



# LIFE, ABOVE ALL

Autumn  
Season  
2011

**Release:** 2010

**Cert (UK):** 12A

**Runtime:** 100 mins

**Directors:** Oliver Schmitz

**Cast :** Khomotso Manyaka, Harriet Manamela, Keaboka Makanyane

This week's film is set in a relatively well-off township in South Africa which is suffering from 'The Bug'; AIDS. One of the problems which makes it so much harder to deal with AIDS in Africa is their refusal to accept it as a disease, blaming it on witchcraft, poison or anything rather than the reality. We have the film, coincidentally, at the time of World AIDS Day; this issue has dropped down in importance in Britain, but is still killing many and devastating communities in Africa. We hope to show a short film about AIDS from the 'Stop AIDS Campaign' at the start of our evening.

The film sets Chanda, a twelve year old girl against this backdrop, after her baby sister dies. Her mother, Lillian has 'The Bug' and her father is a drunk. The locals, suspecting AIDS has killed the baby, blame Lillian for bringing disaster upon them and ostracize the family, leading their well-meaning neighbour, Mrs Tafa, to arrange for Lillian to 'visit' her relations out of town.



Chanda is left trying to keep the family together, with the help of Mrs Tafa.

Chanda also befriends Esther, whose poverty also pushes her into some hard decisions in order to survive and it is the two young girls battle with these harsh realities that is the centre of this film, their to fight to prove that, in the end, it is 'Life, Above All' that counts.

Chanda is played by Khomotso Manyaka, who gets rave reviews from pretty well all critics.

The film was based on the novel 'Chanda's Secret' by Allan Stratton. It was South Africa's entry for Best Foreign Language film at the Oscars this year, and was directed by Oliver Schmitz. Schmitz has been directing mainly TV movies, but his pedigree includes 'Mapantsula', one of the great Anti-Apartheid films from 1987. Here he tries to confront head on the ignorance and fear behind AIDS which has made it so much harder to deal with in Africa.

