

## SURVIVAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR ORPHANS (SSTOP)

**LEAD ORGANIZATIONS:** Training Internationally for the Orphans and their Survival (TIOS)

**COUNTRY:** Mozambique

**HIV PROGRAM AREA:** Prevention, Care and Support

### OVERVIEW:

SSTOP mitigates risk of involvement in transactional sex among orphans and vulnerable teenage girls. Through the production of anatomical dolls, the project provides participants with income-generating skills and a way to support themselves and their families without resorting to transactional sex. At the same time, the dolls assist with the provision of accurate HIV information. In addition, the program training manual covers behavior change in sexual practices, basic health and safety, self-defense and women's rights. Anecdotal evidence shows positive changes in participating girls' lifestyles. Though the project has met some resistance for excluding boys, it maintains this policy because girls lack many opportunities that boys have. A key lesson learned is the need to couple attempts at behavior change with viable alternative options to generate income.

BACKGROUND											
HIV & AIDS Program Goals	SSTOP targets orphans and vulnerable teenage girls who may be compelled to participate in transactional sex to support themselves and their family members. The objective is to provide them with an income-generating skill and accurate HIV information.										
Gender Strategies Addressed	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; width: 20px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Reducing violence and coercion</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Addressing male norms and behaviors</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Increasing women's legal protection</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Increasing women's access to income and productive resources</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Other:</td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reducing violence and coercion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Addressing male norms and behaviors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increasing women's legal protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increasing women's access to income and productive resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
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Description of Intervention	<p>SSTOP produces anatomical dolls to be used as a tool for improved HIV awareness training. Simultaneously, the "Five Components of HIV" Program Training Manual promotes behavioral change in sexual practices and aims to break through educational and language barriers. The program is implemented by the AIDS Orphans Skills Centers (AOSCI), known in Mozambique as TIOS. TIOS conducts training sessions using this manual monthly or bimonthly, depending on the students' semester schedule. Public and adult sessions are normally held every month. Also, a week-long "training of trainers" course is offered quarterly. The training manual teaches facts about HIV in a simple manner and uses memory techniques so that participants can comprehend, remember and repeat accurately the facts of HIV transmission.</p> <p>In addition to HIV education, SSTOP addresses several gender-related issues. The project seeks to increase girls' <b>access to income</b> by introducing income-generating and small business skills to participants. Many of the girls are having transactional sex to survive and help feed their families. Providing an opportunity for them to learn skills that can generate income in a positive way eliminates the need for transactional sex and</p>										

	<p>empowers them to make healthier choices. For girls ages 9–13, a girl’s club offers training in income-generating “household activities,” such as making soap or candles, sewing, and knitting. Older girls (14–19) can attend sewing classes where they learn to make the anatomical dolls used in the HIV education and awareness training. The girls are paid based on quality production of the dolls. The project also organizes apprenticeships within the training center, with, for example, the accountant, the sewing teacher, or the bread teacher. This provides a substitute teacher if a regular teacher leaves, while also training the girls in marketable job skills.</p> <p>The SSTOP program manual also provides basic health and safety/first aid training so that women can take control of their own health. It also includes information about family law and women’s rights to increase girls’ awareness of <b>legal protections</b> for women.</p> <p>In addressing gender-based <b>violence</b>, a separate self-defense course, offered in two three-hour sessions, covers what to do when a girl <i>can</i> fight back (a situation with a thief, intoxicated person, etc.) as well as when she may <i>not</i> be able to physically fight back (such as when dealing with a policeman, teacher or family member). In the latter case, girls are shown how to “talk your way out of the situation” rather than physically fight back. This course also covers the process of filing a police report in an abusive situation with a man and recommends organizations that support women who have been raped or sexually abused. Men are never permitted to participate in this course.</p>
Target Audience	Adolescent girls, ages 14–19 who are responsible for caring for younger siblings, and other disadvantaged girls
Level of Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community</li> <li>▪ District</li> </ul>
Geographic Location	Chimoio district/city of the Manica province, Western Mozambique
Timeframe	June 2006–ongoing
Funders	The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
Partner Organizations	<p><i>Implementation partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Church World Service</li> <li>▪ Columbia University</li> <li>▪ Foundation for Community Development (FDC)</li> <li>▪ Health Alliance International (HAI)</li> <li>▪ Peace Corps</li> <li>▪ Population Services International (PSI)</li> </ul> <p><i>Evaluation partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ilene Speizer, Department of Maternal and Child Health, University of North Carolina School of Public Health, Chapel Hill</li> </ul>

<b>IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS</b>	
Start-up and Implementation Process	<p>In developing the SSTOP project, TIOS wanted to combine HIV awareness with basic safety and first aid. TIOS also knew that they needed a visual tool that would be understood and accepted by the local culture. Because women are traditionally allowed to produce domestic products, sewing dolls could be considered a “girl’s” career. Initial classes also showed participants how to manage the money a family uses for their daily needs, find ways to improve their living situation, and identify ways to generate more income in the future.</p> <p>The self-defense and family law classes evolved organically as additional needs were identified. For example, after the income-generating classes, participants felt empowered yet still placed great importance on attracting men. The family law classes helped them become aware of the legal difficulties of having a child without being married to the father of the child.</p>
Local Involvement/ Ownership	<p>Local community and church leaders, as well as school administrators and local <i>bairro</i> officials, helped SSTOP select girls to join the project. SSTOP also works in partnership with the National Council to Combat AIDS and Accao Social, a local organization that helps orphans and widows.</p>
Evaluation Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Qualitative and anecdotal evidence:</i> An evaluator from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill conducted a site visit and used qualitative methods to gather girls' testimonials and observe lifestyle changes.</li> <li>▪ <i>Monitoring:</i> Data were collected by TIOS on the number of participants trained and how many participants tested for HIV after attending prevention sessions. TIOS also collected data on the number of adolescent girls who are direct and indirect program beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
Evaluation Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Qualitative and anecdotal evidence:</i> Findings indicate that participants are better organizing their home finances and gaining vocational skills for income generation in the future. In interviews, family members said that the girls would now be able to choose their own husbands rather than having to say yes to any proposal offered. Girls also are delaying marriage, choosing to support themselves longer through the project’s income-generating activities, and not engaging in early sexual activity without protection.</li> <li>▪ <i>Monitoring:</i> At the TIOS training center, more than 500 participants have been trained in HIV training, self-defense and more. Typically, about 10 percent of participants have tested for HIV by show of hands at the beginning of a 90-day course, and more than 75 percent have tested by the end. Also, nearly 2,000 adolescent girls are direct program recipients and 29,415 adolescent girls are indirect recipients (indirect includes five family members of direct program recipients, as well as recipients who have received training from more than 500 trainers that TIOS has trained).</li> </ul>
Replication and Scale-up Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Several organizations have expressed interest in replicating the SSTOP project, and TIOS is currently working with Church World</li> </ul>

	<p>Service on replication. TIOS is also adding to the HIV training and income-generating activities. In August 2008, SSTOP began a series of income-generation seminars with instructions on how to make cement water filters, anti-itch and anti-bacterial soaps, and insect-repellent candles. In November 2008, the project will offer classes on computer graphic arts in which participants will make manuals, posters and safety training materials to complement the survival skills curriculum. SSTOP hopes to have a comprehensive training center by 2009 to train new trainers and produce all materials needed to teach safety and survival skills throughout Mozambique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The International Trade Cooperative (ITC) has received the SSTOP training and experienced a big change in behavior among the trainees of their project. ITC also will work with TIOS as they create a “school farm” and girls center in a rural community outside of Chimoio.</li> </ul>
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**LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES**

<p>Key Findings and Lessons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to elicit behavior change must also provide girls with alternative choices. Nobody chooses to live a marginal life; a marginal life comes from a perceived or real lack of options.</li> </ul>
<p>Challenges and Unforeseen Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finding girls who were not pregnant or already mothers was a challenge.</li> <li>▪ Even though the project improved self-esteem and gave girls an income-generating skill, participants still viewed marriage and motherhood as the most important things in a woman's life. This could offset project efforts around safe sex, as their new skills made the girls more attractive to men.</li> <li>▪ TIOS applied for funding in August but the funds arrived in December when prices were 20 percent higher. This is especially challenging, as TIOS is a small organization and cannot begin programs without the funding. Once the funding arrives there is a short time frame to complete the project. It is a bit of a struggle to find a teacher and students for the courses within such a short time frame. If the date of the arrival of the funds were guaranteed, TIOS could have received applications for students and hired teachers in advance.</li> <li>▪ The project occasionally meets pressure to allow boys access to the unique opportunities at the training center. However, TIOS holds to the original design because undereducated girls typically have more responsibilities than boys, and because undereducated boys have many income-generating possibilities unavailable to girls. However, the project has been careful to choose activities for girls that can be considered “home” or “domestic” products. Recently, SSTOP has begun to challenge gender bias by offering girls computer training courses, which is possible because TIOS has built up trust since it has been a part of the community for three years.</li> <li>▪ Finding trustworthy, reliable personnel can be a challenge.</li> </ul>

<p>Recommendations for Replication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire personnel who are intelligent, organized, and practical. Ideally they should have some kind of salary to cut down on corruption, and good training.</li> <li>▪ The community must take ownership of the project, investing their time and support. Otherwise, the organization starting the training center will have to run it independently for many years.</li> <li>▪ It is necessary to have a very organized accounting/purchasing person to run operations efficiently.</li> <li>▪ It is helpful to have knowledge of local family law and local cultural practices, and to know what other local organizations are doing to share ideas and avoid repetition of project activities.</li> <li>▪ It is important to ensure that the project meets the community's actual needs, and to show the community the benefits and incentives of the project. Often people are not aware that they are missing valuable information, like basic first aid, and how it can be a tremendous advantage for them and decrease poverty within families.</li> </ul>
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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

<p>Program References and Resources</p>	<p>KCFR News. "News Feature: AIDS Dolls." Feb. 18, 2008.  <a href="http://www.kcfr.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=94&amp;Itemid=234&amp;target_pg=com_day&amp;date=02/18/2008">http://www.kcfr.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=94&amp;Itemid=234&amp;target_pg=com_day&amp;date=02/18/2008</a>. Accessed October 17, 2008.</p> <p>Lang, J. "How Did Amy End Up in Africa." 2007.  <a href="http://denver.yourhub.com/Englewood/Stories/Faith/General-Faith/Story~292624.aspx">http://denver.yourhub.com/Englewood/Stories/Faith/General-Faith/Story~292624.aspx</a>. Accessed October 17, 2008.</p> <p>"Nonprofit Teaches African Orphans Survival Skills." 2006.  <a href="http://www.easychairmedia.com/Colorado_Springs/2006_CS_Noodles/pdf_files/06.pdf">http://www.easychairmedia.com/Colorado_Springs/2006_CS_Noodles/pdf_files/06.pdf</a>. Accessed October 17, 2008.</p> <p>Stachura, S. "Amy Gillsepie's Mozambique." 2006.  <a href="http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/07/26/amygillespie/">http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/07/26/amygillespie/</a>  Accessed October 17, 2008.</p> <p>TIOS. <i>TIOS Mozambique</i> 2, no. 1 (Aug. 15, 2008).  <a href="http://aosci.org/downloads/Aug%2015%202008.pdf">http://aosci.org/downloads/Aug%2015%202008.pdf</a>.</p>
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