



Salamander Trust
TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT HIV

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Transforming the Way we Think about HIV

www.salamandertrust.net

Registered Charity No. 1143381

“The Senegalese woman is active, politically engaged and fights to make money but in the context of HIV, it is a disease that makes you poor: the majority of HIV-positive women are widows” Director of ABOYA (United in Hope), an organisation of women living with HIV in Sénégal

Using Stepping Stones in Senegal

The information here was collected during a visit to Senegal in April 2011 by Amandine Bollinger, in co-ordination with Stepping Stones, Salamander Trust. You can also see the page "[Ressources en français](#)" for more information regarding the implementation Stepping Stones in Francophone countries.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the population of Senegal was estimated at 14.1 million inhabitants with the region of Dakar accounting for 22.4% of this total population. Senegal is among the more urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (65% of the total population is under 25 years of age). The main religion is Islam (94%) followed by Christianity (4%). The majority of the rural population remain illiterate with women being disproportionately affected (only 28.2% of women living rurally are literate compared to 49.5% of men).

In terms of HIV, Senegal is considered as an example of a success story. This is because, unlike many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, it has maintained a particularly low rate of HIV prevalence. This was largely due to an energetic and rapid HIV prevention policy, implemented from the end of the 1980's. In 2007, only 1% of the adult population was HIV-positive and UNAIDS estimated that there were 67,000 people living with HIV in the country.

Although the level of prevalence in the general population is low, prevalence is concentrated and increased in certain groups such as sex workers (19.8%, 29% in the regions of Dakar and Ziguinchor respectively) and men that have had sexual relations with other men (21.5% in the region of Dakar alone). Other pockets of strong prevalence of HIV include the regions of Kolda (an area of gold mining activity) at 2.3% ; Kédougou at 7%, and Ziguinchor (a region which borders Guinée Bissau) at 2%.

The feminisation of the epidemic becomes apparent when we understand that for every one man living with HIV, there is two women; the trend is even stronger among women between 25 and 29 years old. The rate of prevalence in pregnant women is 1.3%. **For more information about the situation of women living with HIV in Senegal please click [here](#) to read an interview with the president of the organisation ABOYA (the first organisation created for HIV-positive women in Senegal), by Amandine Bollinger of Salamander Trust.**

Currently, the fight against HIV figures among the objectives of sectoral policies and is taken account of in the Strategy Paper on Poverty Reduction and the National Health Development Plan. Two lessons have been learned in the response to HIV in Senegal: firstly the importance of working from the bottom towards the top and secondly to include at all points, the people living with HIV.



Stepping Stones has been used in Senegal since 1997. Action Aid initially introduced Stepping Stones and the methodology was developed further for use in Senegal by the International AIDS Alliance.

One important training session was organised in Morocco in 1997, directed by Kevin Orr, AIDS Alliance. Three people who were later to have a pivotal role in the implementation of the Stepping Stones manual in Senegal are:



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- **Mme Magatte Mbodj,**
- **Mr Baba Goumbala**
- **Feu Abbas Ka**

ANCS - The National Alliance to Fight Against AIDS (www.ancs.sn)

It is via the efforts of ANCS, (The National Alliance to Fight Against AIDS), whose executive director at the time was Goumbala Baba, that Stepping Stones gained popularity in Senegal.

A team made up of, among others, Ms. Mbodj, Mame Mor Fall, Massogui Thiandoum, Alioune Badara Sow and Mr. Famara met to create a training module that was specifically adapted for use Senegal. It was called "**The Positive Approach to Prevention.**"

The implementation of Stepping Stones by the ANCS (The National Alliance to Fight Against AIDS), was the primary beneficiary of the Global Fund since 2005

Stepping Stones and "**The Positive Approach to Prevention**" is used in conjunction with the CAP methodology (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) in order to achieve the different strategies recommended by the Global Fund, notably concerning the support of women and children. Stepping Stones is particularly used in order to target and strengthen these affected populations.

The ANCS employs the Stepping Stones Methodology in order to understand the complexities of the social dynamics within a community and to allow better planning of its programs. In order to read the interview with the executive director of the ANCS, Ms. Mbodj and Mor Fall Mama, download the document at the bottom of this page.

ACI – Africa Consultant International (www.acibaobab.org)

ACI is an organisation using Stepping Stones in Senegal as part of the framework of its activities to support organisations for people living with HIV (there are 26 associations in total, most of which are run by women). Important work is carried out to help self-stigmatisation, a recurring difficulty within communities of people living with HIV. To learn more about the work of ACI, you can download the documents listed below.