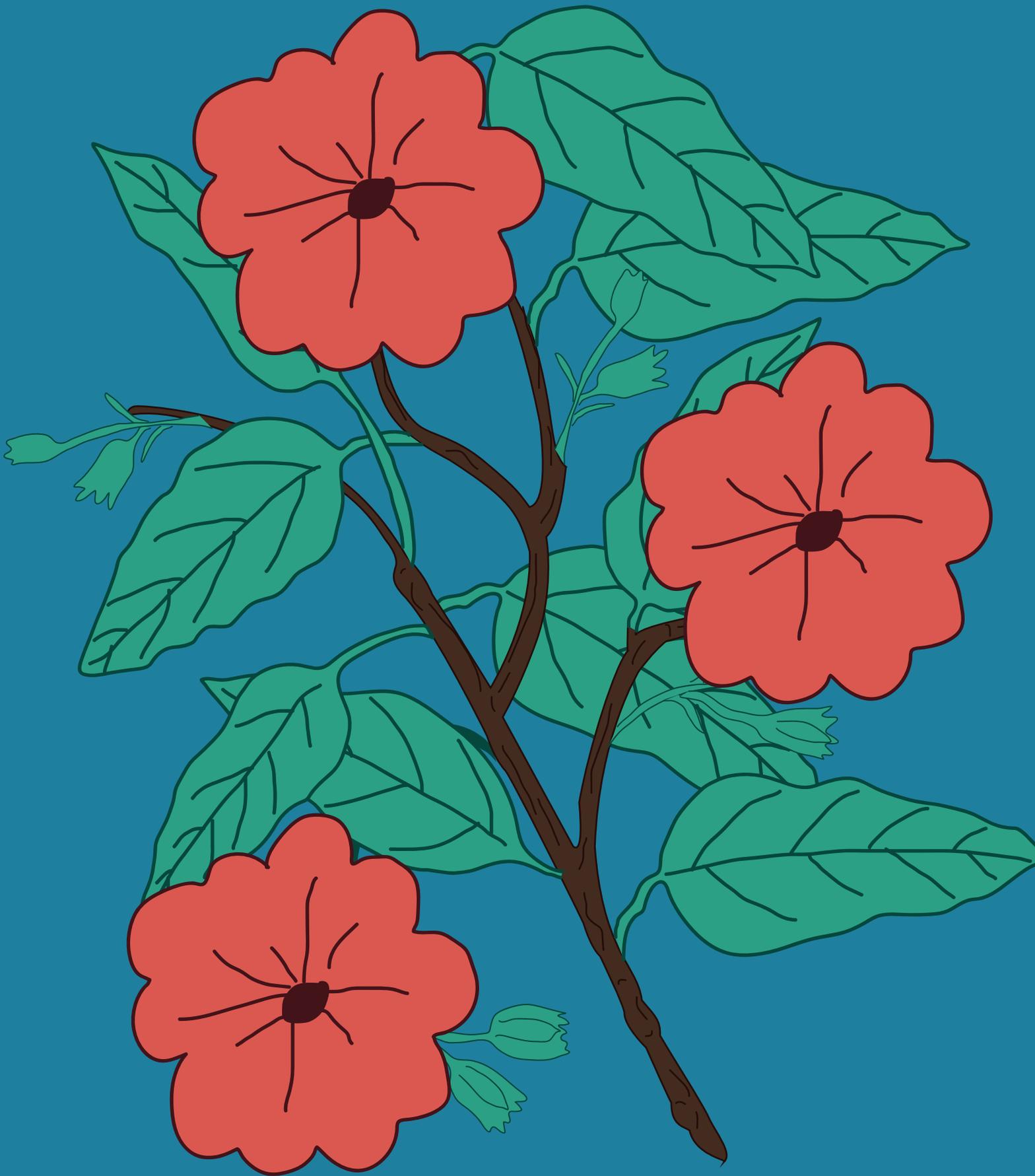


The STREAM Network

Strategic Plan
Overview (2023-2027)





What participants who are women living with HIV said...



"The STREAM network is a game changer that is being implemented to see to it that women and girls are taken care of. My being there will help implement a lot of changes in my community."

~Cynthia Mekubo, Lean on Me Foundation, Kisumu, Kenya

"Its benefits to me will be that I will get to share my ideas and exercise my potentials/skills with other people."

~Mbzighaa-a Beltivate, Health Development Consultancy Services (HEDECS), Cameroon



"There are many benefits which I am going to receive when I become part of STREAM Network: a) to raise my voice as a young person and a young mother because in the STREAM Network most of the participants are elders. b) in the STREAM Network, the voice of young people can be heard - of what they're going through for the services in the hospital; also stigma - and using the STREAM network we can solve many things."

~Gea Mbaruku, Tanzania



"STREAM network is going to benefit for not only myself. The network is including our family, kids and community. The people who are the voice of the voiceless will have confidence to stand out."

~CZ Ralte, India



"I'll get a deeper understanding of *Stepping Stones* which will help me activate sustainable opportunities to become self-sufficient."

~Cynthia Buchira, PYWV, Kenya





"The benefits will be for me seeing the voices of the young women living with HIV in my community being heard through the STREAM Network."

~Jacquelyne Alesi, The Jacquelyne Ssozi Foundation, Uganda



"I hope that STREAM network will be a family to me and other advocates supporting women and children living with and affected by HIV and help us realize our inherent SRHR rights and actively addressing inequalities. Together we STREAM."

~Joyce Ouma, Kenya



"I will tap into the diverse and rich skills set within the network to move the agenda of *Stepping Stones* to the next level."

~Patricia Asero, Ringa Women Fighting Aids Group, Kenya



"To be a part of a community that is deliberate about addressing/ending Violence in Women and Girls, Violence in Children and Adolescents in order to ensure their access to HIV prevention and treatment services, so as to live their optimal lives, motivates me to join and be a part of STREAM."

~Florence Anam, GNP+, Kenya



"The network will provide a platform to young women and adolescent girls living with and affected with HIV to champion for their SRH rights - hence access to quality SRH services. Through the network, I believe there will be awareness creation/sensitization on U=U to the community - hence reduction in stigma and discrimination against women and girls living with and affected with HIV. Since violence thrives when silence shouts..the network will award survivors of GBV a friendly safe space to speak up! Am also thinking, if the network can offer socioeconomic workshops for women who are survivors of violence, living with and affected by HIV so as to enjoy financial freedom.. they will no longer depend financially on their partners who in most cases are the perpetrators - hence ending the cycle of violence. It will give me great satisfaction to live in a community free from stigma and discrimination against women and children living with and affected by HIV thus humanly treated equally in the community and when accessing SRHR services at our health facilities!"

~Lydia Odipo, PYWV, Kenya

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Acknowledgements

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In particular, we thank the creators of the *Stepping Stones* programmes (see Annex 1). We also thank Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, the Executive Director of Positive Young Women Voices who has given her full heart in making this a STREAM of networks ready to work and walk together. To you Lydia and Katanu, thank you for the crucial role well done in making expert arrangements and audits for the meeting. Many thanks go to Emma Mogaka for her highly skilled and excellent work as the moderator. Our thanks also to Ellen Bajenja of Communicating for Action and Results (CFAR) - Uganda and Alice Welbourn of Salamander Trust, for working with Lucy to develop the proposal which funded the Nairobi 4-day meeting which created this strategic plan.

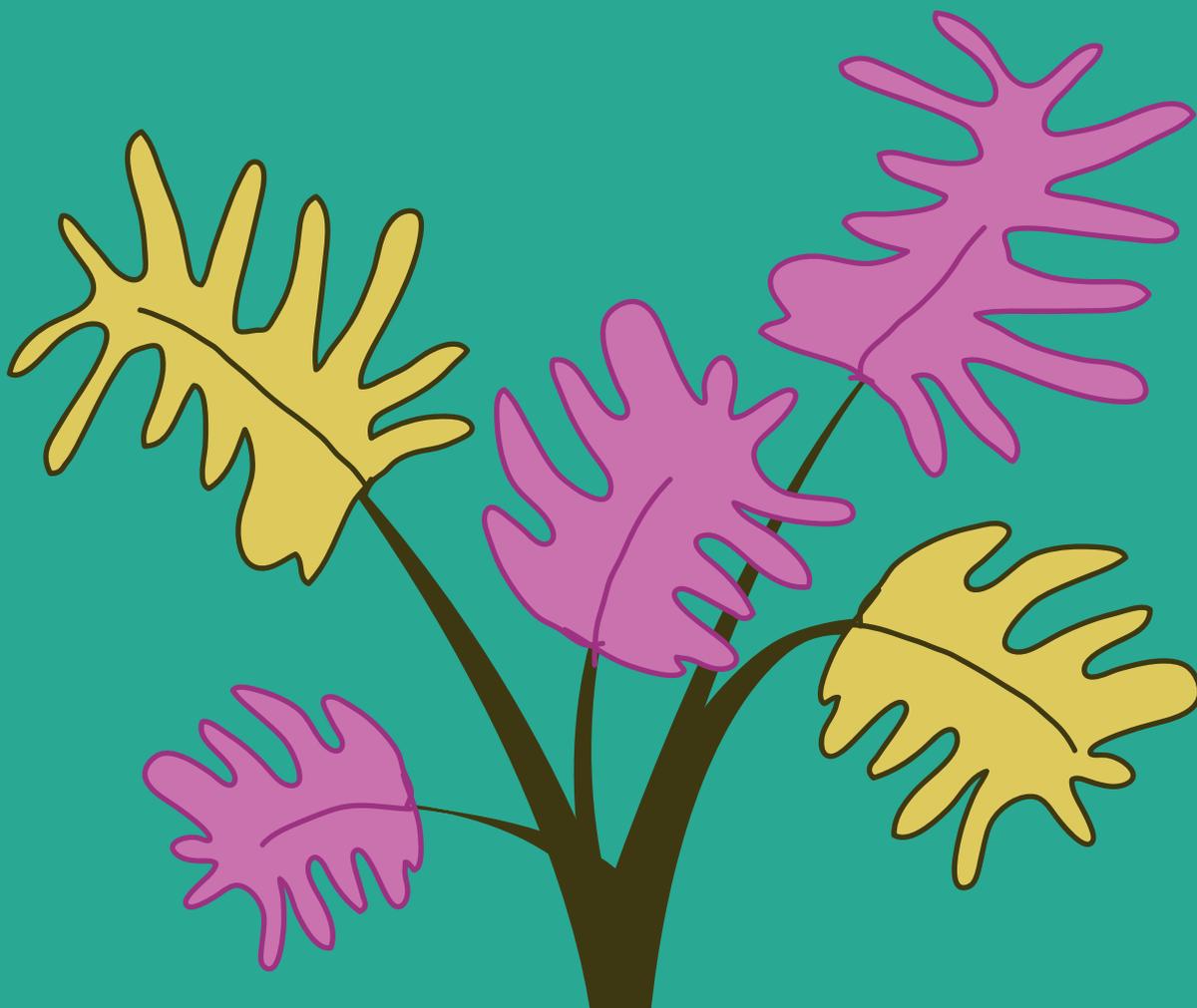




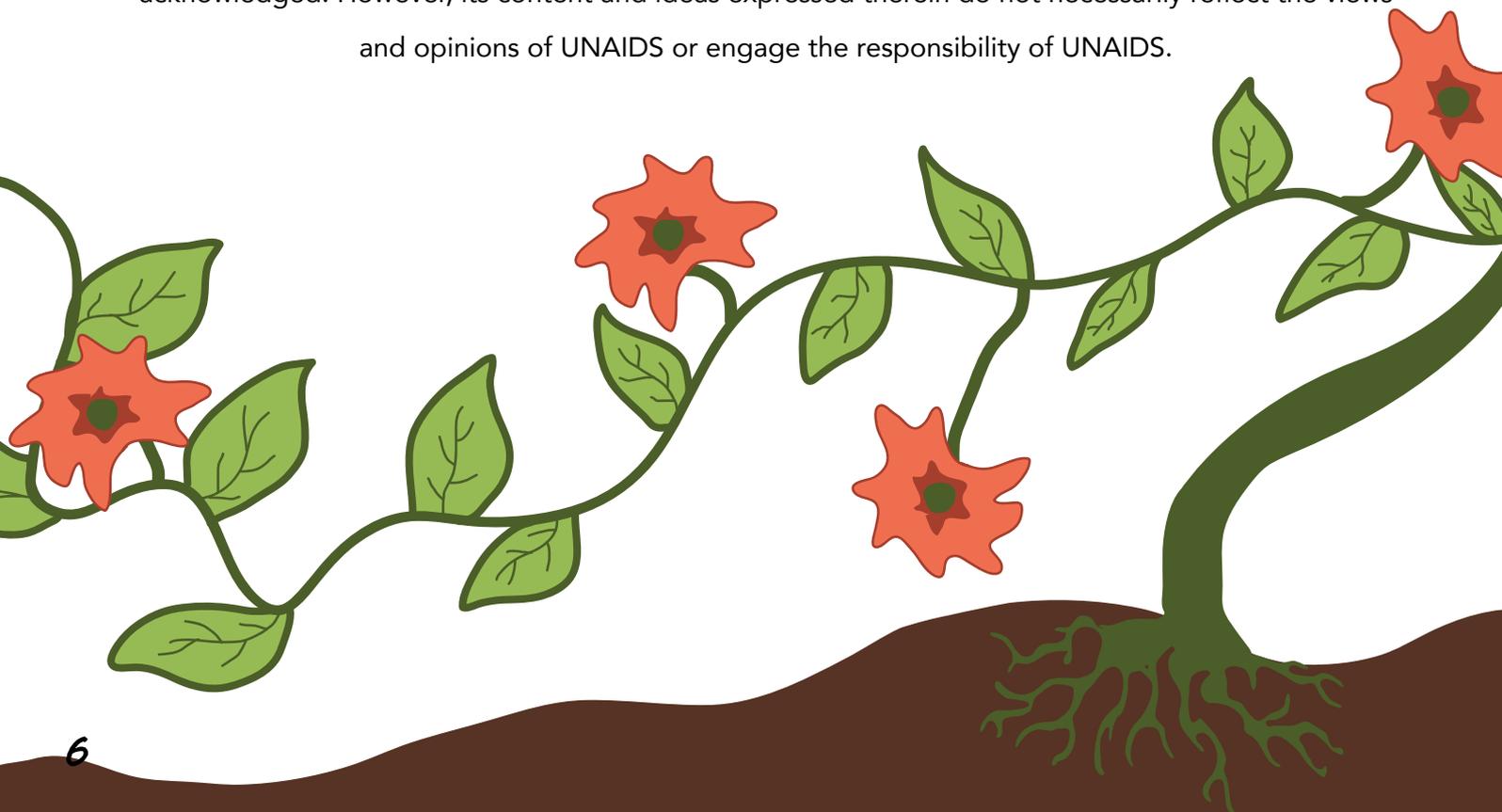
Photo Credit: Strategies for Hope

Remembering Professor Rose Mbowa

1943-1999

"Mbowa's art and teachings inspired the whole African continent and beyond, proof that one voice speaking truth in a time of darkness can make a difference."

The financial contribution of UNAIDS towards this strategic planning process is gratefully acknowledged. However, its content and ideas expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of UNAIDS or engage the responsibility of UNAIDS.



Abbreviations

Letters	Meaning
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ALIV[H]E Framework	Action Linking Initiatives on Violence Against Women and HIV Everywhere Framework
CUSP	Community for Understanding Scaling Processes
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NACC	National AIDS Control Council
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Educational - and Environmental
PYWV	Positive Young Women Voices
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW(G)	Violence Against Women (and Girls)

Suggested citation

The STREAM Network 5-Year Strategic Plan Overview 2023-2027, 2022, Positive Young Women Voices, CFAR-Uganda and Salamander Trust

Foreword by Lucy Wanjiku Njenga

Based on Lucy's final words at the end of our 4-day meeting in Nairobi, early October 2022: "I find I'm so so, so grateful to be part of you all and to be part of this process. When we were in that room yesterday, and we were having our debrief - myself, Alice, Ellen, and Emma, we realized that we had gone to this particular corner where that stream image was there. And some of our presentations were on either side of it. That stream image is really symbolic of what you were doing. It shows the universe is ready to receive us. It's saying, Go ahead, we have the blessings that you need to make this one work. When our work started, I didn't have all the answers that I needed. All I knew was, I was from Dandora [where Positive Young Women Voices now works]. This was a community I grew up in, I had deep challenges that I had no one to work on with. That was the genesis of this. It's an informal settlement where a girl is already expected to fail. By the time you're five years old. And I did 'fail'.

I was a teen mom. In my first relationship, my son died, I got to know my HIV status. A lot was happening. And I was alone in this. And I did not want another girl to go through that alone. And that's why PYWV was founded. And that's the work we do: every day we wake up, we want to see a difference in our community. And also I am very eager and excited. And I know that *Stepping Stones* can support someone else. If *Stepping Stones* was there for my parents, we would probably have had easier ways of engaging me and my siblings and other parents in the community than they did. Right? As *Stepping Stones* practitioners, I know you have different relationships with your children, because of *Stepping Stones*, right? And as we do mentorship with the young girls that we have in our networks, in the schools, we try to engage also the boys, but we find we don't have one thing that can help standardize everything. And that you can follow up on, five years, 10 years down the line. When I hear of Alice saying in Uganda in 1994, there was a girl who said she wanted to go to school and the dad was not on board, and then came *Stepping Stones* and you know how you're dealing with the community? She was able to go to school, she was able to become a teacher, she is now or she was a head mistress. Isn't that what you want?" "Yes!" "Isn't that why, when we did our different group work, when we put them together, they looked so alike? That is what wakes me up in the morning.

We are also excited that you have handed us the role of coordination: we are not sure how that will look like. But we take that role very seriously. And take it with full responsibilityand we will do our best to ensure what you want out of this happens. We won't promise magic, we won't promise a seamless alignment, so there'll be a lot that will happen along the way that will probably make you wonder 'was this the right decision? Is this the right decision?' And that is what shows you started something that is bigger than yourselves. So it will push us, it will cause conflict and conflict and chaos is good. As long as you can manage it, right? As long as we come back to our why. Remember that girl in the community - that is our why. If you can always come back to her then you can remember why it is."



Overview

STREAM The STREAM Network is a new network created out of a 4-day meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 30 September to 3 October 2022, hosted by Positive Young Women Voices. STREAM stands for **Stepping Stones Trainers Engaging with Activist Networks**.

WHO WE ARE The meeting brought together feminist women's rights activists who are all women living with HIV, from Argentina, Cameroon, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, UK/Ireland and Zimbabwe; as well as long-term *Stepping Stones* female and male practitioners from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The meeting comprised 42 participants altogether, with an age-range stretching from our mid-twenties to our late seventies. Together we resolved to join our diverse experiences, knowledge, skills and passions together to create the STREAM Network.

Throughout this document, we refer to the natural world around us as a source of inspiration to guide our work. Just as two raindrops falling into still water can create outward ripples, which can in turn merge together and create new ripples, so the coming together of our two respective networks can create new synergy, energy and actions, rippling out further in new directions as our combined energies are pooled together.

Most of us in the planning meeting are either women living with HIV who are activist SRHR advocates, or are *Stepping Stones* practitioners. Three of us (Elly Kaale of Tanzania, Martha Tholanah of Zimbabwe and Alice Welbourn of UK/Ireland) are all women living with HIV and *Stepping Stones* practitioners. Through our creation together in Nairobi of the STREAM Network, we all seek to increase the overlap between the two circles above, so that more women - and men - living with HIV become trained as *Stepping Stones* facilitators and trainers, so that they guide others through the *Stepping Stones* programmes in their own communities. We see this as an opportunity for shared learning and understanding in both directions: for existing *Stepping Stones* practitioners to learn from the deep-rooted personal experiences, insights and resilience of women - and men - living with HIV in our group. And, for those not yet trained in making use of *Stepping Stones*, to benefit from the particular insights, skills and experiences gained through use of the programmes in many different settings around the world.

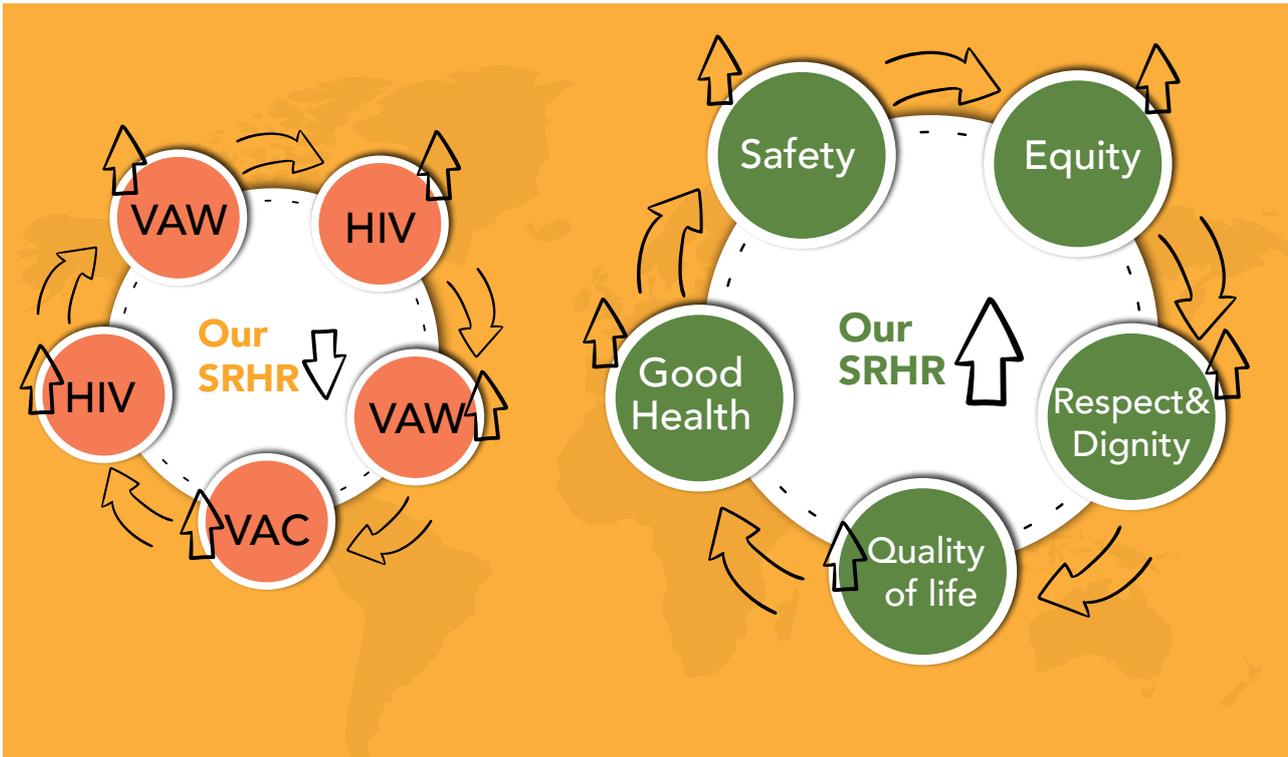
WHY WE HAVE COME TOGETHER We all seek a common purpose in our work - to uphold and maintain the SRHR of women and girls especially in all our communities in the context of HIV, irrespective of our HIV status. We all recognise that violence against women, and against children form a key part of children's and women's vulnerability both to acquiring HIV and to living with HIV, across the life span. We all recognise that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) often challenge an individual's physical, mental and economic health and well-being across their lifespan. We recognise that these ACEs often include violence against women and against children. We recognise that children who have experienced violence in their own lives often grow up to become recipients and/or perpetrators of violence in their adult lives, thereby perpetuating the challenges they have faced in subsequent generations.



We recognize the complacency by duty bearers, to affirm that human dignity cannot be compartmentalised, negotiated, nor be a privilege of a few.

Within our communities, we all recognise also how the vicious cycle of VAW and VAC are both causes as well as consequences of HIV. These slow down, reduce - and often prevent - women's and children's realisation of their SRHR. These challenges conspire to form what we call a *draining circle*, illustrated below.

From Draining Circles to Gaining Circles



Our strategic plan is based on a recognition of the widespread existence of the *draining circle* above in our communities, and our combined wish to ensure that the lives of girls and young women especially in our communities reflect *gaining circles* instead. By *gaining circles* we mean processes which promote safety, equity, respect and dignity, leading to good quality of life and good health. With such a positive environment, the challenges of HIV, of unplanned pregnancies and many related issues will recede and our SRHR will be upheld.

As STREAM, we recognise that working early with children in their most formative years, together with their parents and/or caregivers, can support them to build resilience in the face of the many and complex adverse challenges that they face, in order to overcome them and end violence.

We also recognise that working separately and together with adolescents and the adults in their lives can support whole communities to work together to effect ethical, effective and sustainable change. We recognise that violence against women and against children is a fundamental violation of their SRHR; that this violence is preventable; and that we all seek to combine our diverse experiences, knowledge, skills and passions to overcome violence and many related adverse factors affecting our communities. By working together across the genders and generations, we can all turn *draining circles* into *gaining circles*. We are all stronger together.

“

...women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected. A new HIV infection occurred every two minutes among young women and girls aged 15—24 years old in 2021.

Children are also being left behind—currently only around half **(52%) HIV-positive children** were on life-saving medicines compared to **76% of adults.**

“Now is the time for leaders to invest in their promise to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and to give children and young people a fighting chance at life, said [UNAIDS Executive Director] Ms Byanyima.

”

"When SRHR is upheld, we have equity and safety, in our societies contributing to respect and dignity for all, enhancement of lives and increase in good health."

~Nairobi meeting participant

Many of the issues we seek to address together are psycho-social issues, not easily evident to outside eyes. Negative social norms such as violence against women and against children, stigma-related HIV, and other related SRHR violations, are often unseen intangible issues, which therefore go unrecognised and unaddressed, and which therefore harm and undermine us all. These issues have a fundamental effect on what happens on the visible surface of our lives (such as our ability to negotiate condom use, to access health care, to take ARVs, to attend school, to make informed choices about what we do in our lives, to claim our SRHR....).

We have adopted the image of the wood-wide web below to reflect the importance of this unseen world in our lives. This image reflects how scientists have now recognised that trees do not stand alone in the forest as individual **entities**.

Instead, they work together as a forest: they are inter-connected under the ground through a complex web of inter-related networks. Similarly, none of us is alone. Our own abilities to connect with one another through peer networks provide us with our opportunity to address the very psycho-social challenges described above. By investing in programmes such as *Stepping Stones*, which offer a community-wide gender-transformative approach to ethical, effective and sustainable transformation of gender- and child-rights based social norms change, we can enable the weeds - which hold us all back - to wither and the seeds - which enable new life and growth - to flourish. By moving from a sense of 'i'-dentity (which can often leave us feeling lost and alone), to a sense of shared 'we'-dentity (which can enable us to feel supported and empowered), we can create together a strategy for collective action, where the resulting sum is much greater than the individual parts.

It is against this background that our first 5 year strategic plan, from 2023-2027 has been developed.

“Human Beings are the same and there is always more that unites us than divides us.”

~Meeting participant.



A Personal Story

*Eliaimtonga Kaale
(Tanzania):*



“ My name is Elly Kaale living in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Me and my son Danny, who is 17 years old now, we are living with HIV for more than 14 years now, since we have been tested positive in 2008 at Pasada. Before attending the *Stepping Stones* training, I had a terrible situation in how to disclose the HIV status to my son Danny who was so young, when he would grow up and even to my close relatives. I was an unhealthy unhappy woman with stress and depression all the time. I could not accept this situation so easily, despite counselling received from counsellors at PASADA - that's the place where I was attending clinic with my son, who was always asking me “Mum for how long am I going to take this medicine that is ARVs and why me?” The question was so much, much more painful on my side as I felt that I was the one who caused the problem. In another bad experience that I faced after my son was detected positive, he developed skin problems - he had black spots on the entire body skin. My frustration was that anybody that could see him could think that my son is infected with HIV - especially fellow pupils at the school, neighbours, even the entire society. I thought that would lead to stigma towards my son and myself.

But right now, the environment is changing, thanks to the *Stepping Stones* training, conducted by Salamander Trust in collaboration with Pasada in Dar es Salaam. For sure the whole program is good. It's good in the sense that after attending the training I was able to change completely my mindset.

I wish all parents and children could receive the *Stepping Stones* training because firstly the advantage of this training is as follows: the communication with my son Danny is good now after getting the disclosure that he's living with HIV. The communication now is good and has opened my mind, so that I can stay in touch with my child. Bearing in mind that he has to get all the necessary requirements, like education, food, shelter, clothes, sports, and I have to take care more closely whenever I can assist him, cause we have now medicine. This the second advantage of the *Stepping Stones* training, we are taking medicine in the proper time. And right now, Danny can attend clinic on his own and our health has improved so much, because before it was terrible - the great advantage of this program is that we've overcome stigma in the society we are living in and other people can even ask me, “how did you come to this stage where now you're improving, and you have disclosed to others?” They see the status of our health. And I just say “because of the *Stepping Stones* program which has opened my mind, it is making me free.” And I can say that this condition of my son is good compared to the previous one. Disclosure has stopped the stigma, adherence to medicine has also enabled us to proceed healthwise. Danny has already completed Form 4 last year. And now he's attending vocational training to fulfill his dreams. Thanks to Salamander Trust which has helped my son Danny in year 2014. Last but not least, I can say that I'm an ambassador, of women or parents with HIV and even to the society where I'm living.

After this training, my health condition is improved compared to before attending the *Stepping Stones* training. I was feeling guilty that I'm the cause of HIV to my son, something which was very painful on my side. But right now, I'm happy, free and I wish all women with children living with HIV get this training, so that they can help others. For sure. God is good always. I am very thankful to all team members who were close to me and to my son and to other parents who managed to attend this training. And I wish Salamander Trust to go on to others who have never had an opportunity to attend the same program like me. Thanks to Martha, to Mr. Chiziza, to all the staff members in Pasada. They have assisted us and we are now proceeding. AIDS is gone now thanks. We are still surviving. Thanks so much. Together we can! Let's play our role.





Our Vision

An inclusive and safe environment for all, especially women and children living with and affected by HIV.



Our Mission

We aspire to make all our work rights-based, inclusive and holistic, to end inequalities and uphold our sexual and reproductive health and rights across the life span.



Our Values

In order to explore our values, we asked ourselves: 'What do we value most in others that we admire, what principles do we aspire most to ourselves, what working environments do we appreciate most?'

Our values are currently a work in progress. We wish to build on the core values of UNAIDS' ALIV[H]E Framework. The ALIV[H]E core values are as follows:

Core values of the ALIV[H]E Framework

The ALIV[H]E Framework has seven core values in responding to VAW and HIV:

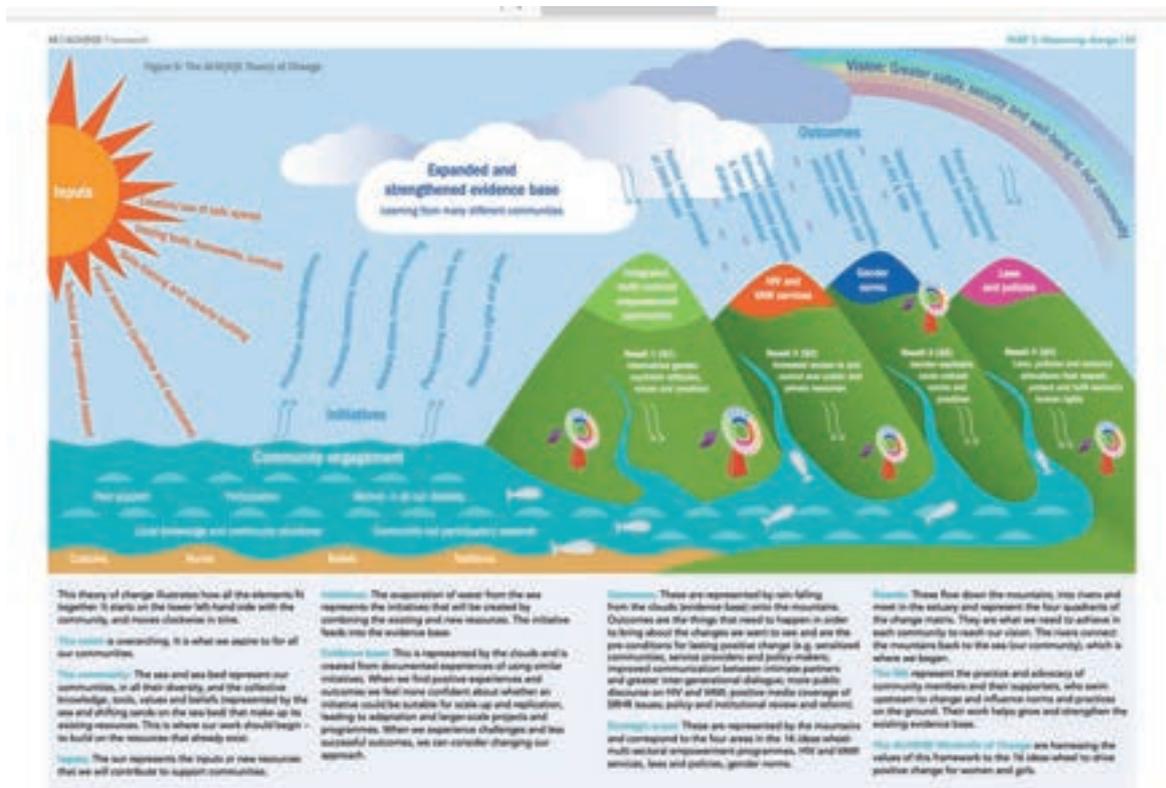


To these we wish to commit to the following values:

- Our Accountability and Responsibility to one another and to our communities
- Equity and equality across genders and generations
- Our commitment to climate justice - and a recognition of the damaging effects of COVID as an example of the consequences of climate change
- Our commitment to economic equity/empowerment (raising the quality of life)
- Our commitment to meaningful participation and involvement of all in our work together

Our Theory of Change

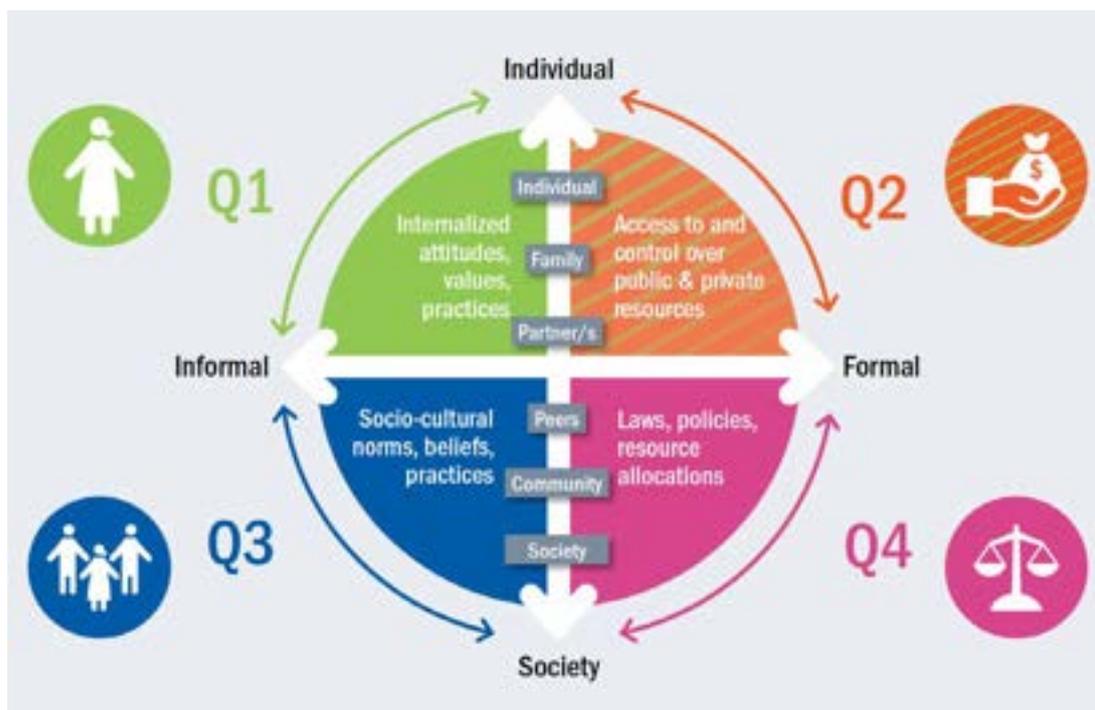
In continuation of our use of the natural world around us as a metaphor to create our strategic plan, we have adopted the landscape theory of change from the UNAIDS ALIV[H]E Framework (see Annex 4 for more information about the ALIV[H]E Framework). This theory of change reflects the cyclical nature of life and harnesses the metaphor of the weather system to reflect this. It recognises the essential deep knowledge and wisdom of people in their communities, at the heart of effective, ethical and sustainable social norms change.



ALIV[H]E Framework Landscape Theory of Change

Our Gender Change Matrix

We made use of the UNAIDS ALIV[H]E **Framework** gender change matrix (see Annex 4 for more information about this). The horizontal axis moves from informal to formal sectors. The vertical axis moves from individual to systemic dimensions.



A note on how change happens:

Htun and Weldon, in their study of 70 countries over 40 years, pointed out in 2012 that the one single factor that can reduce violence against women is a vibrant independent women's rights **movement**. It is impossible to end violence against women and children and to uphold and maintain our SRHR as individuals, without the presence of a wider movement for change.

This is why we value so much the key critical role of women living with HIV as members of the STREAM Network.

Behavioural scientists and policy-makers are now also recognising **this**.

We also recognise that conventional bio-medical, top-down approaches to HIV prevention and HIV treatment do not adequately address the complex diversity of our lived experiences in the holistic context of our **lives**. And we recognise that a 'feminist' approach to scale, which adopts a metaphor of natural growth development and decline, in line with the natural world around us, is a more helpful and appropriate metaphor than those of Western-led, top-down business **models**.

What we aim to achieve

Here are some of the outcomes that we would like to achieve through the STREAM Network. Each quadrant below relates to the corresponding quadrant of the Gender Change Matrix above.

In assessing our work in the context of the Gender Change Matrix, we recognise that most of the direct work of *Stepping Stones* trainers and programmes takes place in the two left hand quadrants, numbered 1 and 3 above, at individual, peer and community levels. These changes can, in turn, effect resulting changes in local institutions, laws and policies (ie in quadrants 2 and 4). We also recognise the rich contributions made by activist women and their movements through their research and advocacy work to effect right-hand quadrant changes (ie in quadrants 2 and 4) at national and global institutional, policy and legal levels also.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Q1: Individual/informal: internalized attitudes, values and practices	Reduction of violence within families, institutions, and communities	Q2: Individual/formal: access to and control over public and private resources	More women, men, boys and girls claim access to services, opportunities and information (SRHR)
	Improved communication, relationships and respect for one another		More girls, boys, women, and men claim access to quality education services, opportunities and information
	Improved partnership between men, women, boys and girls around decision making, resource sharing and ownership and other gender roles and responsibilities		Increased access to safe and inclusive environment for women and children living with and affected by HIV
	Increased demand for access and utilization of quality health and SRH services by adolescent girls and women living with and affected by HIV		
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
Q3: Society/informal: socio-cultural norms, beliefs and practices	Reduction in stigma and discrimination against women and children living with and affected by HIV	Q4: Society/formal: laws, policies, resource allocations	Increased awareness on laws/policies that promote women/children's rights and dignity
	Reduction in the practice of cultural norms that perpetuate and promote violence against women and children		Increased demand for laws and policies that bring about justice for women and children
	Violence against women and violence against children is reduced by at least 10% in 5 years		Increased demand for gender transformative budgeting and resource allocation
	Increased participation of women and children living and affected by HIV in decision making on issues of health and sexuality		Reduced violence against women and children

STREAM Network Proposed Strategic Objectives And Outcomes Related To Each Quadrant Of The ALIV[H]E Gender Change Matrix

In addition, we want to develop and strengthen the STREAM Network itself, as our chosen mechanism for delivery of these outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
STREAM Network Strengthening	Strengthened capacity of the STREAM network to make it more efficient and effective.

STREAM Network Network Strengthening Strategic Objective and Outcome

How: our strategies for achieving change

Our strategies for working together over the next 5 years include the following:

- a) Revive the trainers' links through establishing a database of all trainers and securing accreditation
- b) Build on the power of *Stepping Stones* as a key communication and relationships programme to uphold the SRHR of people living with HIV, including reduction of VAWC and strengthening resilience
- c) Secure our legal status in each country; building partnerships with networks of women and men living with HIV
- d) Strengthen our capacity in *Stepping Stones* programmes for the networks of women and men living with HIV: through opportunities for training of facilitators and trainers
- e) Trainers and networks work together to mobilise resources for implementation of the STREAM strategic plan in each country; and, where relevant, for cross-country mutual exchange and learning
- f) Strengthen the STREAM network through the *Stepping Stones* website and Microsoft Teams
- g) Conduct joint research and documentation of outcomes of adapting, implementing and scaling *Stepping Stones*; and the progress of the STREAM Network
- h) Engage jointly in national, regional and/or global dialogue, advocacy and action



How are we going to measure our progress

We recognise that it is essential to measure our progress in all we do together. We seek to do this by making use of objectives and related indicators that make sense to us in our own lives, and that reflect the less visible but critical psycho-social dimensions to our lives described above.

These are also known as SPICED indicators.

What are SPICED Indicators?

SPICED indicators are normally identified by community members themselves. They can be used by community members to measure the progress of an initiative over time from their own perspectives.

Subjective - personal to **us** – what **we** want

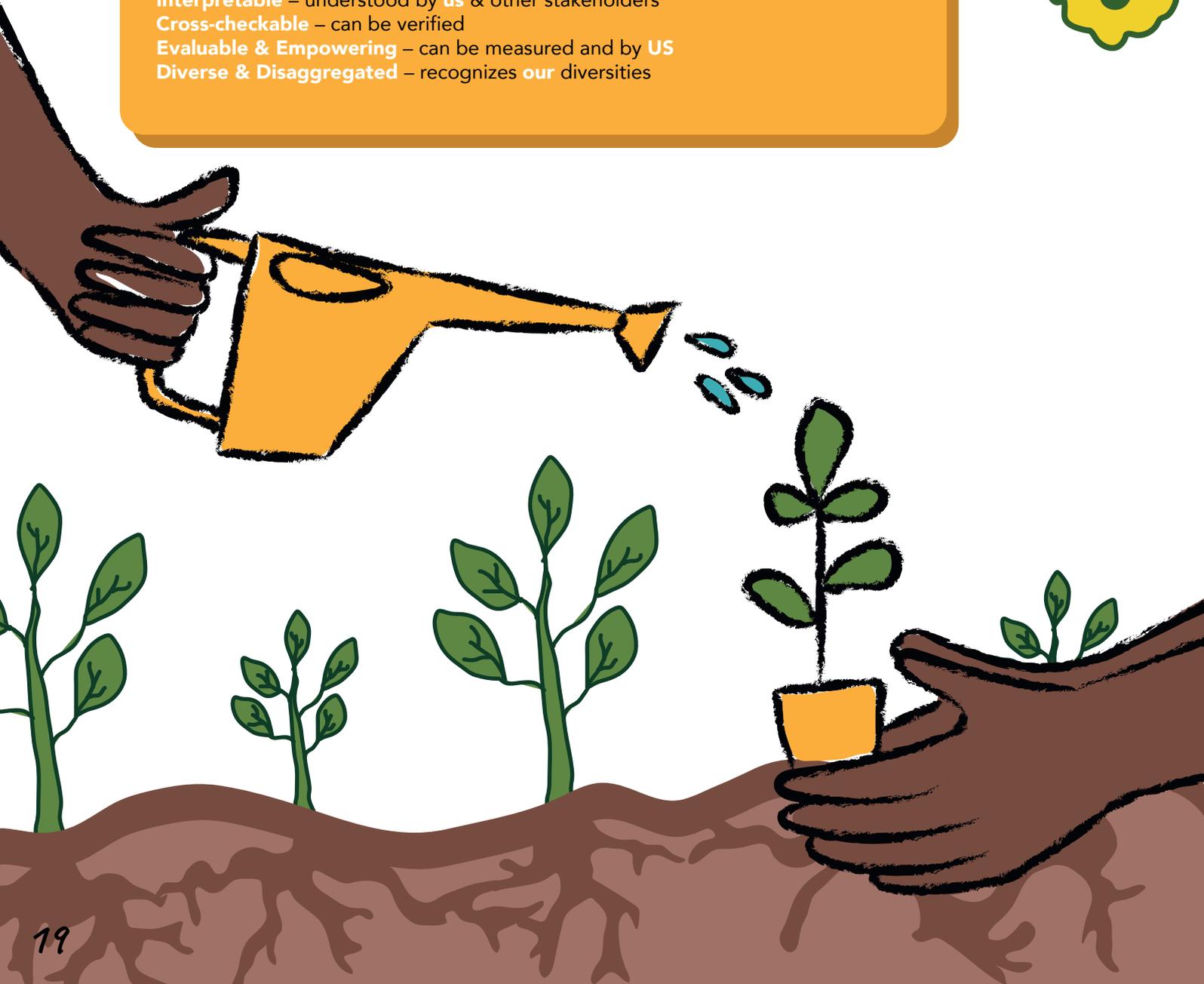
Participatory – developed by **us**

Interpretable – understood by **us** & other stakeholders

Cross-checkable – can be verified

Evaluable & Empowering – can be measured and by **US**

Diverse & Disaggregated – recognizes **our** diversities



Below are images created by younger and older women living with HIV respectively, as part of the preparation for our Nairobi meeting. They highlight some of these more intangible priorities that they have identified, that would confirm to them that their SRHR is being upheld. By contrast, externally designed programmes address or measure such priorities less comprehensively.

YOUNGER WOMEN'S SRHR PRIORITIES



Key: the yellow line indicates issues more directly addressed by *Stepping Stones* (above it) and less directly (below it)

OLDER WOMEN'S SRHR PRIORITIES

My physical wellbeing	My mental and spiritual wellbeing	My social safety and wellbeing	My reproductive wellbeing	My sexual wellbeing	My material wellbeing	My financial wellbeing	My legal safety
I can live free of violence	I have agency	Live free of Violence Against Women	I can live free of violence	Openly talk about sex	I can live free of violence	I can live free of violence	Talk about my Gender identity
Nutritious food	Able to be part of a non-judgemental support group	I am well informed	Accessible, affordable reproductive health	Have a supportive significant other	I have safe and secure housing	Adequate personal funds	I want to be free from marital rape and have everyone know that is a crime.
Safe and clean drinking water	I can make choices	I no-longer have to watch over my shoulder nor worry what I say or write	Free contraceptives and condoms including female condoms	I can choose what sex I need and what to have	I have adequate nutritious food	proper remuneration for work in community	Access justice in a timely manner whenever necessary
Access and take ARVs safely	I can live free of violence	My family is supportive of my sexual reproductive needs	Breastfeed without fear of infecting my baby	I can make choices about who I have relationships with			I have access to justice if I report violence against me
Able to exercise	I talk openly about my feelings and I am not judged	My diverse self is respected and accepted		I can say no to sex if I want. My sex is always consensual			I am able to report violence against me
I have access to appropriate pain medication		I can participate in economic, social and political processes in my country without fear					

Key: the yellow line indicates issues more directly addressed by *Stepping Stones* (above it) and less directly (below it)

Next steps: our mechanism for delivery

Our next steps include the following actions

Domain	Ideas
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Formalizing status at national level (<i>Stepping Stones</i> trainers' networks and platforms in each country)
Strategy completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Follow up country discussions for adapting the global strategic plan to the national context
Capacity strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Refresher sessions for the <i>Stepping Stones</i> practitioners ▶ Training: women and men living with HIV introduced to <i>Stepping Stones</i> programme in each country and trained as facilitators and then (some) trainers
Network structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Agree on the name of the network (STREAM) ▶ Regional coordination mechanism: coordinating learning and experience sharing, regional advocacy and lobbying, quarterly virtual coordination meetings etc. ▶ National committees composed of the focal institutions (coordinating the process for adapting the regional strategy to the national contexts, marketing the strategy and resource mobilization, etc.) ▶ Clarifying the roles of members of STREAM (Network and practitioners) ▶ Code of practice of STREAM members ▶ Reporting mechanism
Resource mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Joint resource mobilization at each national level ▶ Include costs for regional processes/meetings ▶ <i>Stepping Stones</i> programmes - budget templates shared
Communication: exploration of the following options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Stepping Stones</i> website members area development, Microsoft teams/WhatsApp platform, Facebook page





Annex 1: About Stepping Stones

This strategic plan was created out of a meeting that brought two key groupings of people together to pave the way to achieve effective, ethical and sustainable scaling of *Stepping Stones*, which is an evidence-based gender transformative social norms change programme to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of HIV.

This is in line with the Global AIDS Strategy that, among its priority actions, includes:

“Scale up financing and implementation of gender-transformative, community-led innovations to remove social and structural barriers that block gender equality.

Transform unequal gender norms, engage women and girls and men and boys as gender equality advocates, tackle inequalities in the financing, design and delivery of health services, and increase demand and uptake of HIV prevention, treatment and care services.”

The *Stepping Stones* programmes address all the UNAIDS targets highlighted in the image at <https://aidstargets2025.unaids.org/>, except the national target, shown at the top-left of the image.

VIOLENCE REDUCTION AND STEPPING STONES

Violence against women and girls (VAWG), including intimate partner violence (IPV), is both a driver and a consequence of HIV. It is also always part of a complex web of other challenges which beset both those who experience VAWG and its perpetrators.

Stepping Stones, when adapted with fidelity to the principles and **structure** of the original programme, has been shown in many different contexts both to reduce VAWG and to increase care, respect and support for women, children and others living with and/or affected by HIV and/or VAWG. It is designed for use with adolescents around 15 years and above and the adults in their lives. By working separately and together with the adolescent and adult females and males, it offers a community-wide approach to identifying and addressing traumas, building bridges of understanding and positive relationships across genders and generations and across HIV status, and enabling participants to create a positive collective response to the complex challenges which they all face. The original programme was designed with colleagues in Uganda and published in 1995 by Strategies for Hope, Oxford. The wholly revised and updated version, *Stepping Stones & Stepping Stones Plus*, was released in 2016. It is **published** and distributed by Practical Action Publishing, **Rugby, UK**.

Its sister programme, *Stepping Stones with Children*, has been shown in a pilot to support orphans and other vulnerable children aged 5-14, and their caregivers, to build resilience in the face of adverse childhood experiences (**Holden** et al 2018). Changes have included significant increases in the CD4 counts and body weights of child participants, as well as reduced violence against children (VAC) and significant increases in the percentage of those who know their HIV status. While much work on HIV in the context of children has often blamed women for their children acquiring HIV and/or for VAC, this programme offers instead a gendered approach to working both with children and their caregivers, recognising the immense challenges facing both children and their caregivers alike and offering them, separately and together, a holistic way forward to shaping a shared positive future. The programme was designed with colleagues in Tanzania and released in 2016. It is published and distributed by Practical Action Publishing, **Rugby, UK**.

We wish now to augment these results by building the foundations of an effective, ethical and sustainable feminist **scaling** of the *Stepping Stones* programme across regions.



Annex 2: More about feminist scale

The accredited *Stepping Stones* trainers described above - and their colleagues elsewhere - now wish to regroup to work with networks of women living with HIV, in order to support them to make use of these materials in and with their own families and communities through this strategic plan. This is in line with a feminist approach to scale, as advocated recently by the Community for Understanding Scale-Up (CUSP) in a thought-piece, blog and webinar, which together highlight the challenges experienced in conventional, top-down approaches to "scale-up", and instead propose an approach which works instead from the 'bottom' outwards, based on an ecological model of organic growth.

This version of growth is achieved not by the work of external organisations, but instead by accredited trainers working closely with, being led by, and in support of those most affected by the issues. This process of feminist scale by support for movement-building to end VAWG echoes the findings of Htun and Weldon (2012) who studied 70 countries over 40 years and stated: "Our analysis reveals that the most important and consistent factor driving policy change is feminist activism. This plays a more important role than left-wing parties, numbers of women legislators, or even national wealth."

Annex 3: More about the two key groupings

The two key groupings mentioned are, on the one hand, networks of women living with HIV; and on the other hand, accredited male and female trainers of the *Stepping Stones* programmes.

Networks of women living with HIV are vibrant, dynamic women's rights movements, driven by deep personal experience. We can see and feel the challenges of current policies and where they do not meet, or worsen our needs. Yet we are often over-stretched and under-funded to carry out the work that we want to do. There have been recent and growing calls, augmented by the #metoo and #blacklivesmatter movements, for decolonisation of aid. These calls propose to move funding channels away from external organisations, often based in and/or led by Western outsiders, and to provide instead direct funding to enable movements of women most deeply affected by issues, to effect the change they/we want to see.

The evidence is clear that current funding paradigms do not work. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that between 2009-14, only about 0.5% of international aid earmarked for gender equality reached women's rights organisations (WROs). These findings are echoed in the Association for Women in Development (AWID)'s 2015 funding analysis report. To date, however there has been little specific action on this in the context of HIV to reduce and/or mitigate the effects of violence against women and girls.

For accredited trainers of the *Stepping Stones* programmes, there is a clear need for programmes such as *Stepping Stones* to be conducted by facilitators who have been well-selected, well trained, and well supported. This need has been firmly documented in various reports, articles, blogs and webinars since 2017, by a group now called the Community for Understanding Scaling Processes (CUSP), which is a group of 8 organisations, all of which are originators of evidence-based gender transformative social norms change programmes. (The *Stepping Stones* originators are co-founders and co-conveners of CUSP.)

However, since 2008, with the global credit crisis, INGOs who formerly hosted highly experienced dedicated in-house training departments have disbanded these, making their training staff redundant, in order to cut costs.

In addition, CUSP has documented how funders of such programmes have not recognised the critical need for adaptations of the programmes to be delivered with fidelity to the originators' principles or structures. This dismantling of the critical infrastructure for accredited trainers to perform their essential role well is akin to changing our children's school teachers or our health workers from being full-time well trained employed professionals to being part-time self-employed consultants with out-of-date knowledge and training, with a reduced budget to complete the same work they undertook previously. This inevitably deeply affects their ability to maintain standards and has turned them from being teams of well-trained professionals who could justly take pride in their work, into individual self-employed consultants who have had to compete with one another - and with unaccredited individuals - to be hired for under-funded short-term posts.

These challenges, combined with other consequences of funding cuts, have been documented by CUSP and have resulted in programmes which, at best, fall well short of their intended outcomes, and at worst, produce damaging and even harmful outcomes for those who are intended to benefit.



The remaining accredited *Stepping Stones* trainers around the world have, however, kept in contact over the years, through the *Stepping Stones* international Community of Practice database.

In Uganda they have created **CFAR-Uganda**, which is in the process of achieving NGO status, and working with UNYPA, Makerere University and others to make use of the *Stepping Stones* programmes.

Stepping Stones Kenya Network was registered in 2018 with the aim to spearhead and take the lead in promoting the use and oversee the implementation of all *Stepping Stones* methodology trainings in Kenya by a team of accredited *Stepping Stones* trainers. Their aim is to ensure that *Stepping Stones* implementation is protected and safeguarded. The organization supports all the like-minded partners who are implementing the *Stepping Stones* methodology in their organizations.

In Tanzania they are awaiting the imminent authorisation of a Tanzanian edition of *Stepping Stones with Children* by TACAIDS.

In Zimbabwe, *Stepping Stones with Children* accredited facilitator, Martha Tholanah, is seeking funds to support the use of the programme in the cyclone-devastated Chimanimani region.

In Timor Leste, The Asia Foundation, with the support of CFAR-Uganda, is making use of *Stepping Stones* structure and principles, to develop an adaptation suitable for that context.

Annex 4: More about the ALIV[H]E Framework

What is the ALIV[H]E Framework?

“The Action Linking Initiatives on Violence Against Women and HIV Everywhere (ALIV[H]E) Framework is an applied research implementation framework. It draws on the evidence for ‘what works’ to prevent HIV and violence against women and adolescent girls (VAW) in all their diversity, in the context of HIV. ...The framework aims to support NGOs and CBOs, working with community members, in leading creative and dynamic programmes to address VAW in the context of HIV. The framework can also be used by donors, researchers, policy-makers and others to expand the evidence base in partnership with NGOs and CBOs.”
UNAIDS 2017

The ALIV[H]E Framework was developed by women living with HIV, NGOs and researchers together for UNAIDS. It sets out a way in which researchers, activists and community members working together can develop both formal and participatory, quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the changes they want to see when developing initiatives to reduce VAWG in the context of HIV.

The ALIV[H]E Framework Gender Change Matrix was originally designed by Gender At Work and has been adopted by the Global Fund for Women to measure the change achieved by its grantees. This gender change matrix expands on the widely used ‘socio-ecologic model’ by working across two axes, instead of one. In this newer matrix, the horizontal axis moves from informal to formal sectors. The vertical axis moves from individual to systemic dimensions.



Last words



Martha Tholanah (Zimbabwe):

"My experience with training as a *Stepping Stones* facilitator has been phenomenal in terms of my own life and in my ability to be able to work with children and caregivers. I trained as a family therapist and use systems family therapy. It tied in very well but *Stepping Stones* went a big step further in the way that I interact. For me, as a woman living with HIV, it was something that had been missing. When I first went into the training I had been living with HIV for over 10 years and I was public about my status. But I don't think I was able to use being public about my status in a way which facilitates better communication, because when I first disclosed my status publicly it was for education and to aid others to disclose, to make sure someone knows, to get the appropriate support. With the *Stepping Stones* training, this was enhanced in using it effectively even in board rooms and in communities with children and caregivers...."

When I did the training, I was working in a children's organisation and also we were working with caregivers. It helped a lot of the children who were HIV positive and their caregivers in the way they were communicating. Once you go into it, it's not just working on the children. You are working on yourself as well as the facilitator. Also the caregivers find they are able to work a lot on the self. This is what I value most and is missing in a lot of the programmes we were doing. In terms of myself personally, my daughter was going into adolescence when I did the training and it helped a lot that we were able to talk openly about a lot of issues it also went beyond me and my child. I also have nephews and nieces. This has been a good way of actually having someone in the family who was talking openly, ... and we also gradually include their parents to be able to help their children. For me it was a personal transformation but also helped me personally on the self as well as professionally and in the community facilitation that I do."



Angelina Namiba (UK/Kenya):

"The training was very transformational, both personally and professionally. I too have a daughter and after the training it has made it much easier to have personal conversations with her..... Sometimes we don't have the language to speak to our young people but with the manual... it's a tool that really helps you talk with young people... I'm also a volunteer with an association of children living with HIV in the UK. Every year we have a summer camp for nearly 100 of them. For me having gone through the training enabled me to communicate really well and run workshops with them. But the training doesn't just give you training for yourself - it really helped me build on my self-esteem. You just watch women, you see how their confidence builds, they are able to share the information they get with their peers - and that cascades - I've been able to share what I have learnt with many other women living with HIV as well as build up my own self-esteem. It's also about professional and personal development. Often when women are diagnosed they may stop their careers, they are just trying to cope with living with HIV, they may have some mental health issues. But when I trained it wasn't just learning the skills. The way that we were taught meant that I was able to use that training to do other trainings. So the skills that I gained I haven't stopped using them. The skills have translated and have helped women professionally as well as in their own personal development."



“

Bringing our individual and collective ideas to the main STREAM. These shape our future and the future of the communities we serve and exist for. **OUR NETWORK OUR TRUE COLOURS**”. Pfiiraeli Kiwia, Tanzania



“

STREAM NETWORK formation brings together a strong partnership of like-minded practitioners in order to address significant challenges our communities are facing in light of prevention of HIV, SGBV, and other social injustices. This strategic plan is a road map that shall nourish prevention and responses for communities to respond to children, women, men and give opportunity for them to live life to its fullness without prejudice.” Martin Opondo, Kenya



“

The STREAM Network opens opportunities for *Stepping Stones* Trainers and Practitioners as well as networks of women living with HIV to be able to reach out to communities and policy makers towards SRHR-, Gender- and HIV-focused programming. Through community-led initiatives using the *Stepping Stones* Programmes, these key issues will be dealt with from the root, that later will guide policies and decision-making at society level by engaging communities in discussions around SRHR, gender, violence against women and children and HIV, so that they have the agency to pursue positive changes that are better suited for their contexts, with support from the network as one voice.” Sonia Kusiima, Uganda



“

The STREAM Network brings together two entities (expertise) that are crucial to mitigate the impact and realities of AIDS and to reduce the violence, stigma and discrimination related to HIV and AIDS. Societal norms, values and systems that oppress women and children are well articulated in *Stepping Stones & Stepping Stones Plus* and address the unequal power balance in gender relations that favours men. This brings and leads to total transformation of the individual and society belief system to a new dispensation that fosters equality between men and women in decision-making.” Patience Muyambo, Zimbabwe



“The STREAM Network brings together the experience and expertise of persons living with HIV and that of *Stepping Stones* practitioners, who help in putting a smile on the faces of vulnerable communities in using the *Stepping Stones* communication methodologies. The Network will work through country sub-networks and development partners and individuals. The STREAM shall mainly support in coordinating and enhancing capacity-building for the country networks in line with STREAM Vision and Objectives.

Through the rights-based children- & women-centred focus, the Network shall be applying the currently approved *Stepping Stones* training packages, which aim to reduce gender-based VAWG, supporting communities to feel empowered to make informed decisions for better lives.” Jude Okajje, Uganda



“STREAM Network

Different ideas - Different people - from Different cultures or backgrounds supports each other to achieve the same goal.” Martha Kamuhabwa, Tanzania



“Formation of the STREAM Network is brilliant master stroke that has immortalized and will transform the *Stepping Stones* Movement into a formidable local, regional and international giant that is going to have a lasting impact on the lives of ordinary women, men, girls, boys and people with disability affected and infected by HIV. I will ride on its waves as it navigates through thick and thin.” Barnabas Muhoma, Zimbabwe



“STREAM will be a powerful Network bringing *Stepping Stones* trainers, men and women living with HIV together. Through STREAM, we will keep the *Stepping Stones* fire burning across the world.” Florence Kilonzo, Kenya

“Photo credit: Florence Kilonzo”



“One of the best 'seeds' for 'seeding ' is quality service provision to people. You will harvest more of your expectations. Don't eat seeds. The STREAM Network will support our seeds to germinate and flourish.” Nelson Chiziza, Tanzania







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