Large prints: The book is easy for the children to read because of the large print. Large prints motivate children to read more and not get tired so easily. This also helps children with eye problems to read the book more easily.
- Simple vocabulary: Watoto Bomba is written in a very simple vocabulary which can easily be understood by children. In case there's a word they don't understand, the book has a list of vocabularies where explanations of difficult words can be found.
- Cartoons: The cartoons in Watoto Bomba are entertaining to children but at the same time they carry strong messages.

Comments from children

Some children commented that younger children do not understand the text and only look at the photos in the book. In such cases the older children understood the importance of discussing the book with younger siblings and explaining the content and the pictures.

Focus Group Discussions with children in Iringa

As in Dar es Salaam, the children in Iringa valued Watoto Bomba as a unique source of information that they found difficult to access elsewhere. They appreciated that the book discussed topics that are normally sensitive and welcomed the openness about problems such as bullying and gender discrimination.

➤ General findings

During the FGDs the children were asked which parts of the book they had read and which topics they found most interesting. Some topics appeared to be more popular than others. Topics like **changes, bullying and puberty** were more popular while the topic on **safety, rights and responsibilities** was less popular.

In the following the main findings of the Iringa study are presented under the following headlines: Bullying, HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment, puberty, disability, safety, rights and responsibilities and changes.

➤ Bullying

Bullying was the most popular topic and the topic the children had the best understanding of. Children demonstrated an in-depth understanding of both the content and the lessons in the book, for example:

“I read the story of Skadi who was bullying others in school and the reason as to why he was bullying them was because he was mistreated at home and had no one at home to mistreat so decided to revenge on others in school. He was a prefect in school so when the students reported him to the teacher, he was removed from leadership.” [A child from Mufindi]

➤ HIV/AIDS

On the topic of HIV/AIDS, the children also showed clarity of thought and were able to explain how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how it can be prevented. The children also talked about stigmatization and how to treat the victims of HIV/AIDS, as taught through the story of Irene:

“I remember the story of Irene whose mother is living positive. Her friends isolated her. Irene also has HIV virus that she got from her mother because she is too young and children get AIDS only from their mothers. It has been long since she tested positive meaning she was born with the virus.” [A child from Ikonda]

The children were also able to talk about issues of safe sex, sharing sharp objects and transmission from mother to child, which they understood could also lead to transmission of the virus.

➤ Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was also a popular topic. Through the FGDs it was clear that the children recognized the key messages in the chapter on sexual harassment and that they understood that if they faced sexual harassment they should not hide it but report the harassment to elders in order to get help.

➤ **Puberty**

According to the children they also liked the chapter on puberty because it provided them with valuable information hard to access elsewhere. By reading the chapter, the children got a better understanding of their bodies and it allowed them to cope with the changes of puberty better. The children felt that the information in Watoto Bomba was unique and hard to find elsewhere and they appreciated Watoto Bomba as a reliable source of information.

“On the topic of puberty I have learnt a lot of things, like when changes occur, we should not worry so much instead inform our parents that we have such kind of problems and ask them for advice. If it is bodily problem or the problem of puberty advice from adults is needed. If you have read about puberty then there is no need to worry but all you need is to keep yourself clean and try your level best to be close to others and not put yourself aside because of your bodily changes.” [Watoto Bomba reader, Mufindi]

“The issue of puberty even in school is not taken serious. When teenagers especially boys see changes in their bodies they get scared and cant even consult their parents about it. I think the issue of puberty should have been taught from primary level in schools so that people especially children can be ready for it and even parents and adults should be advised on how to teach their children about puberty.” [A child, Mufindi]

➤ **Disability**

Children also emphasized the issue of disability. They said that they had learned not to mistreat or stigmatize the disabled and articulated that they themselves would not want to have a disability. The children also recognized that having a disability is not necessarily a disease. Instead they talked about the need to love and support the disabled whenever possible.

“I have learnt to help the disabled on whatever they need, if I don't have money I will wash their clothes and do other house works, if I have homework I will do their work after reading” [A child, Ikonda]

“According to the story of disability, we have learnt that living with the disabled doesn't mean that we should isolate them because their bodily parts are different from others, but what we are supposed to do is to show them love and make them feel comfortable within a community with us, despite the fact that we have all the bodily parts of which they lack some of them, and we should not isolate them just because they lack some parts of the body. For example a deaf person cannot hear anything and when we sit together we back bite him and whenever he says something we laugh at him, when ask for help you refuse just because he is deaf.” [A child, Mufindi]

➤ **Safety, rights and responsibilities**

On the issue of safety children talked about the proper use of fire and electricity and they discussed the issue of crossing the road safely by looking at both sides of the road.

“I read about bad uses of fire and electricity, we are supposed to be careful. We should make fire far from things which can easily catch fire and cause accidents. About electricity it is advised to use it when we are not wet.” [a child from Makete]

“When we are crossing the road we have to look at both sides, left and right in order so see the car which is coming. It is also good to look at the crossing signs before we cross” [A child from Ikonda]

Children also stated, that the Watoto Bomba had taught them about their right to be protected as well as their obligation to take care of the younger ones.

Furthermore, the children raised the issue of killing albinos for witch craft and said that albinos should be protected since they are also human beings.

Children also remembered the issue of being careful when playing with others in potentially dangerous environments like water and not to force others to do what they can't do. They also talked about being careful when taking drugs by following instructions as well as keeping drugs out of reach of children. The children also included the fact of parents protecting girls but forgetting that boys also need protection. They emphasized that they are all children and that they all have equal rights.

“Safety is connected to education because there are some drugs which are dangerous and we are instructed to keep them far from children, if you are not educated you can just put it anywhere and when the child takes it it dies.” [a child Mufindi]

“I have learned that boys and girls have the right for safety, in our communities in most cases parents are the ones on their children's safety and are the ones to decide on how their family should be. In most families parents protect girls more forgetting that boys are more at risk of getting spoilt than girls because they are more stubborn than girls. They only look at girls forgetting boys and think the effects are only thinking of girls than boys yet boys do a lot of disasters like raping, committing crimes among others, I have learned that as a parent it will be my responsibility to protect my both children, boys and girls.” [a child Mufindi]

➤ **Changes**

When discussing changes, the children divided the topic into body changes and changes in life. The body changes were related to the transition from childhood to adulthood while change in life was defined as the uncertainty we face in life, like loosing what one really wants as a result of fate.

“I will divide change into two, in life you may be living nicely with your parents and you may get a good education and everything like your dreams and goals changes, or even death might occur. The death of parents or even problems that your parents may face at their work place might bring change. Secondly is a change in development/maturity. Here I have learned on how to treat yourself when you are on transition period, from childhood to adulthood and be courageous on the challenges you meet especially from what we have learnt on Watoto Bomba, this helps avoid early pregnancies and what to do as grown-ups. This also helps students since most of them are involved in sexual intercourse. When in school it is easier to learn about such comparing to those who are out of school and need the education from Watoto Bomba more.” [A child, Mufindi]

Children's Reading Techniques, Iringa

Children have different ways of reading the book in order to benefit the most from it. Most start by looking at the titles and select what attract them most. They read these

chapters first and then proceed to the topics that attract them less. Others concentrate on the introduction and the content first.

Children read the book at different times following their time tables. Some talked about reading the book in school on their break time or in class when there is no teacher around. Some read the book from home after finishing their housework and homework, especially when they want to relax. This indicates that the book has become as a relaxing tool to children and at the same time a teacher and a friend they can freely learn from. It is hard for a child to have a specific timetable for reading or relaxing. This means that some of them read the book when they are free especially at night before sleeping, when parents are not asking them to do chores. Most of the children read the book from home.

Who do they read Watoto Bomba with?

When the children were asked about who they read the book with, most of them explained that they read with their siblings at home probably because of the nature of distribution in their areas. After reading in the book, they discuss it with their friends or elders. Some of them act as elders since they discuss the topics of the book with their younger siblings.

Some parents are open and like sharing the education from Watoto Bomba with their children. Parents - especially mothers who in most cases are close to their children - are taking their time reading the book and use it as an educational tool for their children, especially when discussing sensitive issues with them. Older children also take the education from the book and discuss it with their younger siblings. Some families use the examples from Watoto Bomba to educate their families especially about HIV/AIDS while other relatives in the family like aunties and uncles spend more time discussing the education with the young ones.

In general the children are good at sharing the books. In one case a group of 55 people shared the same book, which was sent straight from Femina HIP to one of their friends.

In Makete each family shares one book. This is different from Mufindi where access to the book is poor and a big number of children end up sharing one book. These problems are the results of distribution problems discussed above.

It is very positive that a large majority of the interviewed children discuss the book with others. Experience shows that children remember and understand what they read better if they also discuss it with others. Only 16 % of the children did not share with others what they read in Watoto Bomba, the remaining 84 % discussed the book with family and friends.

When asked about where they got the book from, all children from Makete had received the book through SUMASESU. In Mufindi most children got the book from their relatives working at the market, some borrow it from friends whose relatives work at the market and one got it straight from Femina HIP. Others got the book from Wambi village office and others from different educational concerts.

Accessibility and availability of the book depends heavily on the distribution system. Where the system is working the children benefit from the book. Where the distribution is not efficient, the effect of the book is more limited.

The book has provided the answers to children about sensible topics that they otherwise find difficult to discuss. These include the topics of maturity, HIV/AIDS and bullying. In some families and communities elders are not comfortable discussing sensitive issues with children while living standards and conditions mean that most parents are busy with work and only have limited time to give children answers to their questions. This means that the Watoto Bomba book provides children with answers they find difficult to get elsewhere.

Is Watoto Bomba easy to read?

When the children were asked if the book was reader-friendly, they all said that it is very easy to read and understand. One reason is that the Kiswahili used is very simple for children to understand. Furthermore, the photo stories can easily be understood even without reading the actual words. The children also commented on using both languages in the book which helps people who don't speak one language to use the other, i.e. English and Kiswahili. Words are also big enough for them to read clearly and the use of simple vocabularies which are translated helps them learn more.

Comments from children

A few children think that the title Watoto Bomba is childish, most especially because the education given is basically for older children who are approaching the stage of maturity. They suggested the title to be changed to something which will motivate even elders to read and indicate that there are more than just cartoons inside the book.

The children also talked about the distribution strategies. They proposed that instead of distributing the books to the market place where some of the people can't even read and some don't see the importance of the education, the book should be distributed in schools or other learning centres where it will be easier for children to access it.

The Effect of Watoto Bomba in Urban vs. Rural Settings

As mentioned above, Femina HIP also conducted a study of the effect of Watoto Bomba in Dar es Salaam. When comparing the effect of the book in urban vs. rural settings it shows that the topics the children find interesting to a large extent are the same regardless of the setting. However, the target group varies slightly according to the location.

The topic of bullying appears to be appealing and popular in both settings, rural and urban. Most children like it simply because it touches their life experience especially in school settings where bullying is evident and something they face everyday. The topics of maturity, HIV/AIDS and disability caught both groups of children's attention and they had good views and a profound understanding of it.

However, the topic of changes proves to be more appealing to the children from rural areas than to the urban children. In the FGDs the children from rural areas were more preoccupied with changes compared to urban children. This difference most likely results from a general lack of educational materials and sources of information in urban areas.

Where as children from the Urban areas focused on cartoons, big prints and simple vocabulary, children from both areas focused on the simple language and understanding

of the content of the book. In rural areas the children didn't talk about the entertainment but based on the education they get.

The rural vs. urban setting also has an impact on the book's target audience. The FGDs in Iringa region show that in rural settings even older children read Watoto Bomba and find the information useful. This means that generally the readers of Watoto Bomba are a bit older in rural areas than in urban settings. This tendency is caused by the limited sources of information in rural areas compared to urban settings where a larger variety of material is available.

Conclusion

Through FGDs with children, this study has shown that Watoto Bomba has a positive impact on children and their communities.

The study has illustrated that not only children benefit from the book. Children use the book to access information they can't find elsewhere and elders use the book as an educating tool for their children. In other words, the study shows that Watoto Bomba is both relevant and appropriate to the target audience and that the usage of the book is differentiated.

The study also shows that despite distribution challenges the book is making children aware of a range of crucial topics on healthy lifestyles and is giving them confidence especially in the transition stage from childhood to adulthood.

Most children feel that they have got a friend who can help them learn beyond the classroom lessons, in an open, friendly way. Since many communities no longer involve the extended families in educating the children, Watoto Bomba is filling in a role that the extended family used to play.

Watoto Bomba is helping children growing up knowing who they are and what they can expect to happen to them. The children who have access to the book recognize it as an important source of guidance that they struggle to find elsewhere.

Readers also noted that the book was useful not just for children, but also for older children and parents, both to educate them on the topics and as a starting point for conversations between parents and children on topics such as puberty and gender discrimination. Children appreciated the book because it encouraged openness for discussion around difficult topics that would otherwise not be discussed.

Children also seem to identify with the stories in the book, to see the characters as role models for their own lives, and to feel empowered to change their behaviors to follow the lessons in the book. This feedback suggests that the individual testimonies, which make up a large percentage of the book, are an effective method for communicating with children. Given these responses, it appears that Watoto Bomba has been successful in its goal of providing education and guidance for children.

A large majority of the children discuss the content in Watoto Bomba with peers or elders thus enhancing the understanding of the messages communicated in the book.

Furthermore, children use the book to educate friends and younger siblings and in this way Watoto Bomba helps cultivating a new generation of peer educators.

The important national survey 'Voice of the Children 2007'² identify a number of issues that children need and want information about. Several of these are discussed in Watoto Bomba including Child Rights (including the right to education), health / sickness (including HIV/AIDS) and insecurity in the community (e.g. robbers / unsafe places). Together with the information gathered through IDIs and FGDs this underscores that Watoto Bomba meets a vital demand for information among Tanzanian children.

² 'Tanzanian Children's Perceptions of Education and Their Role in Society, Views of the Children 2007' (p. 22)

Appendix

1. Interview guide for the Dar es Salaam study

1. Have you ever seen this book? Have you read it? Which parts have you read?
2. Where did you get it from? (Probe to see if the books exist and whether they are available to target audiences)?
3. Approximately, how many children do you think can read one book? (Probe to see approximately the number of children who read one book)
4. How do you know that the proportions of those who need the book are receiving it? (Probe to see the need vs. demand).
5. How relevant or appropriate the book is to you? (Probe for content of the books, illustrations, images...) What do you like about the book? Show me your favorite parts? What have you learned from the book? Can you remember any stories or lessons you learnt?
6. How do you use the book? Tell me when and where you read the book?
7. Did a teacher or adult help in any way? (Probe to see to what extent the available book is being utilized, for reference, clarifications, clearing doubts and learning....)?
8. Are they supportive/happy that you have the book which helps you get the information about bodily changes, HIV/AIDS, bullying, disability and personal safety.
9. What are the perceived quality of entertainment and information of the book? (Probe to see the quality of informational materials does the book have)
10. Is the book easy to read?
11. Does the book give you an alternative to your questions? (Probe to see the efficacy of the book)

2. Interview guide for the Iringa study

- 1. What parts of the book have you read?**
 - a. What parts did you like most?
 - b. What parts did you like least?
 - c. Which format did you like (e.g. pictures, stories)

- 2. What lessons did you learn from each section?**
 - a. Go through each section

- 3. How do you read the book?**
 - a. When do you usually read the book?
 - b. With whom do you read?
 - c. How many people have you shared your book with?
 - d. Where do you usually read?
 - e. Where did you get your book from?
 - f. If you want to read it, is it usually accessible?

- 4. Have you talked to your elders about the book?**
 - a. Who did you talk to about the books?
 - b. What topics did you talk about?
 - c. Did the book help you to talk about difficult topics? If yes, which topics?

- 5. Is the book easy to read?**
 - a. Why is it easy to read?
 - b. Which parts were hard to understand?

- 6. How could the book be improved?**
 - a. What don't you like about the book?
 - b. How could we improve the book?