

## UNAIDS Operational Plan has 6 crosscutting principles. This is how Stepping Stones incorporates them:

### 1 Human rights based

**approach:** Protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls

#### Stepping Stones changes men's behaviour...

*"I always believed that a man was the head of the family and the one that makes all the decisions and owns the house and land. Stepping Stones started to make me question some of these things about men and women and this has been the hardest thing for me. Before Stepping Stones I believed that men were the strong ones who made all the decisions about the family, home and money. These have always been the things that my wife and I fight about. I can now see some of her thoughts and why she says the things she does, they are a lot like the things the women doing Stepping Stones said." Older male (36 yrs) Stepping Stones participant from Vanuatu, Pacific*

• In Uganda, Stepping Stones was also successfully used to reintegrate returning army veterans into their communities in a gender-fair way (Baron Oron's video)

#### ... leading to more respect for women:

*"Before Stepping Stones boys and girls in my village didn't really talk closely. If the boys did talk with us it would be about rude stuff or trying to get us to sleep with them. The 6 weeks we spent doing SS brought the boys and girls together. I think we are more like friends now and they don't seem to always call rude things out to us. I think SS made them see us more as people rather than just girls to have sex with." Young female (19yrs) Stepping Stones participant, Sasa village, Fiji*



All drawings are by Petra Röhr-Rouendaal



You can read all the reports and find out more about the organisations mentioned here on our website

Nowhere in the Stepping Stones original manual is the phrase "human rights" mentioned. But this was on purpose, since this phrase often scares people off! The principles and practice of Stepping Stones has human rights at its core - mutual respect, support for everyone, irrespective of their gender, age, religion or HIV status. Ludfine Anyango, formerly of ActionAid Kenya says "Stepping Stones is all about human rights!"

**"Before we were sleeping but now we are awake"**  
Participants in the Gambia after their Stepping Stones workshop

**2 Participation:** meaningful and equal participation of women and girls, including women living with HIV, recognizing their contributions, experiences and expertise.

The uniqueness of Stepping Stones is that it addresses both gender and inter-generational issues facing young women, young men, older women and older men. By doing so it promotes and establishes the right to an equal voice to all members of the community, female and male, young and old, and it ensures that the community listens to every peer group equally. Equality of treatment is fundamental to the human rights of women and girls.

Stepping Stones has been adapted for work with all of the groups below, which are specified in the UNAIDS Operational Plan:

- Sex workers - a specific implementation in India (KHPT); & in El Salvador, by PASMO
- Women and girls with disabilities - In India a Braille version has been developed (Action Aid partners)
- Women and girls who use or have a partner who uses drugs - The Russian, Kyrgyz, Ukrainian, and the Myanmar adaptations address this issue
- Racial and ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees - Plan International in Guatemala with indigenous communities
- People in prison - Indian adaptation (Disha Foundation)
- Women living in conflict or post-conflict settings among others - Stepping Stones has been used to help rebuild community cohesion in Mozambique (evaluated by UNICEF) and Sierra Leone (Action Aid)
- Teachers (Tiwokole Project, Action Aid-Malawi, report available on the UK Government (DFID) website: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Case-Studies/2007/Teachers-stepping-stones-to-behavioural-change-in-Malawi/>)
- Stepping Stones is widely used by networks of people living with HIV such as Vida Nueva in El Salvador; sero-discordant couples in Rwanda; the Namibia Women's Health Network; etc.

### 3 Evidence-informed and ethical responses:

*need to recognize the different epidemiological, economic, social, cultural and political contexts facing women and girls.*

Stepping Stones is based on developing communication and relationship skills, self respect, mutual respect and understanding amongst community members. The examples explored in exercises always come from participants' own experiences. This methodology, which encourages members of a community to know and understand their own and others' behaviour better, has been shown to work in very diverse settings.

Different communities have different issues and Stepping Stones creates a framework for addressing them. In the Gambia, condoms were presented as an issue to protect fertility and the local imams agreed to encourage condom use to protect the community.

Local humour, games, music, crafts etc are incorporated throughout the process.

*"We will share this with our communities, while we have laughed, we have also worked, we have shared, we have learned. Thank you!" Kara Counselling Training Trust, Zambia*

### 4 Partnership: building bridges between civil society

Stepping Stones is implemented through an emerging global community of practice of organisations and partners worldwide - grassroots and faith-based organisations, international and local NGOs, networks of women/people living with HIV, government level initiatives, donors and UN organizations, groups of adolescents and young people, traditional leaders etc.

Stepping Stones has spread from Africa outwards: from the Pacific to Panama, from Estonia to Ecuador, from China to Chile and to many Asian countries also.

As Stepping Stones has grown, organisations have sought to interact with and learn from other organisations, both in-country and internationally that are running Stepping Stones programmes. Over the past 18 months, much work has been put into bringing the network of organisations closer together, strengthening the ability of organisations to share with and learn from each other.



### 5 Engaging men and boys:

*changes in men's and boy's attitudes and behaviours are essential to prevent HIV in women and girls.*

The Stepping Stones process engages the whole community throughout and that always includes men and boys. In addition, organisations of men such as *Hombres contra la Violencia* in Nicaragua use Stepping Stones to promote women's rights.

In many organisations there are male trainers who successfully engage men and boys of the community. A number of you will know Baron Oron who is a very experienced trainer in East Africa. Baron represented Stepping Stones at the 'Men Engage' conference in Johannesburg in November 2009.

*"I have seen conservative, authoritarian men of the armed forces (Uganda) mellow down to pleasant smiling change agents within a period of only seven days in Stepping Stones training programmes" (ActionAid Soroti 2001)*

### 6 Strong and courageous leadership:

Strong leadership is needed to challenge current ways of thinking and bring about lasting change.

Stepping Stones empowers people to become agents of change in their own communities. In keeping with its ethos, Stepping Stones creates leadership at the grassroots level.

In Entebbe (Uganda), girls as young as 10-years old were included in the programme. They were able to stand up in front of the mayor and ask that the older men stop chasing them - (Rose Mbowa interview)

In Guatemala, through Stepping Stones, Plan International has empowered several groups of children to go out and spread awareness of sexual health issues - particularly teenage pregnancy - among other young people.

