

Does Africa have a future?

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The activity is part of the second biology course offered in the third term of the Science, Languages and Literature, Creative Arts program.

Two articles published in *Scientific American* in May and June 2000 serve as a springboard for this scenario.

During the assignment sessions, the group of 21 students is divided into four smaller groups of experts. These groups participate in a simulated international conference on the AIDS epidemic in Africa, like the one held in South Africa in the spring of 2000. A second conference was held by the UN in June 2001.

Representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) discuss how this terrible disease has evolved worldwide. **Scientists** from the biomedical field explain how the HIV virus functions and how the disease evolves. **Representatives of the pharmaceutical industry** present the various antiretroviral drugs that they manufacture, the advantages and disadvantages of tritherapy and their efforts to develop a vaccine. Finally, representatives of **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** describe the situation in Africa, the means that have been put in place to halt the progression of the disease in Africa and the problems encountered.

After this hour of presentations, the groups of experts must write a joint declaration of two to five pages to confront this dramatic situation, while taking into account the interests and limitations of each group.