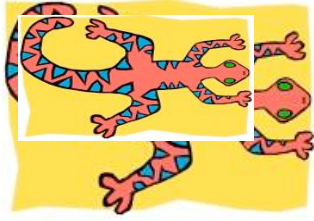




Lessons learned from Scaling up 'Stepping Stones'

Gill Gordon
Salamander Trust, UK

ICRW: The Girl Effect: What do boys have to do with it?



Outline of presentation

- What is Stepping Stones, how does it work and what has it achieved?
- Description of scale up extent and process
- Lessons learned



What is 'Stepping Stones'?

Participatory HIV prevention programme that aims to improve sexual health through building stronger, more gender equitable relationships.

- 240 Page manual for trainers (optional video) (1995)
Instructions on how to run 60 hours of workshop sessions, divided into around 18 sessions over 10-12 weeks.
- Stepping Stones Plus manual (2008) contains sessions on new issues such as male circumcision

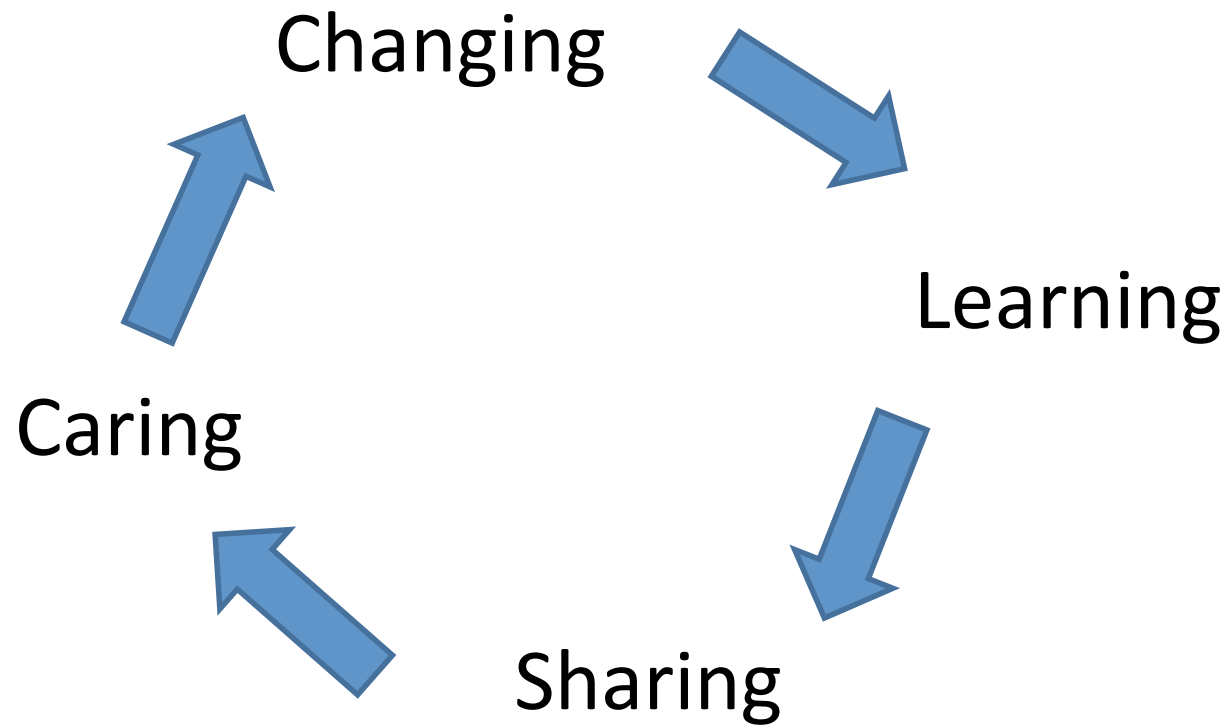


How does it work?

- Grounded in local knowledge, context and experience - community members are learners and actors
- Addresses social norms and structural causes of vulnerability - change at individual, group, community and services level
- Works with young and older men and women in peer groups, separately and together – leads to group change across genders and generations
- Uses creative experiential activities to generate ‘critical literacy’
- Coherent sequence of sessions
- Encouragement of groups to share learning and change with others



Wheel of Change

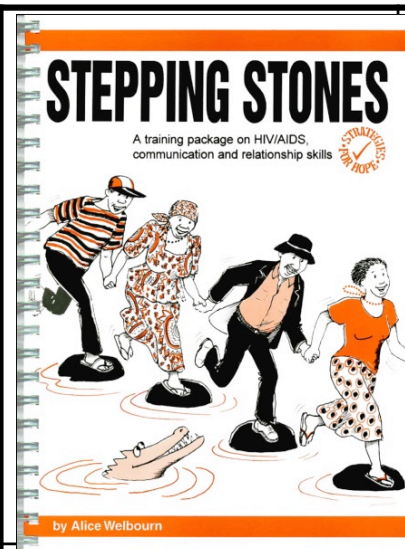




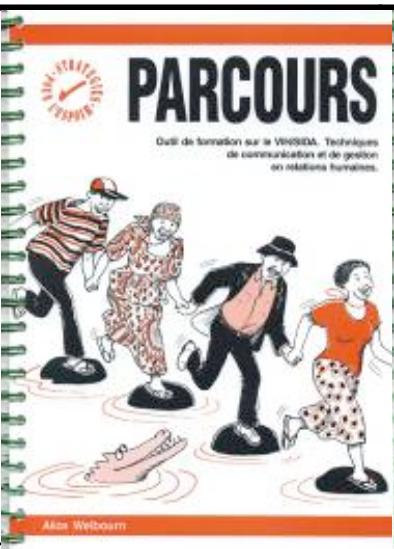
Extent of scale up – 1995 - 2009

- 20,000 copies of the manual to over 5000 organisations in 40 countries in Africa, S and E Asia, Latin America, Pacific and Russia and Eastern Europe.
- 14 languages and adaptations for 17 settings
- Groups include marginalised and stigmatised groups, schools and health services, military and people in conflict zones
- Continuing expansion of use

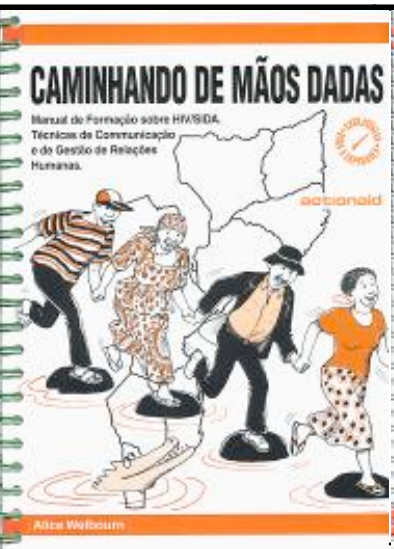
“Almost certainly the most widely used intervention of its kind in the world” Rachel Jewkes, MRC South Africa



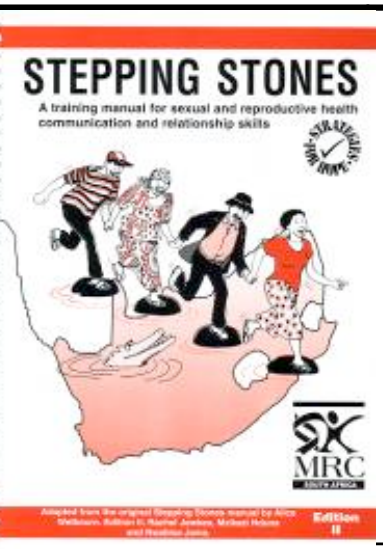
English (by SFH)



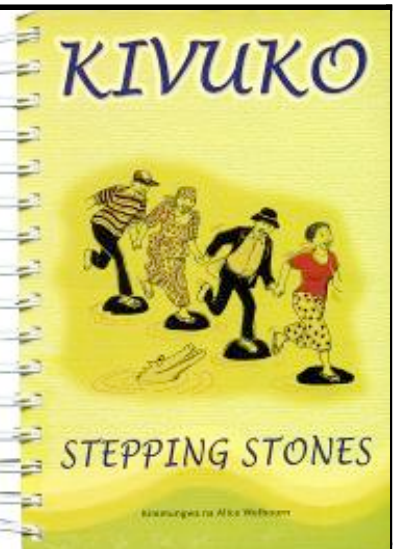
French (by SFH)



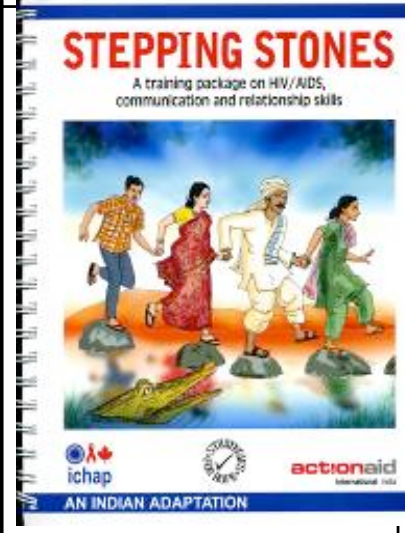
Portuguese



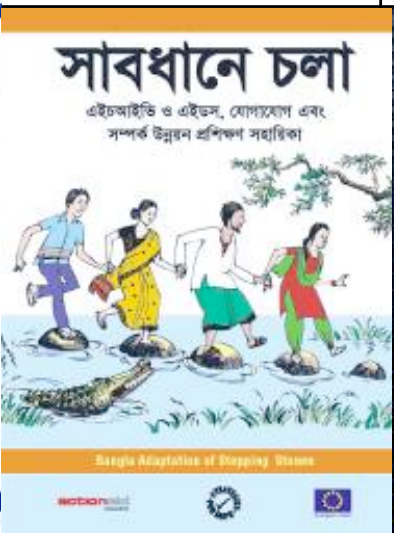
South Africa



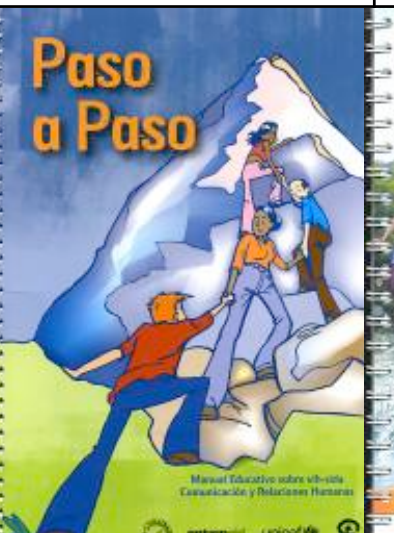
Ki-Swahili



Indian



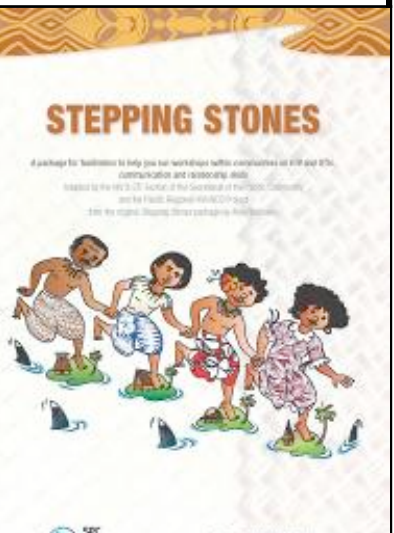
Bangla



L American



Indonesian



Pacific



How has scale up happened?

- Field testing in Gambia – research by MRC to national scale up
- International training of trainers and in-country adaptation and training by INGOs. *Plan, Alliance, IPPF*
- Regional TOT and adaptations – *South Asia, Latin America*
- Stepping Stones networks of trainers and regional co-ordinators
- Appreciation of the package and sharing with others. Positive reports and reviews. Word of mouth. Organic.
- Local expansion in and between communities
- National expansion across districts, new organisations and groups – *Zambia, India, Gambia*
- Low cost distribution centres -*TALC, Strategies for Hope*
- Feedback and networking - SS Website, global meetings –*Oxford*
- Unique characteristics – “nothing like it”



Achievements from SS evaluations (36)

- Universal support and appreciation for SS as a change process from those with first hand experience of using /seeing it
- Improvement in communication between spouses or children and parents, especially about sex
- Better gender relations – greater equality, mutual respect and empathy, increased respect for women’s rights, sharing household work, improved sexual relations.
- Better intergenerational relations, more care about welfare of children
- Closer peer group relations – positive peer pressure
- Reduced alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence
- Increase in safer sex practices
- Economic changes – more sharing in the household



Investing in SS

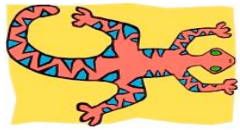
- Scale up of effective Stepping Stones programmes requires major investment. Donors, NGOs and communities need to be sure that this represents a good use of scarce resources.
- Evaluation that provides statistical evidence of SS value-added for public health outcomes requires a large sample and expert researchers. This is costly and may be difficult to attribute and generalise.
- Evaluations using participatory qualitative methods triangulated with practical quantitative methods are grounded in reality and if they converge from a large number of sites, they represent strong evidence



Importance of strengthening M and E

Need to design and expand high standard monitoring and evaluation which engages stakeholders, is triangulated and gives enough information to:

- Make a sound judgement on value for money.
- Consolidate and refine programme implementation
- Information on process indicators on coverage, ‘dose’ and quality needs to be standardised and complete
- Qualitative evidence of knowledge, attitude, skill and behaviour change plus numbers on who has changed, who has not and why
- Identify ways to measure increased safer sex practice, use of services and improved well-being



Maintaining quality

Reviews show wide variations in the quality of implementation.

- Standards
- ACORD developed an 'Implementing Stepping Stones. A Practical and Strategic Guide for Implementers, Planners and Policy Makers' in 2007. This aims to help users to ensure that essential SS components are there while remaining flexible
- Some guides have been developed for different groups - for example, sex workers, and new topics added.
- Monitoring and in-service mentoring and training are vital



Capacity-building

Potential of SS to change gender relations is strongly influenced by the capacities of the facilitator, particularly their level of gender understanding and commitment

- Facilitators need to experience the SS training themselves and change before they can facilitate others.
- Issues of supervision, support and retention
- Strengthening systems and organisational capacity

Stepping Stones website is a community of practice sharing experience, lessons and materials



Multi-level programming

- Evidence consistently shows that SS helps communities change individual, and social causes of vulnerability such as gender norms and violence.
- There are some good examples of the benefits of SS work with health services, schools and local authorities. These need to be expanded
- The importance of supporting economic empowerment, leadership and advocacy at local and policy level is increasing recognised and experience is being shared on how to address these areas



Comprehensive communication

- The Stepping Stones package gives clear and detailed guidance on facilitating experiential learning sessions with peer groups.
- There is a need to reinforce this with other communication methods - simple print and audio materials to help participants share their knowledge; radio/video programmes and local drama linked to key topics



Sustainability – need for follow up

SS process mobilises the community to train other communities, start income generating activities or challenge legal issues, for example.

- Ensure continued presence in community
- Build funding and support at planning stages
- Work with local partners who provide services and support and promote ongoing involvement
- Support for fundraising, development, advocacy demands and training and additional SS work



Mainstreaming

Institutionalising SS is a key way to expand and sustain the programme. This could be through the education or health system, in local government development structures or NGOs with wide coverage.

Gambia – SS was integrated into the rural development system and structures at national level. NGOs became part of multidisciplinary teams making development plans. SS made available to any village with reproductive health problems.



Developing local partnerships

- Leaders and local structures and services engaged
- Provision of complementary services
- Support the work of teachers and health staff in their own lives and their work and in outreach to the community
- Credibility and community support to the process
- Strengthening level of commitment to advocacy demands
- Sustainability – integration



Last Word

- SS and other programmes addressing gender are tried and tested models.
- The lessons learned over the period of SS scale up demonstrate many achievements but also show that there is great scope for strengthening the model to reach its full potential. This could lead to a ‘tipping point’ where the work and change is self-sustaining.
- Lack of investment is a major barrier to this strengthening and expansion.



Useful websites

Learn more about Stepping Stones

www.stepsstonesfeedback.org

www.salamandertrust.net

Publication and distribution

- Teaching-aids at Low Cost www.talcuk.org
- Plan International www.plan-international.org
- Int'national HIV/AIDS Alliance www.aidsalliance.org