

REPSSI Strategy 2011- 2015

From Strength to Strength



The Context

The crises of poverty, conflict, HIV and AIDS continue to have devastating consequences for millions of children and youth in East and Southern Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for **two thirds of HIV infections worldwide and 72% of the world's AIDS-related deaths.**

Two thirds of the population in the SADC region live below the poverty line, and it has **one of the highest under-5 mortality rates in the world.**

More than two decades of conflict in Angola, Mozambique and Uganda have **displaced and traumatised** thousands of children, youth, families and communities.

Additional factors increasing the vulnerability of children and youth in the region include: **physical and sexual abuse; migration; exploitation; trafficking; child marriage; and interrupted or inadequate education.**

All of this has serious consequences for the social and emotional (psychosocial) wellbeing of affected children and youth. Many have lost parents and family, experienced

deprivation and abuse, been stigmatised, witnessed atrocities, and suffered overwhelming grief.

The situation demands a regional, coordinated response, to which REPSSI's new strategy strives to contribute.

Psychosocial Support is love, care and protection. It is support for the emotional and social aspects of a child's life, so that they can live with hope and dignity.

Psychosocial support includes ensuring the meaningful participation of children in issues affecting them, listening and responding to children's problems, helping children to appreciate their history and identity, encouraging children to set goals and reach their potential, and ensuring that children have positive relationships in their lives.

Families, children and youth suffering from loss, ill health, deprivation, stigma, abuse or exploitation are critically in need of this support.

About REPSSI

The Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) is a non-profit organization working to lessen the devastating social and emotional (psychosocial) impact of HIV and AIDS, poverty and conflict on children and youth across East and Southern Africa.

REPSSI partners with NGOs and governments across East and Southern Africa. With our technical assistance, these partners implement policies and programmes which strengthen the ability of communities and families to care for and protect their children and youth.

Since 2001, REPSSI has focused on raising awareness, developing easy-to-use and culturally appropriate tools, and creating demand for psychosocial support among key stakeholders.



Where we work

We currently work in 13 countries in East and Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Successes To Date

In developing REPSSI's new strategy for 2011-2015, it was important to reflect on our successes and strengths to date, which include:

Technical Leadership

- REPSSI has firmly placed psychosocial support on the social development agenda at international, regional and national levels, raising awareness of the value of psychosocial support for the comprehensive development of vulnerable children and youth, and creating demand for psychosocial support technical support.
- The SADC *OVCY Framework and Business Plan*, and draft *Minimum Package of Services for OVCY and Psychosocial Support Conceptual Framework* are direct results of REPSSI's investment in the SADC Secretariat.

Knowledge Development

- A comprehensive body of psychosocial support knowledge has been researched, developed, tested and packaged, including resources for use at community level. Anecdotal evidence illustrates the usefulness of REPSSI tools and approaches.

- The *Certificate Course in Community-Based Work with Children and Youth*® has been developed to equip community based caregivers to provide a more professional service to children and youth. The Certificate has been rolled out to over 1500 students in 10 countries, as the first psychosocial support accreditation of its kind.

Capacity-Building

- By partnering with implementing organisations, REPSSI has developed effective capacity-building models and tools to assist these organisations with mainstreaming psychosocial support. As a result, partner NGOs are more active in community engagement and participation, and families and caregivers have been provided with increased psychosocial support.
- A pool of regional psychosocial support expertise now exists, which includes Regional Facilitators and Master Trainers, who have become key resource persons at regional and national levels.
- Through REPSSI partners, more than 5 million children now have access to some form of psychosocial support.

Strategy 2011-2015

This new phase of REPSSI's work represents a refocusing to best meet the considerable demand that now exists for mainstreaming psychosocial support into programmes for vulnerable children and youth. This entails:

- Providing assistance through **national programmes for orphans and vulnerable children**, to ensure optimal reach and sustainability
- Increasing high-level advocacy to ensure psychosocial support becomes a **core component of the child development agenda**
- Adopting more rigorous evidence collection to support **the development of regional and international PSS standards and indicators**
- Moving from a focus on individual children to a focus on **strengthening families' and communities' competencies** to nurture and protect vulnerable children and youth
- Becoming an **accrediting authority for PSS** resources, training and programming in the region
- Adopting a **cost recovery approach** and **establishing a social enterprise** to better ensure sustainability

Strategic Vision, Mission and Goal

REPSSI's Vision

Communities and families nurture, protect and empower children and youth to enhance their psychosocial wellbeing.

REPSSI's Mission

REPSSI provides technical leadership in psychosocial support for children and youth.

Overall Goal

REPSSI contributes to promoting enabling environments for communities and families in East and Southern Africa to preserve and nurture the psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth, so that they can live with hope and dignity.

REPSSI Strategic Goal 2011-2015:

To maintain our position as a leading African psychosocial support mainstreaming technical expert.

In implementing this strategy, REPSSI's programming and resources will be developed and reviewed through a gender and a rights-based lens.

Strategic Objectives & Activities

1 KNOWLEDGE: Develop, accredit and share innovative, evidence-based and culturally appropriate resources in the application of psychosocial support (PSS) for children and youth

Activities

- Work with partners to develop evidence-informed, culturally-contextual resources which respond to emerging PSS issues
- Partner with institutions of higher learning to strengthen the evidence-base for the importance of psychosocial support
- Provide a core PSS unit standard for professional pre- and in-service training
- Contribute to strengthening PSS capacity within the region by supporting SADC and EAC processes, participating in regional task teams, and improving the Certificate course for community-based caregivers
- Develop accredited, professional pre- and in-service training resources at certificate, diploma and degree levels
- Organise and disseminate PSS knowledge, and promote regional discourse on PSS

2 ADVOCACY: Advocate for the integration of psychosocial support (PSS) into policies and programmes that affect children and youth, nationally, regionally and globally.

Activities

- Engage with SADC & EAC and other international and national partners to establish regional child care regional policies and guidelines that incorporate PSS
- Forge linkages with international, regional and national partners for joint PSS advocacy and knowledge exchange
- Strengthen the capacity of civil societies, national network partners and local communities to conduct advocacy on PSS
- Engage with media and donors to increase the public profile of REPSSI and PSS
- Use evidence to demonstrate the role of PSS in promoting effective and sustainable childcare, protection and support practices
- Contribute to the regional response to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support
- Provide consistent, accurate and relevant messaging & communication to current and potential stakeholders about REPSSI's mission and impact
- Provide support for the Regional Inter-Agency Task Team for Children and AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa (RIATT)

3 PROGRAMMING: Provide technical assistance to national programmes in at least 13 countries in East and Southern Africa to mainstream psychosocial support (PSS) and enhance family and community competences to protect and empower children and youth.

Activities

- Pursue agreements with SADC and EAC to become a technical partner for PSS
- Engage with the relevant national ministries responsible for the NPAs, to provide technical support and guidance for mainstreaming PSS into the NPA process
- Develop and implement a national partnership plan with NGOs engaged in NPA processes in each country to ensure that PSS is mainstreamed into their programmes. The plan will include provision of capacity building, mentoring and evaluation services to partners
- Engage with national Ministries of Health and Education and partner NGOs to ensure that PSS is mainstreamed into the health and education sectors
- Partner with academic institutes to deliver certificate, diploma and degree level training on mainstreaming PSS
- Monitor and evaluate programmes based on quality assurance standards, and facilitate regional cross-country learning and sharing of promising practices

Organisational Effectiveness

To realise the foregoing Strategic Objectives, REPSSI will enhance its organisational effectiveness, by:

- Strengthening financial and administrative management systems
- Developing REPSSI staff competencies necessary for proficient strategy execution
- Establishing clear change management strategies
- Mobilising adequate resources to implement mission, and establish social enterprise mechanisms to generate at least 5% of the operational funds
- Streamlining knowledge and information management systems

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation

REPSSI will develop a user-friendly and innovative Research, Monitoring & Evaluation system, to enable REPSSI and its partners to engage in ongoing dialogues, and capture relevant, gender-disaggregated data on the approaches and resources partners use.

The aim is to create a “learning network”, to share ideas concerning PSS application between REPSSI and its partners, and gather evidence for the impact of PSS programming on the wellbeing of children and communities.

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Love, care and
protection for
all children



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