

Newsletter July 09 - Issue 1

The Stepping Stones training packaging on gender, HIV, communication and relationship skills

STEPPING STONES NEWSLETTER



No.1

Welcome!



Dear Friends of Stepping Stones

Greetings from a sunny London!

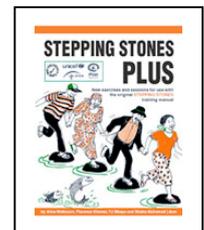
This is Newsletter No. 1 from the Stepping Stones Feedback Team. By clicking on the underlined web links, you will be able to access the relevant documents.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and that you find it useful - any comment/feedback is very welcome.

We're still experiencing problems with our website. Thank you for your patience.

Stepping Stones updates:

Website: Please visit our website (www.steppingstonesfeedback.org) which was redeveloped in January 2009. We're frequently adding new documents to the 'Resources' section. You can download them all. Some of you may have noticed problems with the website or even received virus alerts. The website was subject to a hacker attack but we've now cleaned it and it should all be working again properly in the next month - there should be no effect on your computers. Because of the attack, we're still fixing some formatting and this should all be done soon. If you have any problem with the site or with downloading a document, please contact me directly. We are very sorry for any problems that this attack may have caused you.



Forum: The repair of the website has pushed back the creation of the online user forum. We also intend to get this up and running by mid-August. We will let you know when it's up - it should be a great place to exchange ideas and see what others are doing.

Stepping Stones Plus: This is our latest manual in the Stepping Stones series, addressing broader issues around sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also contains new exercises, for example on male circumcision. If you have already started using it, please send us some feedback on how you're getting on. If you would like to order it, please contact our partner Strategies for Hope at: www.stratshope.org

"Flies do not enter a closed mouth "

Mexican saying meaning a person who does not judge will not get judged

Stepping Stones key document:

We would like to remind you that the document 'Implementing Stepping Stones' by Angela Hadjipateras from Acord, is available for download on our website. This is a very useful document if you are about to start the programme. It will provide you with lots of practical tips for running a successful programme, such as making sure that all 4 separate peer groups (young and old, male and female) also meet together two or three times during the workshop, to share their work, and to improve the impact of the whole programme.



Stepping Stones workshop in Angola

Stepping Stones translations:

Stepping Stones is available in French, Bengali, Swahili and several other languages Please see <http://www.stratshope.org/t-languages.htm> for further details and to order your copies.

If you want to obtain Stepping Stones in Spanish (known as Paso a Paso) you can download this from the Plan Las Americas site, at the bottom of the resources page (<http://www.plan-international.org/wherewework/americanas/publicaciones/>).

Users are adapting and translating Stepping Stones into new languages as needed. So do get in touch with us if you are thinking of translating it - it may already be in the language you need, or your translation may be of use to others in future.

In India, there has also been a translation by ActionAid and partners into Braille.

'Caminhando de Mãos Dadas' - the Portuguese edition of the 'Stepping Stones' training manual - has recently been reprinted, in collaboration with ActionAid Mozambique.

A second edition of the Pacific Stepping Stones manual (2008) has recently been printed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands. Draft versions in two Pacific Island languages: I-Kiribati (the language of Kiribati) and in Bislama (the language of Vanuatu) are also being written, and a Fijian version is being explored.

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“The training is like cultivating a field. You look after it well and it will always be there for future generations to draw benefit from here.”



Infant male circumcision exercise from Stepping Stones PLUS

Congolese humour

Please share your jokes with us!

Knock Knock
 Who's there !
 Congo !
 Congo who?
 Congo on meeting like this !

Knock Knock
 Who's there !
 Congo !
 Congo who?
 Congo into the woods - it's dangerous !

Knock Knock
 Who's there !
 Congo !
 Congo who?
 Congo out, I'm grounded !

UNFPA pilot program of Stepping Stones in Kyrgyzstan:

Between 2002 and 2007, UNFPA with WHO, UNICEF, and ILO-STEP, supported the Stronger Voices for Reproductive Health project in Kyrgyzstan.

“Stepping Stones training, 16-22 April 2005”, by Peter Hall (Extract):

Despite the “tulip” revolution, ActionAid, London and India, were able to facilitate a Stepping Stones training programme in Bishkek. WHO provided funding for the travel. Funding for the workshop was provided by the Stronger Voices project and the Swiss Red Cross.

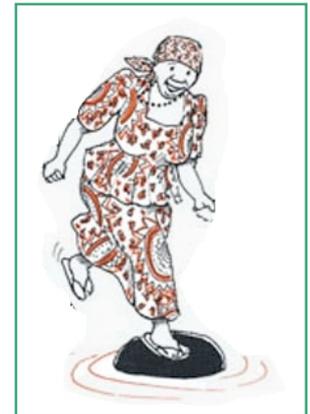
There were some 30 participants, 20 women and 10 men, representing trainers and other relevant participants from the Stronger Voices project, the DfID Hygiene and Sanitation Project and the Swiss Red Cross project. The workshop was a great success and both the participants and the sponsors recognized the importance of the approach to build the communication and relationship skills necessary at the community level to address issues around sexual and reproductive health.

Trainers from various regions of the country adapted the manual to local realities. Stepping Stones is now available in Russian and Kyrgyz. The greater influence of Islam in the South, will also require translation of the manual into the Uzbek language. Stepping Stones was approved by the Book Chamber of the Kyrgyz Republic and is in the process of approval by the Ministry of Health.

Participating communities developed strong focus and increased dialogue on the prevention of HIV and AIDS transmission, domestic violence and alcohol and other drugs use. All of these are central health problems in Kyrgyzstan. Priority is now given to sexual and reproductive health issues as these were taboo topics during the Soviet era.

The involvement of key leaders of the Muslim community has been successful in mitigating initial opposition of village religious leaders. It also enabled the creation of materials about the role of Islam in family planning and in health more generally.

Extract from the “Stronger Voices” project report in Kyrgyzstan (29th April 2008).



*all drawings are by
Petra Röhr-Rouendaal*

Additional resources

In February 2009, the Indonesian magazine “Tempo” reported on the use of **Stepping Stones in the province of Papua** by Project Concern International and partners (<http://www.stratshope.org/t-tempo.htm>).

ActionAid International Malawi has developed “**Tiwoloke**” which is Stepping Stones adapted for the work place. The impact it has had on teachers in Malawi and beyond can be found at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Case-Studies/2007/Teachers-stepping-stones-to-behavioural-change-in-Malawi/>

Monitoring & Evaluation

We are currently looking at the possibility of conducting a multi-country evaluation of Stepping Stones as the manual is used in more than 100 countries across Africa, South and South East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and E Europe also. We want to better understand how it's used and what outcomes are being achieved. Alice Welbourn (author of Stepping Stones) is speaking with potential partners. We're going to focus - initially at least - on the work of some international NGOs but the results should be available to everyone.

A session on monitoring Paso a Paso, the Spanish version of Stepping Stones, using “outcome planning” will be held in San Salvador, El Salvador from 17th until 19th August. We will report on this session in our next newsletter. If there are any particular questions you would like to ask our Latin American users, please email us!

The Rio Global Symposium focused on Men and gender equality in April 2009. Please see the following article: *GLOBAL: Real men don't cry – or do they?* <http://www.plusnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=83991>

HIV-related forthcoming international events can be found on Drum Beat the Communication Initiative Network: <http://www.comminet.com/en/classifieds/events>

“Fear does not travel by donkey”
Mexican saying meaning that fear does not move slowly.

Working with Men and Condoms: Learning from the Gambia



We're looking for more stories, please send them in!

Experience by Momodou Conteh, World View the Gambia Project Coordinator

As we all know, condom use forms a key part of an effective HIV response - and yet *negotiating* condom use and having it accepted by community members is one of our greatest challenges, wherever we live in the world.

Recently Momodou Conteh of Worldview The Gambia told us about his inspiring approach to this issue during his many years of working with Stepping Stones there. The Gambia is a small country in West Africa, where over 99% of the population is Islamic. Stepping Stones was introduced there in the mid 1990s and was adapted by Worldview, Gambia Family Planning Association (GFPA) Trust for Rural Development (TARUD), the Medical Research Council, Action Aid The Gambia and others.

Conteh told us how the team realised that if they went into a community and just started trying to promote condom use, that community members might fear that this was a plot to stop them having children and condom use is belief to promote "promiscuity" amongst women. In this society as in so many others around the world, children are very much loved and welcomed. Moreover, in a rural agricultural context where there is little state pension or other provision, it is important for parents to have several children, so that they can provide for parents as they grow old. So reducing the numbers of children people have, whether through condom use or other means, is a very sensitive issue.

So Conteh and his colleagues instead decided to explore with the men the presence of STIs in their communities. Once they had established that STIs are present, they asked the men whether they knew that some of these STIs can damage their fertility. On hearing this, the men were most concerned and asked how these damaging STIs could be avoided. Conteh and his colleagues then introduced the idea of condom use as a fertility *protection* strategy, thereby enabling men (and women) to continue to have children if they wanted.

Nonetheless, there were still some queries regarding condom use from some religious leaders. Conteh told us also how these leaders were supported to overcome their concerns and, in turn to become condom champions.

Conteh decided to invite each religious leader in turn to sit with him to have a private discussion about their concerns and later organised a religious scholars training where their concerns were ironed out collectively and a consensus reached, which they agreed to have filmed. During this discussion, they were able to voice their concerns regarding condom use with reference to the Quran. Since Conteh and his team of resource persons knows the Quran well, they were able to discuss other parts of the Quran with them also, as well as the views of other Islamic leaders on condoms from around the world. Thus he was able to reassure them that the advantages of condom use far outweigh any disadvantages. Once these leaders were convinced, and with their permission, Conteh then went back to the communities where each of these leaders worked and presented the film to the community elders, with the religious leader present. The elders in each community were then able to hear all the arguments for and against, which Conteh had carefully recorded, and were able then also to ask direct questions to the imam himself, in order to reassure themselves that he was indeed now supporting the promotion and use of condoms in their community.

In this innovative way, Conteh and his team were able to bridge the understandable gaps between tradition and necessary change. Imams themselves became champions of condom use as this particular stepping stone became firmly embedded in their community.



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Strategies for Hope publishes Stepping Stones...

TALC distributes Stepping Stones

Salamander Trust keeps you in touch with other Stepping Stones users

Thank you to Packard, UNESCO CAFOD and Plan International for their generous support.