

## *Stepping Stones & Stepping Stones Plus*

A background to the theory and the spread of the *Stepping Stones* training manual on gender, generation, HIV, communication and relationship skills

Alice Welbourn PhD  
Salamander Trust

Dar es Salaam  
March 2016



*Stepping Stones & Stepping Stones Plus* and its new daughter programme, *Stepping Stones with Children*, are both now published by Practical Action Publishing - <http://tinyurl.com/PAPStStwC>

## What is *Stepping Stones*?

A Training programme on HIV & AIDS, communication and relationship skills and community mobilization

Designed to enable participants to define, analyse, articulate and *realise* their visions in relation to various factors which influence their sexual and reproductive health, HIV status, *gender* and *inter-generational* relations and rights



Here is a brief introduction to the *Stepping Stones* methodology

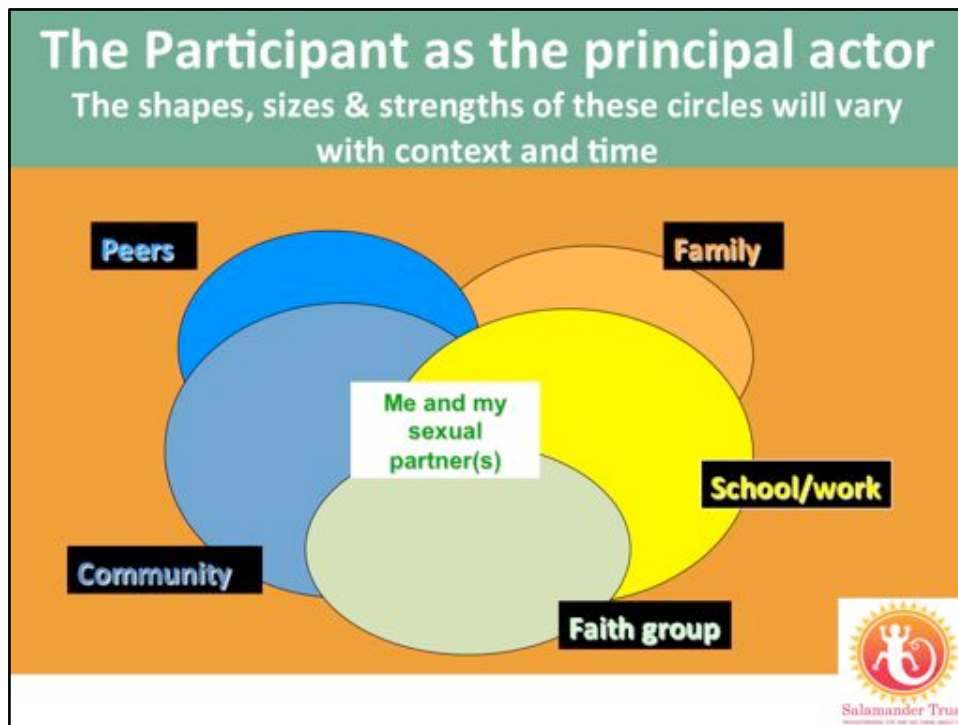
## What is *Stepping Stones*.... contd?

Community-based programme (approach that uses workshops and exercises to engage members of a community).

Package made of manual + DVD

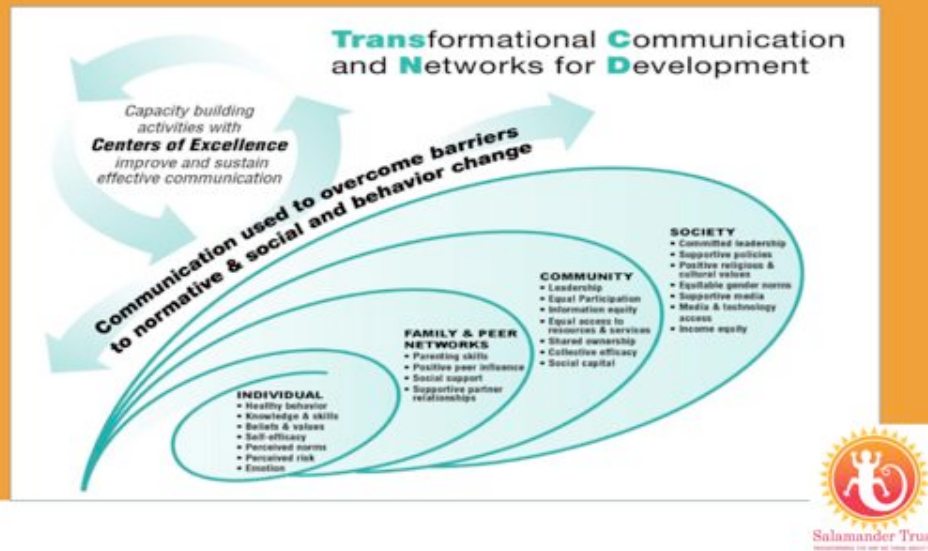
First workshop in Uganda in 1994 – manual  
1995 : longest running programme of its kind

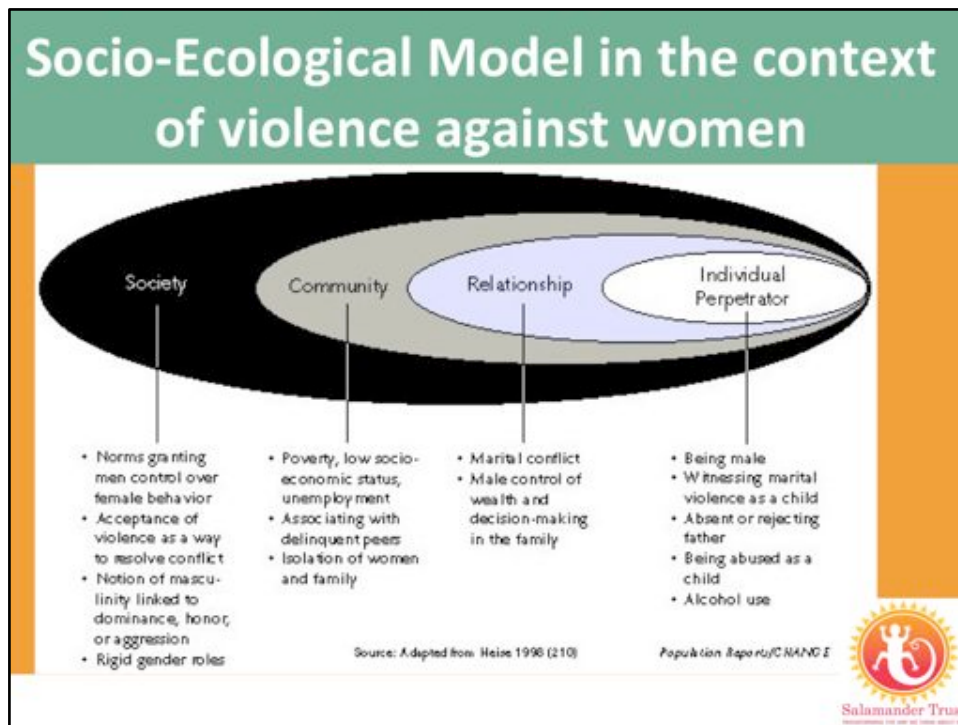




This diagram illustrates some of the multiple identities that we can all have as individuals

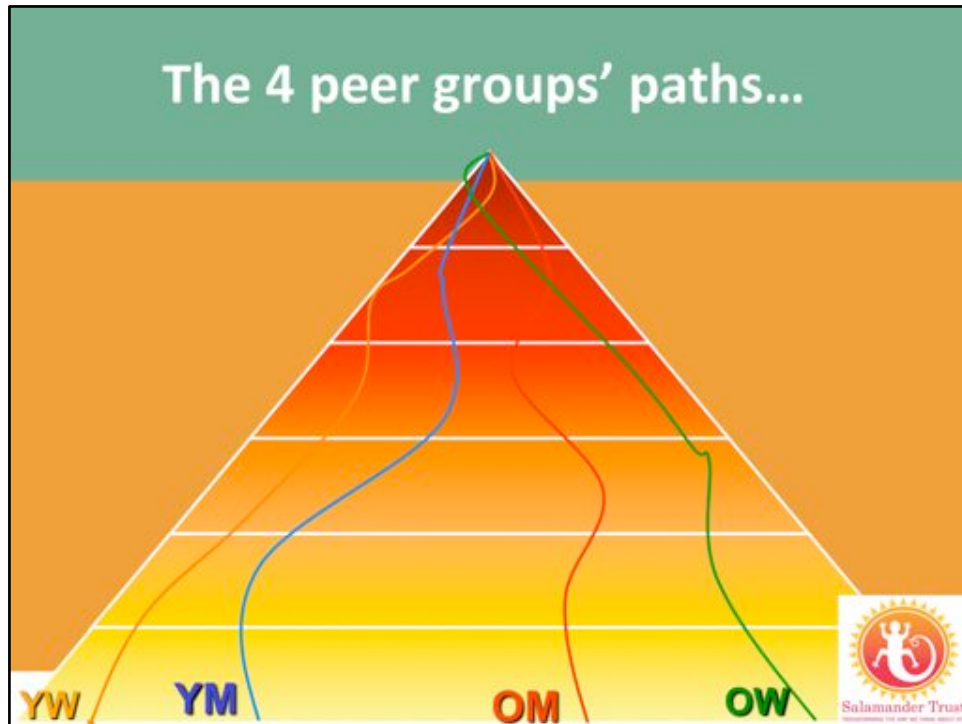
## Stepping Stones is based on the Socio-Ecological Model of behavioural change



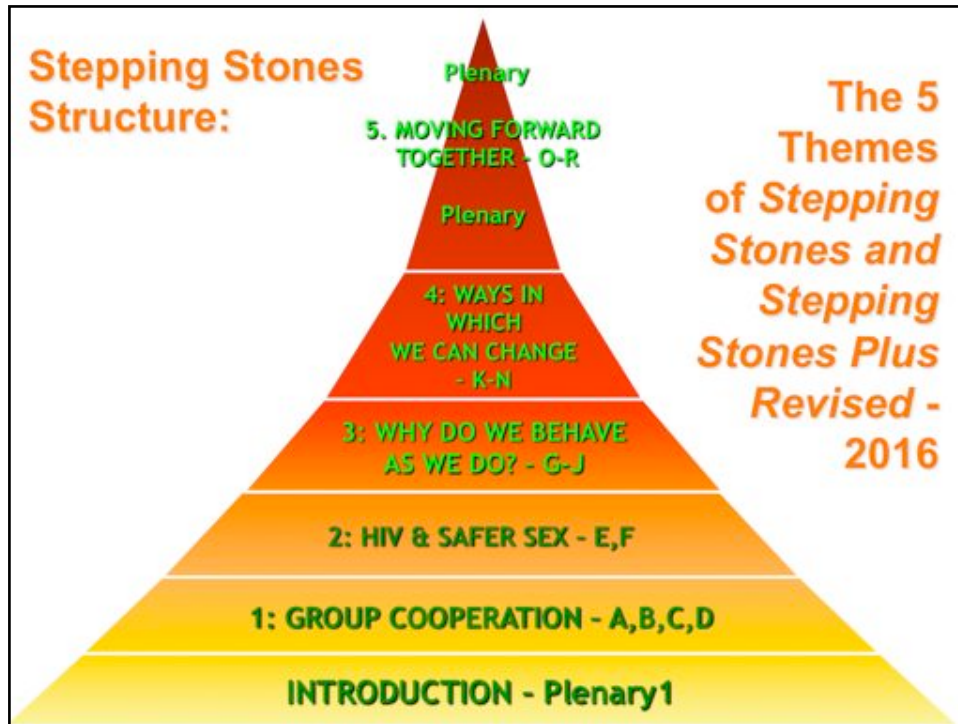


Here is another version of this same model. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is recognised both as increasing women’s vulnerability to acquiring HIV: and women when diagnosed with HIV can face increased IPV.

*Stepping Stones* is recognised to reduce IPV in communities.



There is no monopoly on the “right” way up a mountain. This image shows how the four peer groups each have their own way up and that these different ways need to be mutually respected by us all.



Some people think Stepping Stones has no structure. That is incorrect. There is a clear progressive structure, like a staircase, or like climbing a mountain. There are 5 themes: progression on purpose (from getting to know each other and working together to talking about sensitive subjects, addressing one's own behaviour and reflecting on ways to change). Stepping Stones was breaking barriers because of its development of critical literacy & routes to address gender norms + its framework for analysis of what is going on in our lives: it is developing participants' critical literacy skills ie the ability to step outside, reflect on and evaluate their own and others' lives & on power relationships between themselves and others around them. [Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. Accordingly, songs, novels, conversations, pictures, movies, etc. are all considered texts.]



## Stepping Stones Foundation Stones...

### ***Involvement of all stakeholders:***

- *Four-peer group work and discussions, gender- and age-based – and emphasis on these relationships*

### ***Holistic response to HIV:***

- Focus on *rights-based* sexual and reproductive health & gender issues – with *multiple positive outcomes*
- All can address their *own* most pressing issues
- *Ownership* of the process by the community

### ***Experiential learning structure:***

- Interactive discussions, role plays, diagrams
- Fission and fusion approach
- Around *50 hours* contact time

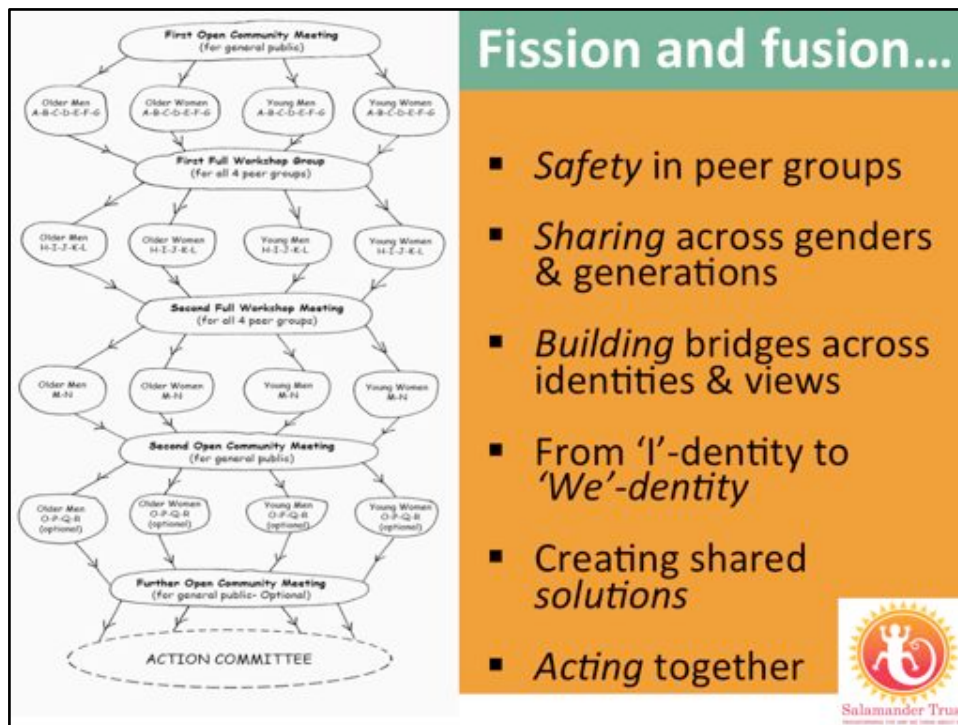
### ***Facilitators as guides not teachers***



Here are some key 'foundation stones' of the *Stepping Stones* approach. They are not unique to *Stepping Stones* but if they are not present without strong reasons (eg availability of only two peer groups) then the programme is not *Stepping Stones*.

The approach of self-reflective experiential learning is key. This is why some people think there is no structure. There *is* a structure, but it is not spelt out explicitly. Instead, participants have to work out what they are learning far more for themselves. This process of deep reflection connects to much deeper processes of learning and change within us than more traditional IEC materials.

**The core programme is designed to take place over 18 sessions with about 50 hours contact time. There are 5 additional optional sessions.**



## Fission and fusion...

- *Safety* in peer groups
- *Sharing* across genders & generations
- *Building* bridges across identities & views
- From 'I'-dentity to 'We'-dentity
- Creating shared *solutions*
- *Acting* together

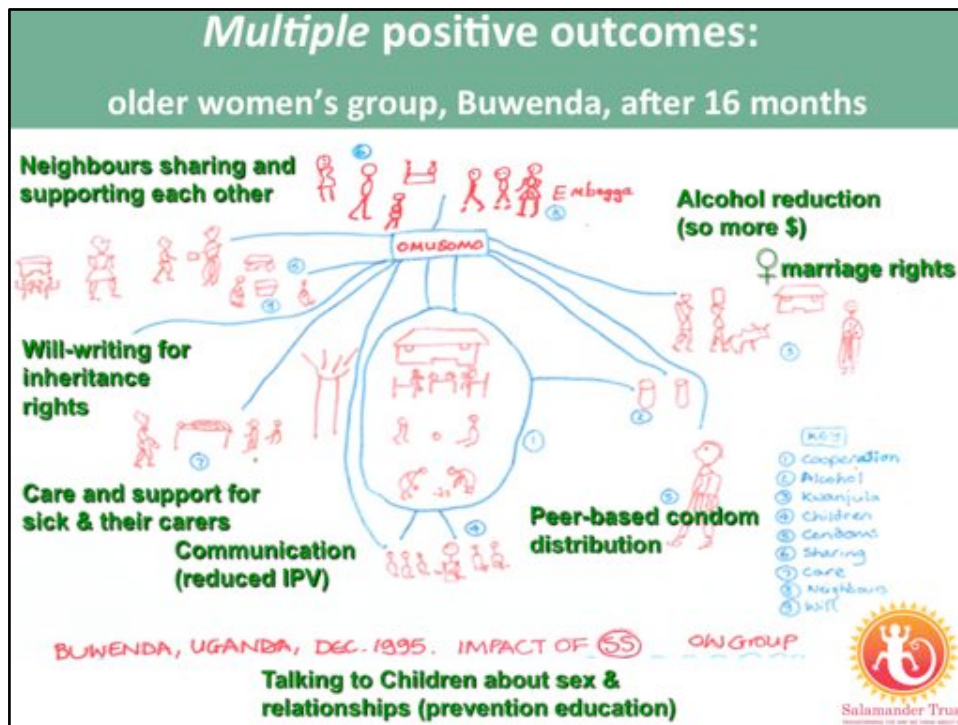


The process of peer groups working in safe separate parallel peer groups and then coming together to share and compare what they have learnt every few sessions is what we call “fission and fusion”. Here is an organogram of the whole workshop process. In this way, bridges are slowly and carefully built across the community’s genders and generations.

**Again, please note, the core programme is designed to take place over 18 sessions with about 50 hours contact time. There are 5 additional optional sessions.**



Through this link, you can view several films about *Stepping Stones* and its use in different contexts in Uganda and Malawi, including what happened in the original community where *Stepping Stones* was implemented, 12 years later. The Tanzanian documentary is about our new *Stepping Stones with Children* programme.



This is a drawing done by women from the older women's peer group 16 months after the original training workshop. The drawings are all theirs. The key was written in just afterwards. The green printed writing highlights all the different issues that the women had mentioned. This shows the multiple positive outcomes that the women identified in this drawing, in response to the basic question: "what has changed for you in this community since the *Stepping Stones* workshop?"

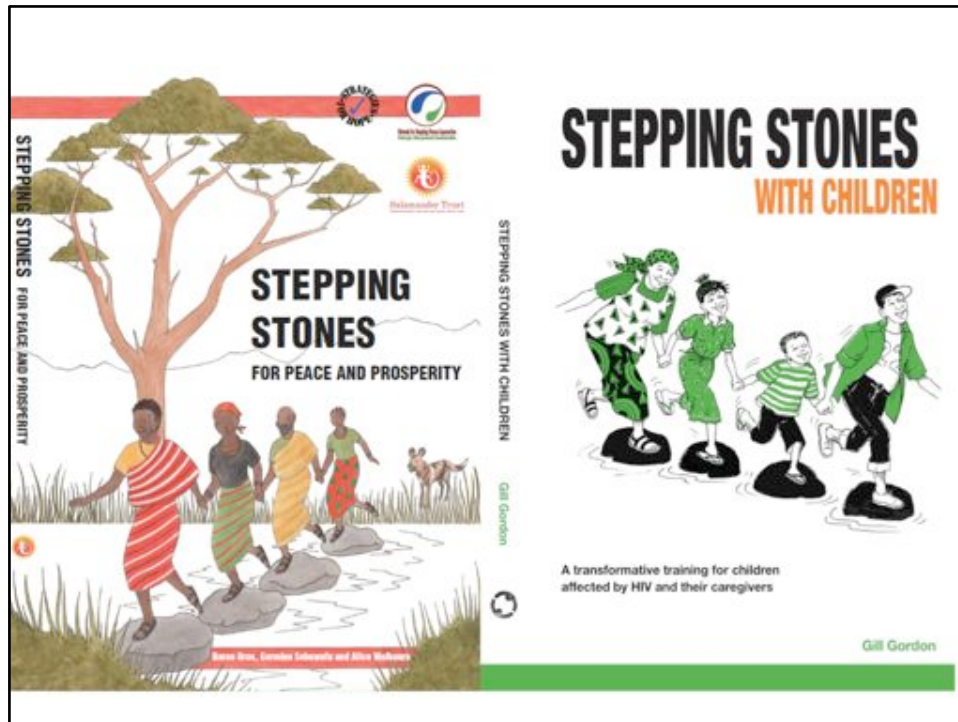


Some of the covers of the translations of the original manual... If you want to translate or adapt *Stepping Stones* please contact us first for guidelines and support on how to do this properly.



The programme has since gone global to over 100 countries. Adapted and translated into at least 30 languages, it reduced intimate partner violence (or IPV) in an RCT conducted by the South African Medical Research Council. The What Works for Women website grades it as Gray II evidence level for effectiveness, both in addressing violence against women and transforming gender norms. Women in countries including Malawi, India (where it has also ended child marriage in communities where it's been used) and the Gambia. have *themselves* reported IPV reduction, in response to being asked "what has changed for you?".

Jewkes et al 2008 ***Impact of Stepping Stones on incidence of HIV and HSV-2 and sexual behaviour in rural South Africa: cluster randomised controlled trial*** BMJ 2008; 337 <http://www.bmj.com/content/337/bmj.a506>  
<http://www.whatworksforwomen.org/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=%22Stepping+Stones%22>  
<http://pag.aids2014.org/flash.aspx?pid=1806>  
 (eg COWLHA/Salamander Trust 2013; Bradley et al 2011, Paine et al 2002).



Other recent adaptations by Salamander Trust: a) for pastoralists in relation to sexual violence in fragile communities. Published by Salamander Trust and Strategies for Hope, in partnership with Network for Stepping Stones Approaches, Uganda.  
 b) *Stepping Stones with Children and their Caregivers* for 5-8s, 9-14s and their caregivers. Published by Practical Action Publishing. Created in partnership with PASADA, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

## With whom has Stepping Stones been used?

Many different contexts, including:

- People with disabilities (eg India)
- Pastors and Imams and their congregations (Kenya, Gambia)
- School pupils and teachers (many countries)
- NGO staff (eg Tanzania)
- People living with HIV and AIDS (eg Zimbabwe, Namibia)
- National and constituency AIDS Control Councils (Gambia..)
- Girls and boys out of school (many countries)
- Women's rights groups (many countries)
- Health staff (Mumbai)
- Drug using communities (Myanmar)
- People in prison (Morocco, India)
- University staff and students (Namibia)



We welcome adaptations of this programme, provided you contact us for guidelines and support and provided the basic foundation stones highlighted here are fully observed.



## Evaluations

### Many different contexts, including:

- Gambia evaluation AJAR
- A review of evaluations up until 2006 (T. Wallace)
- RCT South Africa (Jewkes et al, BMJ)
- Regional evaluations (C. America, Fiji)
- ACORD: Uganda, Tanzania, Angola
- COWLHA Malawi evaluation



For more information about evaluations of the programme, see the [www.steppingstonesfeedback.org](http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org) website

Thankyou!

The *Stepping Stones* training programme is a project of Salamander Trust

*Stepping Stones & Stepping Stones Plus* is now published by Practical Action Publishing



For more information see the [www.steppingstonesfeedback.org](http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org) website.

For more information about *Stepping Stones with Children*, also published by Practical Action Publishing, see our website and <http://tinyurl.com/PAPStStwC>