

STREAM NETWORK UGANDA STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2029



SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

STREAM Network Uganda (*Stepping Stones* Trainers Engaging with Activist Movements) is a network that was born out of a regional meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2022, hosted by Positive Young Women Voices. The network was formed after realizing that we all seek a common purpose in our work - to uphold and maintain SRHR for women and girls in all our communities in the context of HIV irrespective of their HIV status. It was also noted that violence against women, and children forms a key part of children's and women's vulnerability to acquiring and living with HIV, across the lifespan span. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) often challenge an individual's physical, mental, and economic health and well-being across one's lifespan. It was realized that children who have experienced any form of violence in their lives often grow up to become recipients and/or perpetrators of violence in their adulthood. The network, therefore, brought together male and female *Stepping Stones* trainers with extensive experience in the implementation of transformational social norms programs like the *Stepping Stones* programme on gender, HIV, and AIDS, together with activists on policy analysis, lobbying, and advocacy at national, regional, and international levels.

STREAM Network Uganda presents opportunities for cross-learning and strengthening, as each entity leverages the other's diverse experiences, knowledge, skills, and passions. It is anticipated that through the STREAM Network strategic plan, sustainable outcomes for prevention and response to violence against women, girls, men, boys, and children will be realized including ensuring that the rights of those who are living with HIV are upheld.

To achieve the desired objectives, the Uganda STREAM strategic plan shall be implemented by CFAR Uganda and the Jacquelyne SSozi Foundation (JSF), gradually bringing on board other networks of persons living with HIV. CFAR Uganda and JSF will work with other development partners including key government ministries (Gender, Health, and Education), donor agencies, Local leaders, Civil society organizations, the private sector, and the community.

Who we are:

We are a representation of feminist women activists, women and men living with HIV and HIV practitioners who include: *Stepping Stones* Trainers and other social norms transformation practitioners. We come together to share diverse experiences, knowledge, skills, and passions to tackle HIV and Violence Against Women and Girls and strengthen SRHR.

Our expertise: STREAM Network members have a long-term, in-depth track record of expertise in supporting and working with communities and accompanying them to make informed decisions to address and overcome social and community health challenges. These include gender-based violence; limited access to HIV treatment and care and other sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls; working towards the end of early and child marriages and the negative mental health-related effects of exclusion and lack of information

and services in those areas. Additionally, members from the networks of women living with HIV are skilled in lobbying and advocacy for inclusive policies, that enable access to and use of treatment and care services by young mothers living with HIV; tackling HIV-related stigma and discrimination, strengthening cross-gender and intergenerational dialogue and action around intimate partner violence and child marriage.

Uganda context analysis

Uganda is recorded to have the youngest population globally, with an estimated population of slightly more women than men (51% females and 49% males). Over 70% of the national population is comprised of young people aged below 30 years. Gender equality and women's empowerment are considered key elements for ensuring national development. With the political goodwill supporting women's affirmative action in the political, economic, and education sectors, the country has noted improvements in gender parity and reduced the wide gap in women's participation in economic and political spaces; achieved a reduction in major health indicators like the maternal mortality rate. The government of Uganda's political commitment is manifested in the ratification of several international frameworks for the protection of women's rights and through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development which is mandated to enforce several national legal frameworks for the protection of women's rights. The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development developed the national gender policy on the elimination of gender-based violence.

These achievements notwithstanding, Uganda has continued to grapple with the aftereffects of the COVID-19 lockdown which led to a surge in cases of VAC and VAW. Many schoolgirls were sexually abused, conceived children, and were then barred from school. Many also acquired HIV thereby leading to an increase in HIV prevalence among young women- which is 2.9% and among young men is 0.8%.

To date, many communities continue to grapple with the effects of these VAW/G and VAC cases. The continuing influx of refugee populations from neighboring countries like South Sudan and DRC that are still facing conflicts and displacement adds to the national challenge. Fueled by the shifting power balance between men and women and the recent rationing of food supplies for the refugees, reports of VAW are being raised. Within our communities, we all recognize how the vicious cycle of VAW/G and VAC are both causes as well as consequences of HIV. These slow down, reduce - and often prevent - women's and children's realization of their SRHR. We all recognize that violence against women, and children forms a key part of children's and women's vulnerability both to acquiring HIV and to living with HIV, across the lifespan.

Concerning the health sector, a greater portion of the health budget is still externally financed. Even with the remarkable national commitment to ensuring integrated and comprehensive treatment access, People living with HIV often face treatment stockouts, & limited SRH services, or ineffective VAWG and VAC referral services. Uganda is badly hit by the Ukraine war, with soaring costs & grain shortages.

Climate change is leading to prolonged drought, landslides, and floods, increasing women's & girls' poverty, & their vulnerability to VAWG, as well as HIV & other SRHR violations. Around 28,000 young women migrate annually to the Gulf States as domestic servants to earn income for their families, further increasing their vulnerability to exploitation.

Political, religious & traditional patriarchal norms, polygamy & misogyny are all challenging effective SRHR work. People living with HIV are also stigmatized, with people attributing HIV to 'promiscuity'. These trends all conspire against the SRHR of women & girls in general, especially those living with HIV.

It is against this context that the STREAM Uganda network strategic plan has been developed to promote holistic and inclusive approaches to these complex challenges fueling VAW, VAC, and HIV spread in the communities we live and work in.

SECTION TWO: STREAM STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Our Mission Statement

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

Our Vision

An inclusive and safe environment for women, men, girls, and children living with and affected by HIV.

Our Goal

To contribute towards empowerment of marginalized community groups for informed healthy decisions and improved standards of living.

Our Core Program Areas

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:

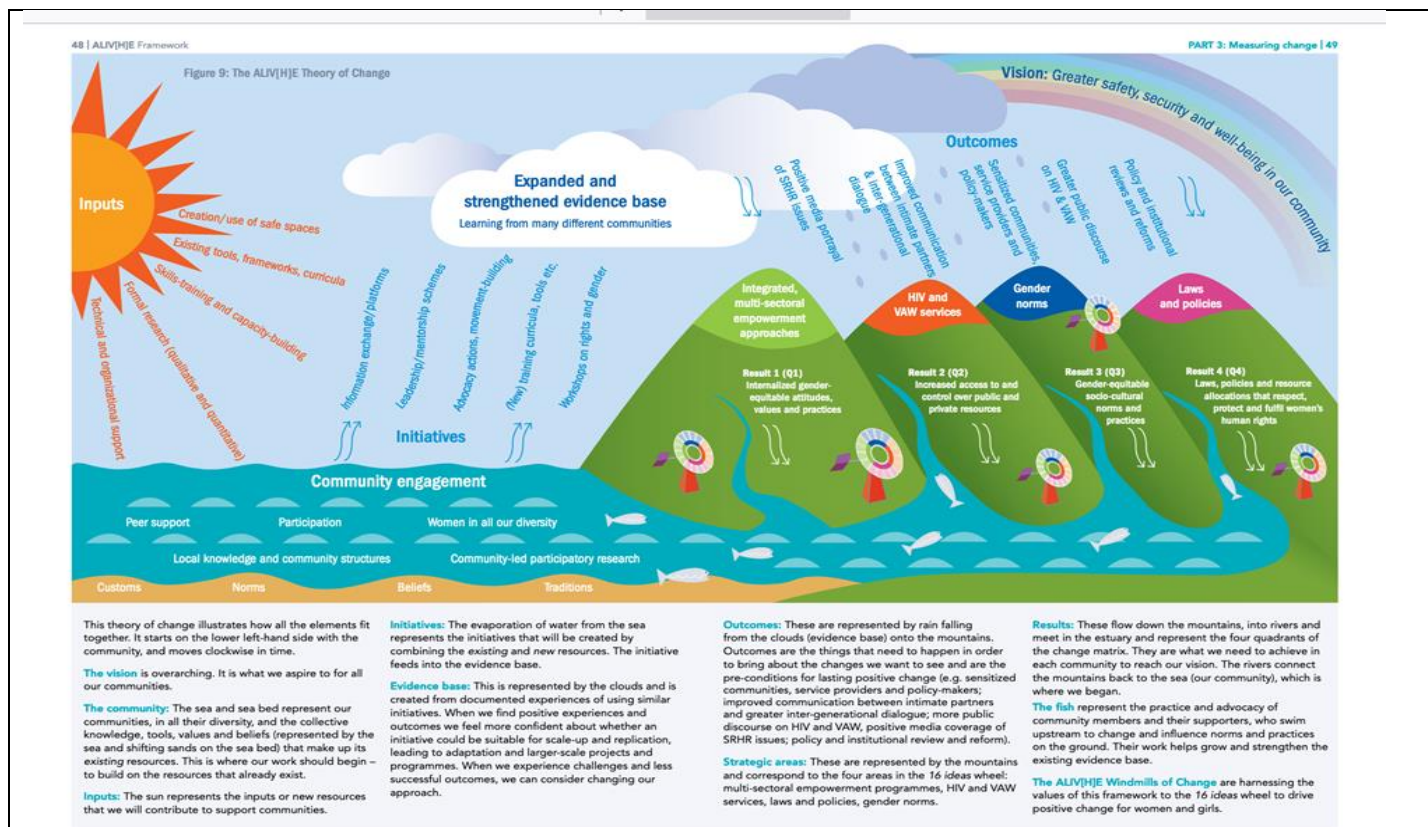
Core values of the ALIV[H]E Framework

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



Our Theory of Change

STREAM-Uganda’s network strategy adopts and contributes to the International STREAM Network theory of change as presented below. **The International STREAM Network theory of change:**



ALIV[H]E Framework Landscape 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 recognizes the essential deep knowledge and wisdom of people in their communities, at the heart of effective, ethical, and sustainable social norms change.

STREAM International strategy extract

a. Strategic Objectives

1. To strengthen the capacity of marginalized groups in identifying exclusion concerns and how to address different forms of discrimination and stigma.
2. To promote the applicability of well-tested, positive, and sustainable gender-transformative social norms to change approaches and behavior in communities and humanitarian settings.
3. To advocate and contribute to poverty reduction through the creation of linkages that enhance community access to social services and livelihood interventions.

To foster advocacy and lobbying for improved SRHR, peace, and reduced VAW/C and HIV, through partnership and networking with multi-level actors.

b. Strategic Objectives Based on the Quadrant (ALIV[H]E Framework)

Strategic Objective 1:	Strategic Outcomes 1:	Strategic objective2:	Strategic Outcomes 2:
Individual / Informal, Internalized attitudes, values, and practices:		Individual / Formal: Access to and control over public and private resources:	
To strengthen the capacity of individuals and marginalized groups in communities to identify exclusion concerns in SRHR, HIV programming, VAW/G and VAC, mental health, and how to address the different forms of discrimination and stigma.	The proportion of the community able to collectively identify community SRHR, HIV, and VAWG needs and priorities and strongly come up with viable solutions using the <i>Stepping Stones</i> programme knowledge and skills	To foster advocacy and lobbying around SRHR, peace, reduced VAW/G and VAC, HIV programmes, mental health and poverty reduction through partnership and networking with multi-level actors and creating linkages that enhance individual and community access to social services and livelihood interventions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % increase in numbers of community members seeking access to free and right information about reduction of VAWG and HIV, realized from partnerships by 2028. 2. % reduction of mental health related cases (suicide, couple related GBV as a result of counseling, social norms change and Foundation Education Health and Well-being (FEHW) development.
Strategic Objective 3:	Strategic Outcomes 3:	Strategic Objectives 4:	Strategic Outcomes 4:

Society / Informal, Socio-cultural norms, beliefs, practices:		Society / Formal: Laws, policies, resource allocation	
To promote the applicability of well-tested, positive, and sustainable gender-transformative social norms change approaches in and with communities and in Humanitarian settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % increase utilization of approved <i>Stepping Stones</i> social norms change training materials for Uganda context. 2. % reduction of GBV, VAWG, and HIV-related issues as a result of proper applicability and consistent use of <i>Stepping Stones</i> FEHW skills in and with communities and Humanitarian settings. 	To advocate for a review of National and District bylaws that increase or reduce VAWG, HIV, and access to fair treatment for cases of VAWG.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of National or district bylaws reviewed, removed or enforced to reduce VAWG and to reduce stigma for persons living with HIV. 2. % increase in the number of GBV cases testifying about receipt of fair treatment and support in the courts of law.

SECTION THREE: SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>Stream Network Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> STREAM network members have immense experience in supporting and working with women, girls, and boys living with and affected by HIV. For instance, the Jaquelyne Ssozi Foundation has supported about 150 women of which 60% are women living with HIV, 30% are Adolescent Girls and Young Women, and 10% are women of old age and 260 children with Scholarship programs in the Luwero district. The Foundation has trackable networks of women, men, girls, and boys living with HIV. STREAM network members support communities through training using the <i>Stepping Stones</i> social norms change programme, which is conducted by trainers and community facilitators. These structures continue to support communities and 	<p>Stream Network Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The network has limited financial resources to achieve its objectives.
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<p>individuals on HIV issues whenever there is a need. The <i>Stepping Stones trainers</i> have the required education qualification and experience in supporting women and girls (as well as men and boys).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a well-tested and proven methodology that has been implemented with results The member organizations are legally recognized and have the mandate to work with communities in their areas of operation 	
<p>Stream Network Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Network has vast prospects to explore both locally and internationally. Many development partners have expressed interest in utilizing the <i>Stepping Stones</i> training packages for social norms change initiatives. The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development has always supported in the development of the <i>Stepping Stones with Children and their Caregivers'</i> training package. This shows the willingness of stakeholders to respond to the health needs and priorities of women, girls, and boys who are vulnerable to HIV. Looking at the SRHR service gaps, the STREAM network can reach out to women and girls in communities. The network can utilize the existing social media communication channels to reach out to the intended beneficiaries. The willingness of development partners, the private sector, and individuals lies in the hands of the network to reach out and share about the network 	<p>Stream Network Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Government Policies that may affect the operations and performance of the STREAM network.

SECTION FOUR: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

STREAM shall undertake a thorough analysis of the current fundraising strategies and how they have performed in the past. The team shall review previous strategies and fundraising data to ascertain:

- Who makes up our donor base?
- What were our most successful campaigns?
- Which marketing channels and/or direct communication methods reach our donors best?
- Whether our fundraising metrics are performing well, and how to improve them.

STREAM shall carry out research to discover potential partners' funders who may be able and willing to donate a major gift to our intended goals and activities. This process shall involve assessing the existing

relationship with our current or existing funders, the likelihood of growing the relationship for upcoming ideas, and or taking existing projects to scale.

The organization will create and strengthen existing networks with local and external partners. STREAM shall build strong coordination and connections with prominent development partners already affiliated with STREAM and or organizations working with STREAM in and outside Uganda.

The organization shall also institute several resource mobilization strategies including, membership donations, development of fundable proposals, and coming up with an online donation form on our organization's website to receive gifts from those willing to give through the online donation form. However, STREAM shall continue exploring the interests of other potential partner entities in establishing other mechanisms to encourage individual donations.

The team shall also proceed with all necessary arrangements and efforts to reach out to foundations and philanthropic organizations, including through informal contacts and consultations with relevant organizations, providing presentations about the need to take *Stepping Stones* adaptations and utilization in Uganda to scale, to raise funds to meet the set project goals.

SECTION FIVE: MEAL FRAMEWORK

STREAM Network Uganda's Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) approach is grounded in a participatory approach and ALIV[H]E Framework that promotes community involvement in the design of the desired results. The Monitoring and Evaluation team shall develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will be utilized to track the progress of the Network activities and to document lessons learned and success stories from STREAM network interventions. Desired quantitative and qualitative data collection tools shall be developed to suit the desired research results.

The monitoring and evaluation process will start with gathering baseline information to provide a starting point for the strategic plan. This will be done through interactive peer group-based consultative processes. Working with the peer group to assess the baseline situation will enable the gathering of what has already been done by STREAM in the various priority areas for STREAM Network Uganda.

Resources will be invested in ensuring that both the qualitative and quantitative data required for measuring the strategy outcomes and impact are effectively tracked and documented.

The process will specifically include;

- a. Designing a mechanism for active participation of the community through peer groups,
- b. Documentation and sharing of the lessons generated from the implementation of the *Stepping Stones* programmes
- c. Design of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework guiding routine tracking of the outcomes and impact

- d. Annual reviews with members of STREAM trainers to inform the organization of the annual report
- e. Alignment of the STREAM anticipated outcome and impact indicators with the national and global GBV, VAC, VAW, and HIV frameworks. This will strengthen the strategy's relevance.

SECTION SIX: ENGAGING WITH PARTICIPANTS

a. Our Work Approach

STREAM-Uganda is a collective of trainers currently in the *Stepping Stones* programme and networks/ organizations of people living with HIV. Each of them has a wealth of experience with community-based social norms change approaches. Our approach uses interactive and community participatory exercises to engage different peer groups in understanding some of the negative cultural practices perpetuating violence against women, girls, and children. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults irrespective of their social, and economic status. We focus on all children, young people, and vulnerable adults, who come into contact with staff and other stakeholders as part of the delivery of the organization's mission and objectives. The *Stepping Stones* programme promotes learning and self-reflection; this is a journey to move to a more protective and supportive environment for women, girls, and children. It has three manuals addressing different issues from SRHR, VAW/G and VAC, HIV, and mental health among others. *Stepping Stones and Stepping Stones Plus* (2016) is designed to help trainers and community members engage with young and older women and men, (aged from about 15 years upwards), working separately and together, to explore their social, sexual, and psychological needs and desires, to overcome their communication blocks, and to practice ways of enriching their relationships. The workshop sessions help individuals, peers, and their communities move step by step to change behaviors and build healthy relationships. *Stepping Stones for Peace and Prosperity* is focused on reframing masculinities around violence against women and girls (VAW/G) and violence against children (VAC), in a post-conflict context where sexual and gender-based violence and small arms proliferation are widespread.

The *Stepping Stones with Children and their Caregivers* package is a community participatory process that engages 3 (three) peer groups (Children 5-14 years and Caregivers of children living with and affected by HIV). It contains powerful exercises to engage children and their caregivers, convey information, explore norms, discover their abilities, and individually and jointly create stronger ways of being and doing. The sessions cover a wide range of topics in this framework including psycho-social well-being and resilience, assertiveness, bereavement, HIV testing, living well with HIV, preventing sexual abuse, and supporting survivors of abuse. They cover issues faced by all young people as they grow up, which may be particularly challenging for those affected by HIV, from friendships at school to relationships, sexuality, and livelihoods.

b. Our Partnerships

The STREAM Network in Uganda will work with existing and new networks of people living with HIV and partners in development at different levels (sub-county, district, and country levels). On the one hand, those of us who are *Stepping Stones* trainers intend to engage the expertise of those of us living with HIV

through the latter's lived experiences in the appropriate adaptation, of the programme(s). Those of us living with HIV will also be trained by the trainers as facilitators of the respective programmes, to implement them and roll them out. The trainers will also be supporting those of us who are living with HIV in our advocacy campaigns around the issues that the programmes address.

As a member of the international STREAM network, STREAM Uganda will work in partnership with the regional and other respective country networks in the membership. In Uganda, we work with existing government structures and intend to conduct joint planning meetings with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), the Ministry of Health (MoH), and the Ministry of Education and Sports as line ministries for the proposed intervention to be conducted. This will guide work with district local government structures that are custodians of different policies and frameworks and will ensure ownership and sustainability of the project. These shall be guiding effective activity implementation to avoid duplication of services, enable leveraging on resources, and serve as a referral point for community support.