

**Stepping Stones Evaluation Report
[2004]**



The Impact of Stepping Stones.

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1.0 Introduction:

Surveys have shown that most Zambians know the facts about HIV infection. They can recite how it is transmitted and know some ways to avoid it. But we realized that knowledge alone rarely persuades people to change their very private risk sexual behavior. People need certain skills to make important decisions about their sexual lives. We came to learn that people may stand on platforms and boast about condom distribution, and yet distribution of condoms does not in itself mean that the people are correctly using the product or even using them. It is against that background that we integrated Stepping Stones into our training programmes. We had to initiate processes that would eventually encourage and support behavior change. It became clearer in our work that it is almost impossible for individuals to change their personal risky behaviors unless their peers, family and society at large support that change. Stepping Stones training provides opportunities for participants to examine their values, and attitudes towards gender roles and build on their aspects of knowledge on sexual health and HIV/AIDS, and to develop skills of communicating with others. This is a value that makes Stepping Stones a unique strategy in behavior change process.

It is also important to realize that Stepping Stones is based on participatory learning approaches, since we know that people learn better when their knowledge is affirmed and are able to discuss and decide things on their own and for themselves.

The six stones in Stepping Stones address issues of stigma, behavior change, and denial and discrimination.

The sessions in the manual are arranged in a way of helping participants build steadily on their understanding of the issues.

2.1 First Stone:

Looking at our perceptions - The participants begin by looking at themselves and share what makes an ideal man or woman, young man or woman and discover the reality. Ideal images are listed and critically analyzed in relation to HIV and AIDS. This stone looks at how we are imprisoned by our own perception of things, and how we become self centred and selfish as we seek to identify ourselves.

2.2 Second Stone:

Looking at our Risk-taking and Prejudices - participants are asked to share risks that they have taken in life; how they now view these risks, and whether it was worth the risk. This stone helps participants to look at risky behavior and leads to better decision-making and appreciation of others and their feelings.

2.3 Third Stone:

Discussing HIV and Safer-Sex - participants are exposed to HIV and AIDS information and strategies that are available to prevent the spread of the virus. **Abstinence, Being faithful to the partner, Condom use, and Non-Penetrative sexual methods** are discussed in depth.

2.4 Fourth Stone:

Looking deeper into issues of alcohol, Traditions, Customs, and the role of money in HIV and AIDS and relationships - this part now looks in detail on the practices and beliefs of participants and how the practices affect their ability to protect themselves from HIV.

2.5 Fifth Stone:

Assertiveness training and ways of changing ourselves - now at this point participants are taken into communication skills. Assertiveness are discussed and practiced so that the full understanding is reached.



2.6. Sixth Stone:

Preparing for Death-this is the most interesting and sad stage of the training. Participants now look at death and how to prepare for this long unknown journey of **no return**.

The Stepping Stones strategy:

- Encourage social norms that deter the spread of HIV and lessen risky behavior.
- Encourage and ensure supportive environment to the youth, and HIV positive persons.
- Facilitate communities to find resources with which to care and support families, individuals affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- Create greater awareness of HIV/AIDS in churches and to commercial sex workers, to reduce the impact of HIV/ AIDS.

Stepping Stones address barriers that prevent people from dealing with sensitive issues that HIV/AIDS strategies demand. We realized that these barriers could make our task, as educators seem impossible. However, we did realize that these barriers and blocks in communication could be challenged through Stepping Stones. Amongst these blocks and barriers are:

- The perceptions, fears and prejudices expressed by inadequate knowledge and information on HIV/AIDS especially in the church community.
- Traditions, customs and cultural values that encourage the spread of HIV.
- Existence of judgmental attitudes in the community and the churches that have slowed the proper implementation of risk reduction strategies.
- Lack of parent-to-child dialogue on issues of sex, gender, sexuality.
- Difficulties of being open on issues of sex, feelings, and attitudes with peers, partners (wife and husband), opposite sex and colleagues.
- Religious taboos and beliefs.
- Stigmatization of HIV positive persons that has led to silence on coming out in the open. .

The questionnaires were distributed, collected and analyzed. During the analysis of the data the following questions were asked:

- ✓ Are there norms and practices of the community in relation to children and communication with parents?
- ✓ How do these norms and practices affect us and influence the HIV spread?
- ✓ How can these norms and practices be changed to help us prevent the spread of the virus?
- ✓ What concepts do the youths and adults hold about sex and HIV/AIDS?
- ✓ Do the youths and adults hold misconceptions that may put them at risk and fail to make informed choices based on correct information?

3.0 Objectives of the Evaluation:

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To find out what changes have taken place in participants after SS training.
- 2) To establish whether communication has improved in the couples that were trained.
- 3) To find out from the trainees if they have shared the SS with other people.
- 4) To use the evaluation as a tool for further intervention in the HIV fight.



3.1 Rationale of the Evaluation:

The rationale of the evaluation is to examine in context whether those trained in SS have been able to come of the societal box and cultural demands that might put them at risk. To examine other factors, apart from the commonly talked about male chauvinism, that influences the spread of the HIV-virus. It shall also be important for this evaluation to make a follow-up and sensitize the couples and the youth concerned.

4.0 Methodology:

4.1 Evaluation Design:

The instruments used in the evaluation were the questionnaires and that targeted those that were trained in Stepping Stones.

The method used is the analysis of the sample answers to the questionnaire and the comments made by the participants.

The method used in the evaluation is the **Structured Interview**. This was done in order to collect accurate information from the respondents. Nine (9) couples and fifteen (15) youths were interviewed. Each person was given a questionnaire to answer by ticking and filling in.

4.2 Sample (Respondents)

The respondents consisted of 9 couples, and 15 youths.

5.0 Data Presentation

The questionnaire below show the questions that those interviewed answered.

5.1 Tables [Questions and Responses]

Stepping Stones Impact Evaluation Form

Questionnaire:

Section A (Youths)

1. Should parents talk to their children about sexual issues?

Yes No

2. Before SS did you communicate with your parents about sexual issues?

Yes No

3. Do you have problems discussing sexual issues with your parents now?

Yes No

4. Have you discussed sexual issues with your parents in last 3 months?

Yes No



5. Should partner (boyfriends and girl friends) discuss sexual issues within their relationship? Yes No

6. If your boyfriend /girlfriend refused to have sex with you, how would you feel?

- I would not mind - 6
- I would feel disappointed - 3.
- I would respect that decision- 5
- I would end the relationship -1

After going through the respondents the answers were summarized in the bullets above.

7. What would your reaction be?

- I would respect her decision - 11
- I would want to know why - 3
- Find another partner- 1

After going through the respondents the answers were summarized in the bullets above.

8. Have you ever said 'No' to sex?

Yes

No

Probe on the reason for not saying No was that this was before SS training, but now they are able to say No and stand peer pressure.

9. Would you say Stepping Stones has helped you to have the skill to do so?

Yes

No

10. If No to question 9, what has helped you to have this skill?

No response was given.

11. How long have you remained on abstinence?

- For four years- 3
- Since the SS training-6
- Two years.- 4
- From Birth- 3

12. Do you have problems discussing sexual problems with your boyfriend?

Yes

No

13. Do you have problems discussing sexual problems with your Girlfriend?

Yes

No

14. Do you find it easy to say No to sexual demands of your Girlfriend or Boyfriend?



Yes No

15. Do you have problems discussing sexual problems with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Yes No

16. Do you think that having sexual intercourse with your girlfriend or boyfriend is a Sign of showing love?

Yes No

17 Sexual abuses should be reported to police and parents.

Police Both Parent None

18. Boy or girlfriend has a right to say No to sexual intercourse demands.

Yes No

19. Do you find it easy to state your opinion or feelings to your girl or boyfriend?

Yes No

20. Should men only have sex with the woman if she wants to have sex?

Yes No

21. Should a woman always accept sexual demands from a partner?

Yes No

22. The last time you had sexual intercourse was the condom used?

Yes No

23. Now if you are to have sexual intercourse, what would you do?

a) Use a condom b) Use no condom

c) No need to have sex.

24. What is the relationship with the person you had sexual intercourse with?

1. Boyfriend 2. Girlfriend stranger



25. What has changed in your life after undergoing SS training?

- *The perception of things in life.*
- *I have been empowered to make right decision.*
- *My listening skills have improved greatly.*
- *I am non-judgmental now.*
- *Respect other people.*
- *My communication skill has improved.*
- *I have learned to appreciate the weaknesses of the opposite sex.*
- *General response to daily challenges has improved*
- *The relationship with parents has improved.*

Section B (Adults)

1. Should parents talk to their children about sexual issues?

Yes No

2. Do you have problems discussing sexual issues with your children?

Yes No

3. Have you discussed sexual issues with your children in last 3 months?

Yes No

4. Have you had sexual intercourse outside marriage?

Yes No

5. If yes to the above question, did you use a condom?

Yes No

6. What is the relationship with the person you had sexual intercourse with?

a) Commercial sex worker

b) Man friend

c) Woman friend.

7. The last time you had sexual intercourse with another person was the condom used?

Yes No

8. Do you work on your monthly budget with your husband?

Yes No



9. Do you work on your monthly budget with your wife?

Yes No

10. How many times do you and your husband communication between yourselves?

30 minutes/day 1hour/day As often as need arises
1time/week

11. Has the communication improved since the SS training?

Yes No

12.. Does your husband come back early after work?

Yes No

13. Has your sexual relationship improved?

Yes No

14. If Yes to the above question state what has improved.

- General Sexual enjoyment
- Open communication during and after sex
- Foreplay in practice now
- Helping with washing clothes
- Open and free discussion with wife and children
- Mutual understanding
- Able to wait for each other during sexual intercourse
- Free with each other
- *"After the workshop I cut the relationship I had outside marriage and this has brought happiness in our marriage", male participant.*
- *"He is now satisfying me sexually", female participant.*
- *"He has patience now and waits for me to reach my orgasm", female participant.*
- *"She is able to initiate sex now and participates actively and communicates during sex intercourse", male participant.*

15. Who initiated sex (Before the workshop)?

Wife Husband

16. Who initiates sex now (After the workshop?)

Wife Husband Both

17. How many sexual partners did you have before the workshop?

Two Three or more One



None

18. How many people have you shared SS and HIV/AIDS messages with since your training?

More than 2 More than 5 More than 10

More than 15 but less than 20

19. Should a wife refuse her husband's demand for sexual intercourse?

Yes No

20. Before SS did you communicate with your children about sexual issues?

Yes No

21. Do you have problems discussing sexual issues with your young people at home now?

Yes No

22. Have you discussed sexual issues with your children in the last 3 months?

Yes No

23. Should partners discuss sexual issues within their

Relationship? Yes No

24. If your husband/wife refused to sex with you, how would you feel?

1) I would respect her opinion

2) I would respect his opinion

3) I would feel bad

4) I would find sex from somewhere else

5) I would report her to Bana chimbusa (Traditional marriage counselors)

6) I would report her to Bashi chimbusa (Traditional marriage counselors)



25. Do men have sole right over his wife in sexual intercourse matters?

Yes

5

No

11

26. What would you say about SS?

- a) *Very good and educative.*
- b) *Is a real behavior change tool*
- c) *It deals with the realities of life*
- d) *It mends marriages*
- e) *It provides valuable information on HIV/AIDS.*
- f) *It breaks silence on HIV/AIDS and other issues of life.*
- g) *“All married people and those intending to marry should under go the Stepping Stones training”, male participant*
- h) *“Stepping Stones has really helped me very much to communicate freely with my husband and my children on HIV/AIDS and sexuality”, female participant.*

5.2 Data Analysis:

5.2.1 Youths.

Parent Relationship.

100% respondents stated that parents should talk to their children on sexual issues. This showed the increased desire in the youths wanting parents talk to them on sexual issues.

“There are questions that I had but was shy and afraid to talk to my father but now I have strength to ask. Thanks to SS”, said a female youth.

67% said that before Stepping Stones training they were unable to talk to their parents on sexual issues. They had found it difficult to initiate talks on sexual matters but after Stepping Stones training 80% respondents said they now have confidence to discuss with their parents on sexuality.

80% of the respondents stated that they have had sexual discussions with their parents in the last 3 months. This is a real achievement given the cultural barriers that exist between parents and children.

Boy /Girl Relationship.

93% of the respondents said it was important to discuss sexuality and sexual issues within relationships.

73% said that they would respect the decisions of their partner if s/he said ‘No’ to sexual intercourse demands.

This acceptance by the boys especially to respect the girl’s decision on sexual issues is another achievement knowing the cultural background that places a man at the centre of decision-making in sex and normal relationships.

100% respondents said that they are able to say ‘No’ to sex after Stepping Stones training (20% who had said that they were unable to say ‘No’ to sex after probing clarified that they had meant the time before SS training) They said that they are now able to deal with peer pressure.

Stepping Stones Skill.

87% respondents said Stepping Stones has helped them to be assertive and were responsible for the strength in them to respond decisively to sexual demands.



“Stepping Stones has helped me to meet the daily challenges and I am able to recognize the risk behavior”, said one female youth.

Abstinence.

The questionnaire wanted to establish if among the trained youth there were those practicing abstinence. 40% of the respondents said that they practicing abstinence after the Stepping Stones training and have chosen to be on the path of abstinence.

27% said that they have been on abstinence for the past four (4) years, and 20% for the past two (2) years.

20% said they had been on abstinence from birth and that SS has strengthened them further.

Sexual Abuses.

Looking the number of reported cases of child abuse we wanted to know what the youths thought about the child abuse.

73% of the respondents stated that sexual abuses should be reported to both parents and police. This attitude will lead to more abuses being reported to the law enforcement agencies.

6% said child abuses should be reported to police only.

Condom Use.

Knowing that some youths may choose the path of abstinence and others may not, the questionnaire wanted to know what the youth would do when faced with the someone wanting to have sexual intercourse.

93% of the respondents said that they would insist on though the same 93% stated that there was no need place to have sex.

The desire to practice abstinence among youth is result of the SS intervention.

7% of the respondents said they allow unprotected intercourse.

20% of the respondents stated that they have had either their boy or girl friends. This also is encouraging knowing that there exist some misconception that a sign of love between youths is to have sex.

“It is not worth the risk for me to have unprotected sex, in face abstinence is the best for me”, said one male youth.

situation of
condom use,
in the first
positive
sexual
sex with

What Has Changed After Stepping Stones Training

- *The perception of things in life.*
- *Improved decision-making process.*
- *Improved Listening Skills*
- *Become non-judgmental now.*
- *Respect opinions and decisions of girls.*
- *Respect opinions and decisions of boys*
- *Improved communication skill.*
- *Appreciation weaknesses of the opposite sex.*
- *General response to daily challenges has improved*
- *The relationship with parents has improved.*

5.2.2 Adults.

Parent-Child Relationship.

100% respondents said that parents should talk to their children on sexual issues.



82% of the respondents said they had no problem after SS to talk to their children on sexual issues. This is a great achievement in a society that believes that it is taboo to talk on issues with children.

94% of the respondents said that before Stepping Stones training they had problems or difficulties discussing sexual issues with their children but now they have no problem and difficult in doing that.

Fidelity / Faithfulness.

88% respondents said they are faithful to their spouses.

12% said they have had sexual intercourse outside marriage

“After the workshop I cut the relationship I had outside marriage and this has brought happiness in our marriage”, male participant.

Money.

75% of the female respondents stated that they are now working on the monthly budgets with their husbands. This openness on money in the trained couples is a positive change in a community where withholding the salary from a wife is thought manly.

90% male respondents said they have disclosed their salaries to their wives and work on the monthly budgets with their wives.

10% of the respondents said they did not work on the monthly budget with their wives though they have disclosed their salaries to them

Communication.

100% respondents said partners should openly discuss sexual issues and share discomforts and comforts of sex.

85% of the respondents stated that there is communication among them as often as need arises.

94% said there has been great improvement in communication in their marriages since the Stepping stones training.

“He is now satisfying me sexually”, female participant

“He has patience now and waits for me to reach my orgasm”, female participant

Sexual Relationship.

94% of the respondents said that sexual relationships have improved since the SS training.

94% female participants said their husbands initiated sex before the SS training.

71% said that a wife has the right to say ‘No’ to sexual demands of her husband.

35% of the respondents said they extra-marital affairs before Stepping Stones.



88% male respondents said they would respect the decision of their spouse in refusing sex in marriage.
100% female respondents said they would respect their husbands' decision in refusing sex in marriage.
12% said they would find sexual pleasure out side marriage.
12% of the male respondents said they would report their wives to Bana Cimbusa (female traditional marriage counselors).
100% female respondents said they would not report their husbands to Bashi Cimbusa (male traditional marriage counselor)

“She is able to initiate sex now and participates actively and communicates during sex intercourse”, male participant.

Sharing of Stepping Stones.

100% respondents said they have shared with someone the Stepping Stone principles on Communication, Relationship, and Gender and HIV/AIDS prevention skills.

What would you say about Stepping Stones?

The respondents were asked to comment on SS and they see the package

- i) *Very good and educative.*
- j) *Is a real behavior change tool*
- k) *It deals with the realities of life*
- l) *It mends marriages*
- m) *It provides valuable information on HIV/AIDS.*
- n) *It breaks silence on HIV/AIDS and other issues of life.*
- o) *It is the best tool to fight Stigma, Silence, Denial, and Discrimination*
- p) *It reaches the inner person and brings to the surface the evil past that we carry in life.*
- q) *It real journey to the self.*

“All married people and those intending to marry should under go the Stepping Stones training. It can save a lot of marital problems that we face in marriage because it has helped my marriage”, male participant



5.2.3 Conclusion.

The evaluation has revealed norms and practices of the respondents in relation to behavior and relationship skills which are important in HIV/AIDS fight. These practices which the respondents could not have fully put in practice if they had not undergone the Stepping Stones training. The evaluation has shown effective communication between parents and youth. It has further shown that it possible for people to change if they are exposed to information.

The evaluation has also revealed that Stepping Stones has the power to influence behavior change and is able to with misconceptions that girls and boys have on sex. The notion going through the minds of the girls and boys that having sexual intercourse is show of love can easily be dealt with and bring about reduction in casual sex.

The risk of boys and girls engaging in sex is so great that if nothing is done we should be ready to prepare graves of the youths who will die from sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

Although both adults and youths have knowledge on HIV/AIDS, we must realize that knowledge alone does not really persuade people to change their very private sexual behavior. We need to address this problem with a tool that brings about an effective change in behavior; this is **Stepping Stones**.

We also need parent-to-child dialogue on issues of sex, gender, and sexuality in order to prevent loss of life. The youths need to be informed so as make informed choices that is based on correct information.

The evaluation has also shown the improvement in communication between husbands and wives. This improved communication and freedom of expression that SS has introduced in marriages is positive aspect in the fight of HIV spread.

We must remember that behavior change is key in HIV prevention and these bad cultural practices and bad morals can impact negatively on their peers. It is of primal importance to address the **‘bad’ seeds in the community** if we are to halt the spread of the HIV.

The following has come out of the evaluation as the impact of Stepping Stones.

- General Sexual enjoyment
- Open communication during and after sex
- Foreplay in practice now
- Helping with washing clothes
- Open and free discussion with wife and children
- Mutual understanding
- Able to wait for each other during sexual intercourse
- Free with each other

“After the workshop I cut the relationship I had outside marriage and this has brought happiness in our marriage”, male participant.

“He is now satisfying me sexually”, female participant.

“He has patience now and waits for me to reach my orgasm”, female participant.

“She is able to initiate sex now and participates actively and communicates during sex intercourse”, male participant.

