



Celebrating 21 years of *Stepping Stones*

1995-2016

Stepping Stones Stories from *Zimbabwe*.....



PATIENCE MAENGAMHURU-MUYAMBO

Organisation: Independent Development Worker

Country: Zimbabwe and across Southern Africa



★ **When did you first come across Stepping Stones?**

1999 when I joined Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT), Zimbabwe as the Regional *Stepping Stones* Coordinator for Southern Africa.

★ **How did you use it and where and when?**

From 1999- now, during Training of Trainers (ToT), Training of Facilitators (ToF) and Community workshops and at a Personal level.

- **ToT** – Training Organisations at regional/national levels (Southern Africa) – this includes the 10 countries in Southern Africa and in West Africa and in Eastern Africa in collaboration with ActionAid, Practical Action, Healthlink Worldwide
- **ToF** – At Community based organisations mainly in Eastern Zimbabwe, Mayukwa yukwa Refugee Camp in Zambia, in Quelimane Mozambique, AIDS Consortium (S. Africa), ZNNP+ (Zimbabwe), Padare Men’s Forum (Zimbabwe), AIDS Consortium (S. Africa)
- **Community** – With Dananai Home Based care in Buhera (Zimbabwe), National Council of Disabled Persons in Zimbabwe (NCDPZ), HODI (Zambia), Batsirai Group (Zimbabwe)
 - **Personal** – with my family and extended family, at work, at church
 - At the **Bangkok AIDS Conference** (2004) when I presented 2 abstracts on my work on *Stepping Stones with people with disabilities* in Eastern Zimbabwe



★ **Something that you liked about it:**

- **Positive effect at personal level** – I am a more assertive person than before I attended *Stepping Stones*, I am a good listener especially to my children, *Stepping Stones* influenced me to pursue further studies on Gender from 2004 to 2006.
- **Positive effect at community level** –
 - after I conducted *Stepping Stones* in the Gombahari village (Buhera), on their special request, the community requested for a mobile HIV testing facility, and this was conducted by FACT. Men and women who were living with HIV formed a self-help support group for themselves, for psycho-social support, and they also started income



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generating projects with support from the whole community. The local leadership also banned a cultural practice where by overnight church gatherings were discontinued since the participants in the *Stepping Stones* workshop noted that many girls fell pregnant because men took advantage of such gatherings. There was more unity of purpose than before in the whole Gombahari village. The *Stepping Stones* work conducted in Gombahari had a ripple effect and the surrounding villages also cascaded and replicated SRHR activities in their own villages through the local CBOs.

- In Eastern Zimbabwe, I conducted *Stepping Stones* with **people for disabilities** (ToF and Community). This was the first time a comprehensive HIV and AIDS activity conducted for the marginalised group who comprised people with leg or back injuries, with sight problems and in wheel chairs. The adaptive nature of *Stepping Stones* to meet the needs of people with disabilities made the workshops easy and issues of abuse and stigma came up, were discussed and addressed. This also influenced policy formulation at organisations for people with disabilities for mainstreaming Gender and SRHR.

I am yet to come across a 'one stop' methodology that addresses SRHR, Gender, Communication and HIV and AIDS other than *Stepping Stones*. It is a transformative methodology such that if one so happens to attend and participate in all sessions, one's attitude and behaviour are influenced in a very positive and constructive manner. It is also progressive and empowering, making one to being a 'learning' not learned individual.

Stepping Stones has influenced me to believe in myself and to being confident in whatever I do. I have also learnt to love myself first and respect all people, irrespective of age and sex. I have also analysed my strengths and weaknesses, where I try my best to exploit on my strengths and improve on my weaknesses.

Thank you Patience!

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