

Stepping Stones with Children



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A transformative training for children aged 5-14 affected by HIV and their caregivers

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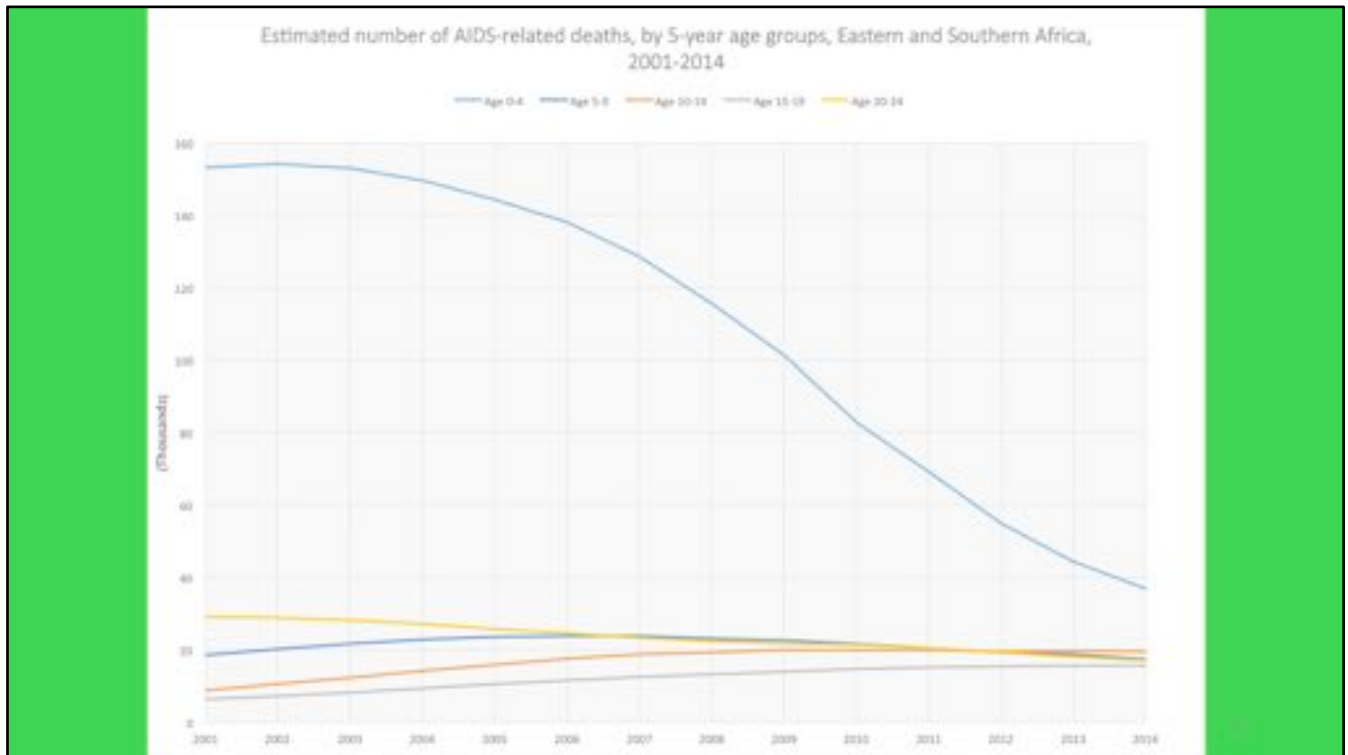
Designed for use WITH children aged 5-14 years directly affected by HIV and their care givers

WHY STEPPING STONES WITH CHILDREN?

- Answers caregivers' question "How do we talk to our children?"
- Training is not 'for' but **WITH** children.
- It *involves* children in **open dialogue** together and with their caregivers on sensitive issues.
For example, HIV disclosure, death, sexuality, reproductive health, gender, power, discipline and violence among others

WHY: HIV & AIDS among children aged 5-14 years

- **Most children** are becoming adolescents without life-saving education, testing, care, or treatment
- Children aged **5-9 and 10-14 years** are particularly left out and have higher rates of death from AIDS than 15-19 year olds (UNICEF 2015)



SOURCE: UNICEF https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2015-Children-Adolescents-and-AIDS-Statistical-Update-Executive-Summary_244.pdf

PROJECT HAS PUT CHILDREN AGE 5-14 AND THEIR CAREGIVERS ON THE MAP FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL, PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, SEXUAL AND MATERIALS WELL-BEING.

MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE *STEPPING STONES WITH CHILDREN* PROCESS

- Initial *workshops* with children & caregivers to input into the content, preferred learning activities and examples of stories, role plays and drawings for the manual.
- 3 *pilot workshops*, feedback into final draft.
- In the *community workshops*, people *explore* their situations, strengths, desires and wanted changes through their *own* stories, role-play, drawings, mind maps and ability spotting.
- Children *share* their drawings, role-plays, manifestos & requests with their *caregivers, health workers, teachers & peers* to bring about change

EXAMPLE - SESSION 22: PORNOGRAPHY

Research: Children & caregivers want a session on porn.

Exercises: adapted from UK education on porn for schools

5-8 years: Asking questions, effects on children, is it legal, is it right? how to protect ourselves

9-14 years and caregivers: Plus 'Planet Porn and Earth'

Positive change (all groups). We don't watch pornography; we have stopped watching pornography; we protect our children from watching pornography

Film: 'Kigadoro' made by 5-8 year olds

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY -1



Children aged
5-8 in the
workshop



- **Holistic programme** including psycho-social, physical, sexual & material themes (29 sessions in all, taking 15 full days minimum)
- **Uses positive language**, mind sight, virtues, visioning as well as role plays, games & drawing
- Building **positive cross-gender & cross-generational communication skills & critical literacy**

(CRITICAL LITERACY – MEANS LEARNING TO THINK ABOUT AND UNDERSTAND WHY A SITUATION IS HAPPENING AND WHY AM I RESPONDING IN THIS WAY? WHAT IS THE OTHER PERSON FEELING/THINKING? HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE WELL? IT INCLUDES MINDSIGHT, GENDER AWARENESS, RESPONSIBLE USE OF POWER, ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING ETC.)

EG. PUNISHMENT AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE, COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT, LIVING WELL WITH HIV, PUBERTY AND MANAGING SEXUAL FEELINGS, SEXUAL ABUSE, CHILD LABOUR AND FINDING AN OCCUPATION.

APPRECIATIVE POSITIVE LANGUAGE. ACKNOWLEDGING OUR STRENGTHS, TELLING STORIES OF SUCCESS – ABILITY SPOTTING NECKLACES.

VISIONING OUR BEST FUTURE AND THE STEPS WE WILL TAKE TO REACH IT.

MIND SIGHT – UNDERSTANDING HOW OUR BRAINS WORK AND HOW WE CAN BECOME MORE AWARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR OWN MINDS AND BODIES AND THOSE OF OTHERS. LEARNING TO DEAL WITH STRONG FEELINGS AND STAY CALM.

VIRTUES ARE THE STRENGTH IN OUR HEARTS, THE BEST ASPECTS OF OUR CHARACTERS, THE THINGS THAT ARE KIND AND HELPFUL, BRAVE AND FAIR ABOUT

AN EXAMPLE - SESSION 2: USING OUR BRAINS

- Understanding how the brain develops and works helps children and caregivers to:
 - manage their big feelings, relate well to each other, practice positive discipline, empathise and use mindfulness.

“My brain stays positive by using my upper brain with the ‘brain-in-hand tool’ (9-14 year old children)

AN EXAMPLE - SESSION 7: ALL ABOUT VIRTUES

- Virtues are the strength in our hearts, the best aspects of our characters, the things that are kind and helpful, brave and fair about us. Our power and energy for good.
- A virtue such as courage is selected for each session and participants are praised when they use it. They learn tools to practice the virtues as a family at home.
- Positive change “ Getting myself used to being virtuous” (9-14 year olds)

LESSONS LEARNED AT THE WORKSHOPS

- The power of **appreciative approaches** – glass half full, ability spotting, visions of the future & planning from that place, what has worked before and can work again.
- The **enthusiasm and optimism** generated when children and adults look at the **positive** side of things.
- The power of children and caregivers doing **active learning exercises** in their peer groups and coming together to share what they learnt and how to use it

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY - 2

- Two trained facilitators each work with 3 separate peer groups organized by **age** (twelve 5-8 year olds, twelve 9-14s and 24 adult caregivers, the majority women)
- Participants are *also* based on **gender** for some activities
- Each peer group covers the **same** topics with *adaptations* for the **age** of the participants.
- The groups come together at intervals & participants are encouraged to **share learning** after the sessions
- **Participatory** monitoring & evaluation is carried out through the sessions and recorded in a **Facilitator's Journal**

ADAPTATION OF EXERCISES FOR AGE GROUPS

Exercise: Do condoms fit everyone?

Aged 5-8: Children wear adult clothes to play an active game. This shows that items like condoms designed for adults do not work for children

Aged 9-14: Pairs discuss the pros and cons of options when condoms are too big. For example, delaying sex, non-penetrative sexual activity and tying on condoms with rubber bands.

Caregivers: Consider a scenario and discuss how best to support their children with regard to condoms

SOME LESSONS LEARNED AT THE WORKSHOPS

The children:

- **demonstrated** how much they know about the issues that affect them, relationships and feelings as they discussed sensitive issues like talking about HIV, relationships, love & sexuality
- **opened up** about their experiences and feelings regarding sexual, psychological and physical violence in their homes & communities

The care givers:

- strengthened their skills and confidence in **supporting** the children.
- **Increased** talking about HIV between care givers and children (*not* used as an indicator to minimise any pressure to do this)

PARTICIPANTS ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN HOPED-FOR CHANGES AFTER 6 MONTHS

All peer groups: Taking medication, working harder to reach future visions, protecting children/not watching porn, more loving child-caregiver relations, reduced heavy punishment and abstaining from sex at a young age.

EXTRA changes by age group

5-9 year olds: Keeping clean, having good friends, get used to using 'I' statements

9-14 year olds: Getting used to being virtuous*, keep away from inappropriate touching, educate peers no condoms made for children, greater sense of self-worth, brain stays positive by using upper brain with 'brain-in-hand tool'

Caregivers: use our own judgement and abilities, focus on what's positive, cooperate and educate each other

CHANGES AFTER THE WORKSHOPS

- Relationships between caregivers and children became more **loving** (e.g. using positive discipline instead of beating).
- Preliminary data suggest increased treatment **adherence** in some children.
- Children have formed small **groups** for mutual **support**, thereby strengthening their **resilience** to the impact of HIV
- HIV **counselling services** for children have **improved**
- Children have been able to make **their own films** about the changes brought about by the workshops & **advocate** for **children's rights**

WHAT NEXT?

- 30 experienced facilitators from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya trained in Stepping Stones with Children and 30 from Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Promotion and sale of Manual, Counsellors Guide and DVDs from Practical Action Publishing
- External evaluation in progress
- Trainers Guide in progress
- Establishment of networks of trainers and practitioners in Eastern and Southern Africa
- Stepping Stones Community of Practice



*'Our forest of love': children aged 9-14 years
in a pilot workshop in Tanzania*

Ellie and her son Daniel, after completing the *Stepping
Stones with Children* pilot workshop in Tanzania



Thank you!

STEPPING STONES WITH CHILDREN



A transformative training for children
affected by HIV and their caregivers

Gill Gordon

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<http://tinyurl.com/PAPStStwC>

For orders: <http://developmentbookshop.com/stepping-stones-with-children-training>

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Websites:

www.steppingstonesfeedback.org

www.salamandertrust.net

www.pasada.or.tz

Films:

<http://tinyurl.com/StStwCDar>

