

Talking HIV in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

Findings from Baseline Studies

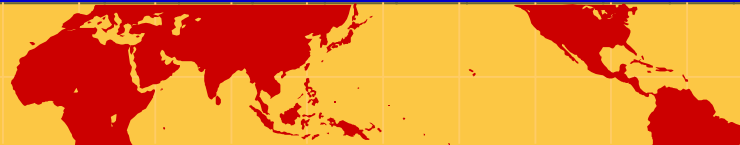
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CARE Sierra Leone

(Presented by Doris Bartel)

Reproductive Health: From Disaster to Development

October 2003



careSM

Sierra Leone



Tonkolili District

Total Population: 322,310 (estimated)

Displaced People: 30,924 (2001)

Number of dwellings destroyed: 50%*

Literacy: 14%*

Wasting malnutrition: 11%

Access to potable water: 30%

*OCHA data, 2000



CARE's programs in Tonkolili:

- Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
 - Houses
 - Water and Sanitation Systems
- Health education
- Governance and conflict reduction

HIV in Sierra Leone

- $< 1\%$ * ?
- $1 - 4\%$ * ?
- 66% ?

*CDC prevalence data, 2001

HIV Messages

Abstain! Be Faithful! Use Condoms!



But...

- What does my faithfulness matter if my husband/wife has other sexual partners?
- If I now ask my wife/husband/partner to start using condoms, what will they think?

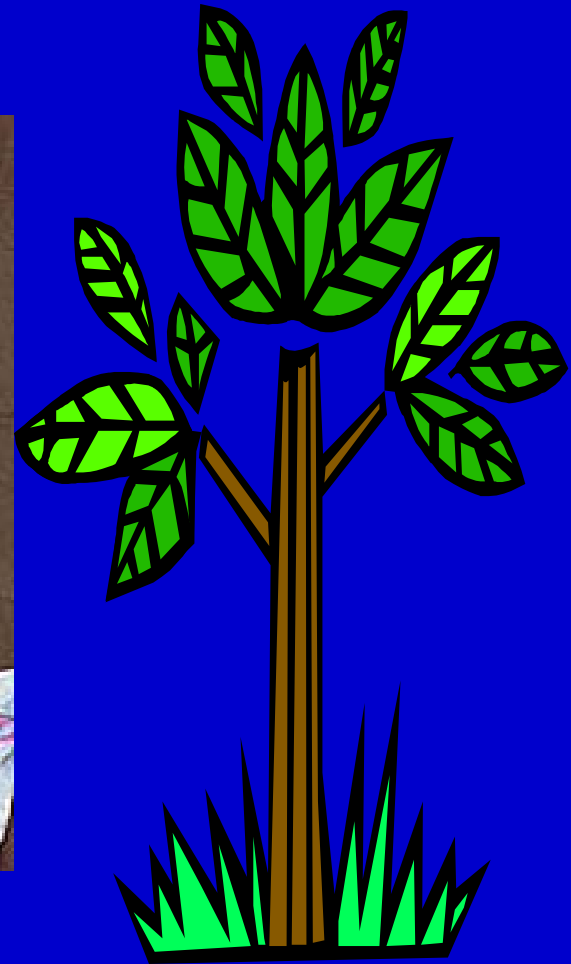


But...

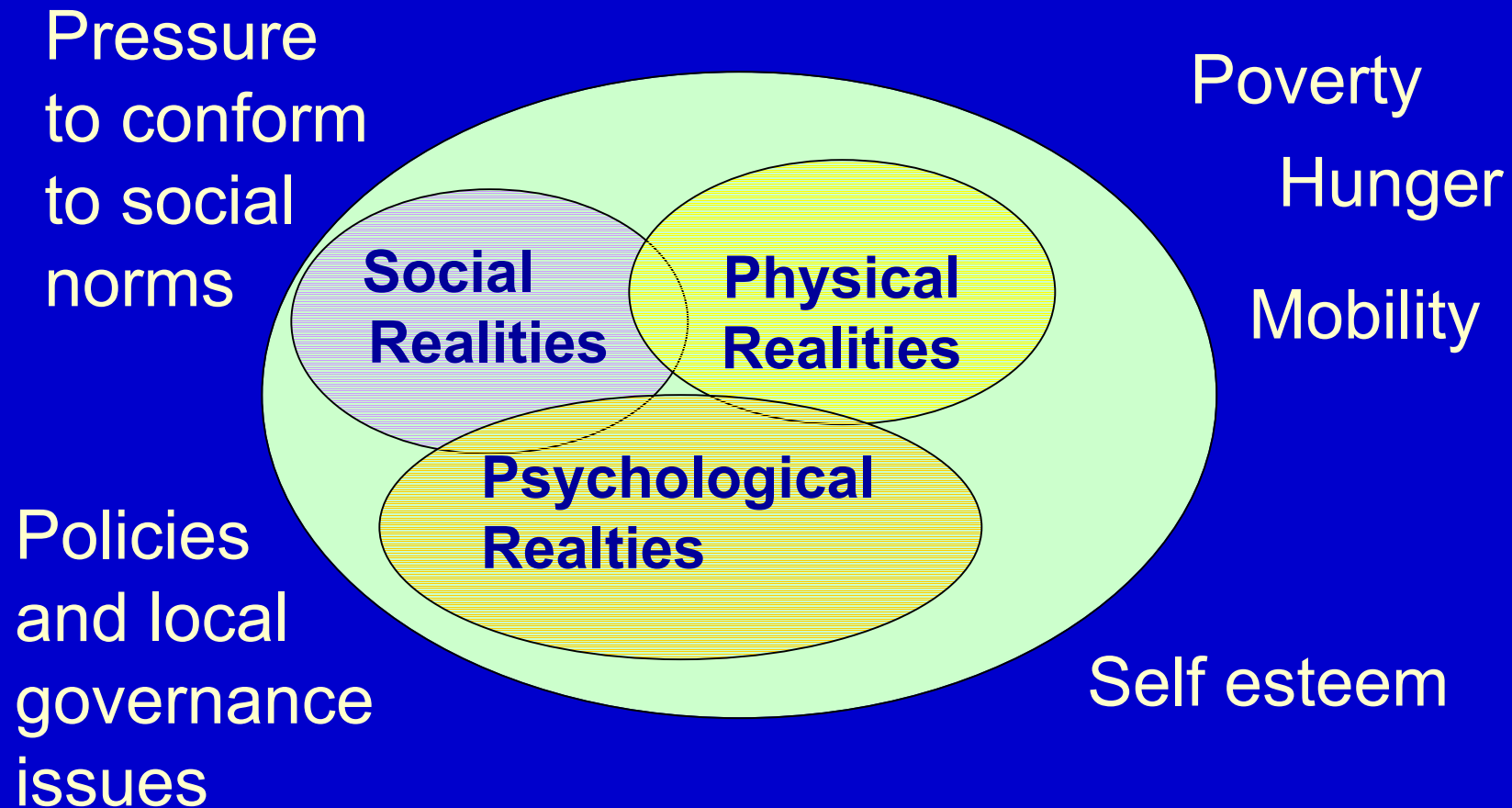
- I have not eaten for 2 days, have no family, no land. If someone offers me a piece of chicken in exchange for sex, do I have a choice?
- It is too late for me. I was raped in the war.



Current Realities of Rural Post-war Sierra Leone

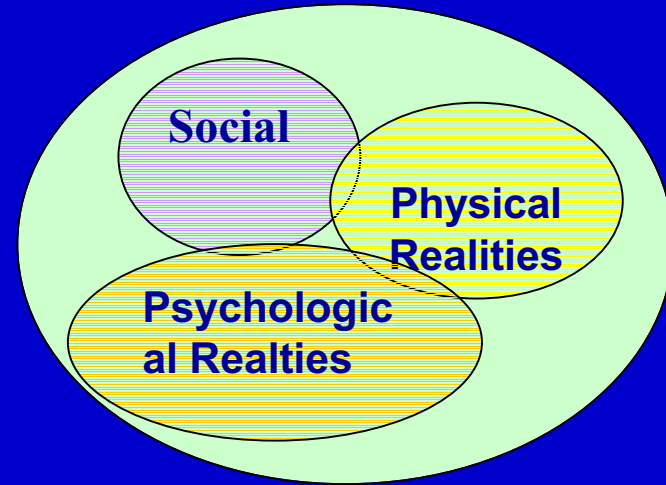


Building an integrated framework



Integrated framework for response

- Informing people
 - Fostering dialogue
 - Addressing multiple underlying causes simultaneously
 - Collective action, social change



Goal

To field test 2 methods of raising awareness and improve self-efficacy related to HIV prevention in post-conflict Sierra Leone

- Stepping Stones (adult)
- Auntie Stella (age 11 - 18)



What are Stepping Stones?

- Training materials for HIV, sexuality and gender
- 14 participatory sessions (role plays, discussions)
 - Gender awareness, GBV
 - How to communicate, including how to be assertive, how to negotiate
 - Societal and household issues that affect personal decision-making
 - Technical information on HIV, STIs
- Developed in Uganda by Action Aid, Amref and others





Purpose of the Study

To learn the levels of awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS in rural areas

To learn the societal factors that could influence behavior with regard to HIV infection

To determine the specific components of training materials best suited for post-conflict rural Sierra Leone

Research Design

	Intervention Area	Non-intervention Area
Baseline	HIV KAP survey Focus Groups	HIV KAP survey Focus Groups
Post-Intervention	HIV KAP survey Focus Groups	HIV KAP survey Focus Groups



Data Collection Methods

1. HIV Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice Survey

HIV prevention, condom use

Family communication

Partner communication

HIV stigma

2. Focus Group Discussions

Communication

Social cohesion

Governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone



Data Collection Methods

1. KAP Survey

Questionnaire conducted through interviews

4 villages in Tonkolili District

April 2003

Random selection of households

50% men, 50% women

n=240, which is 20% of population

2. Focus Group Discussions

16 focus groups



Demographic data of respondents

Survey Respondents = 240 (Intervention and Non-Intervention responses combined)

- Average age: 38.5 years
- 80% Muslim
- 92% subsistence farmers
- 78% no formal schooling



Survey Results: Condom Access and Use

Know where to get a condom?

57.9% said “Don’t Know”

Used a condom at last sex? *96.3%* said “NO”

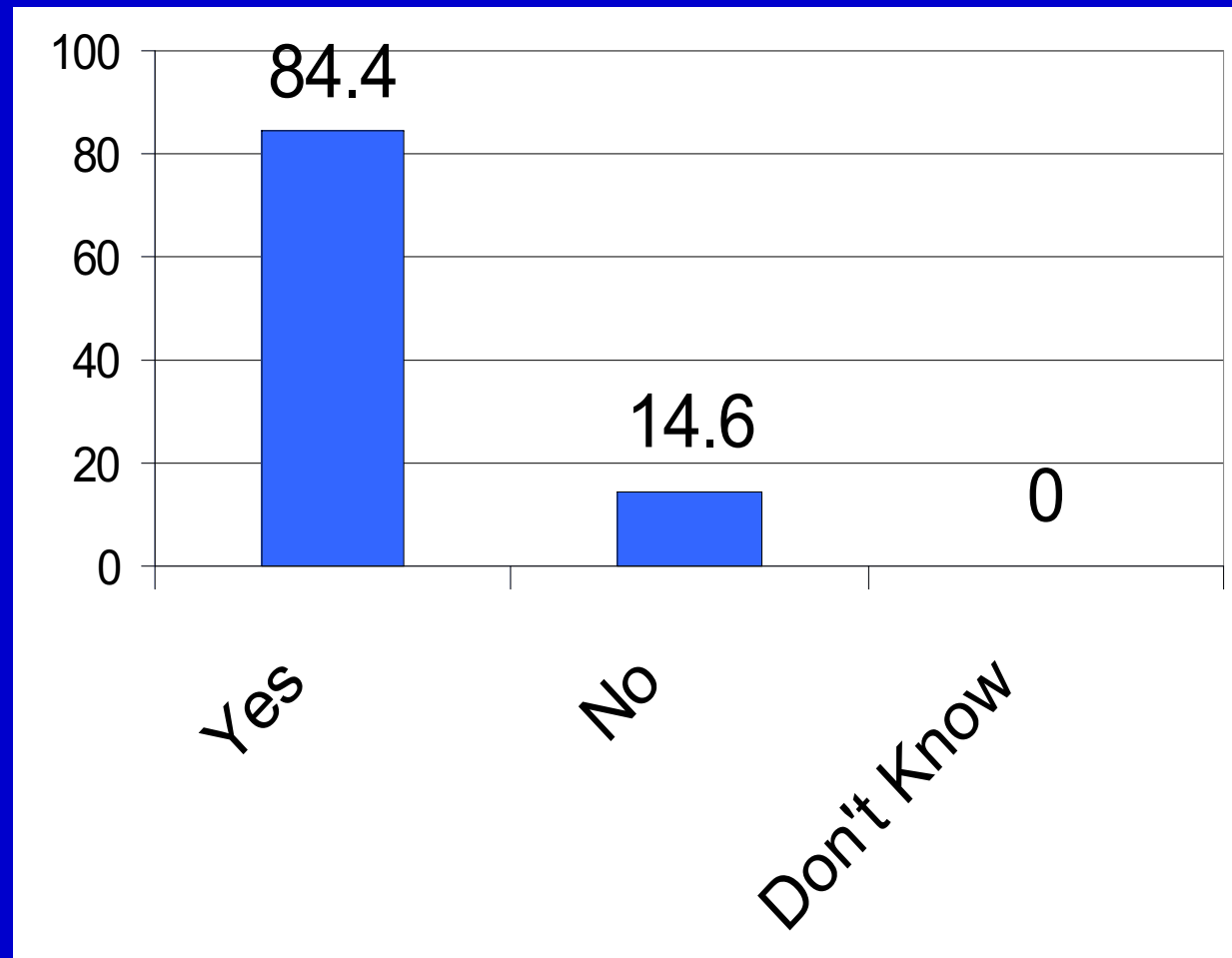
Ever used a condom? *85.5%* said “NO”

Ever seen a condom? *43%* said “NO”

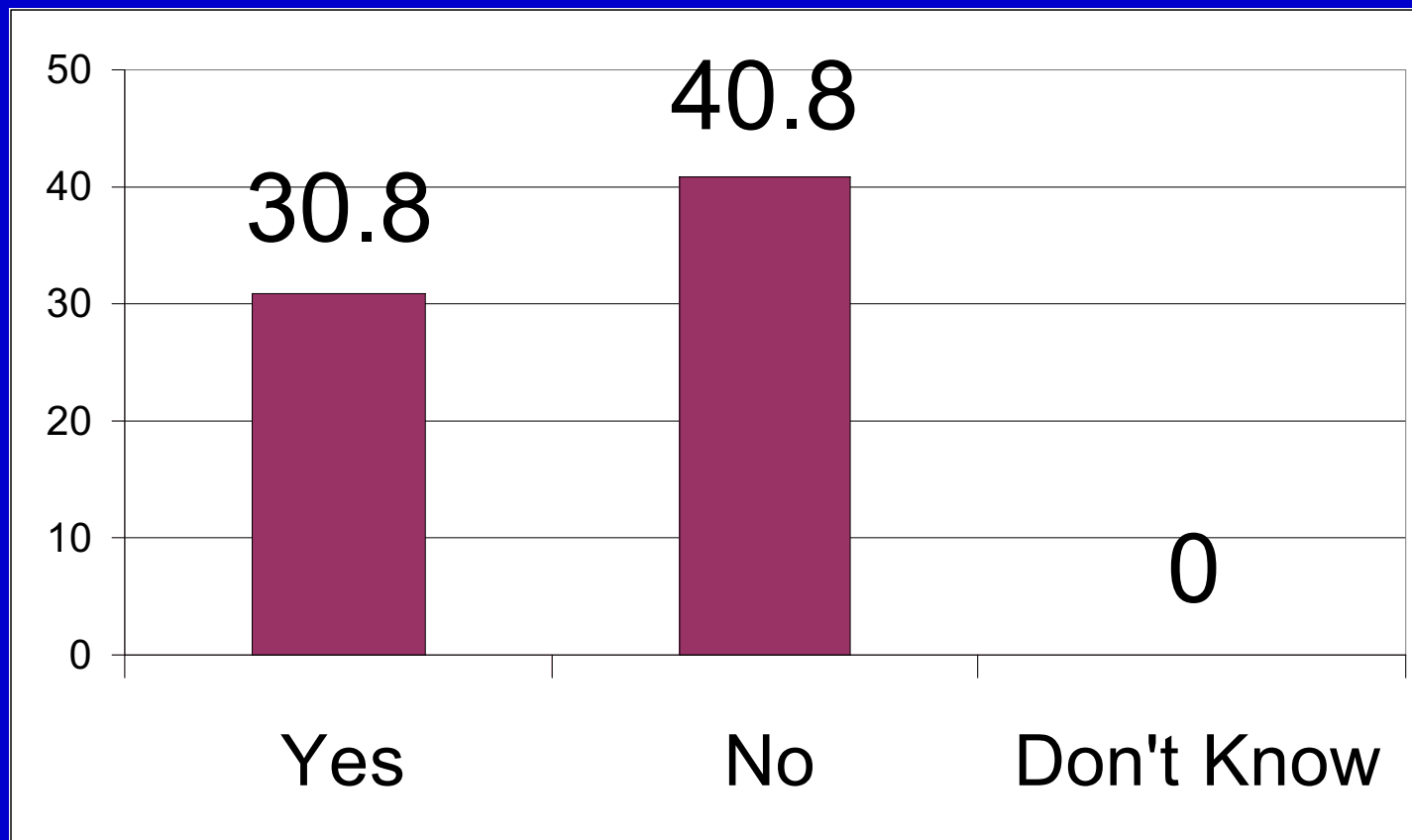


Survey results: Communication

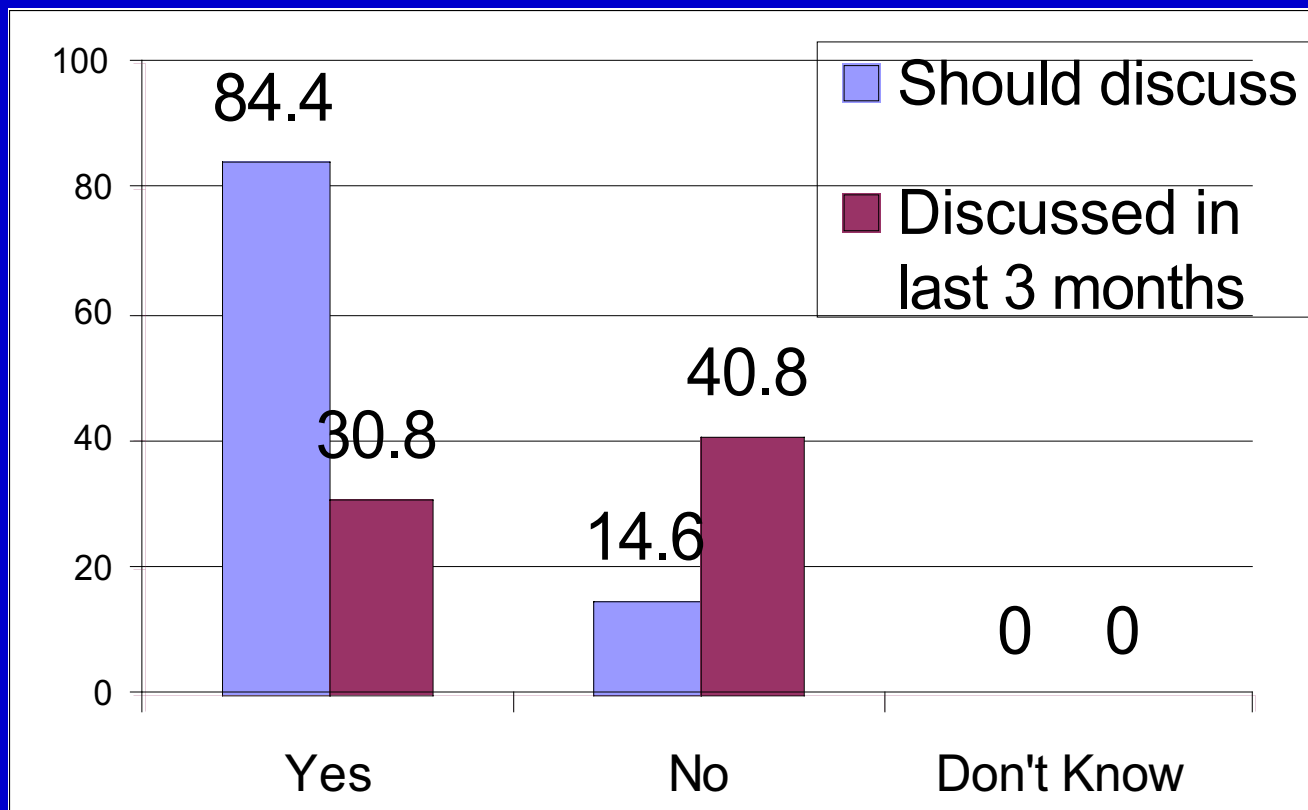
Should partners discuss sexual issues?



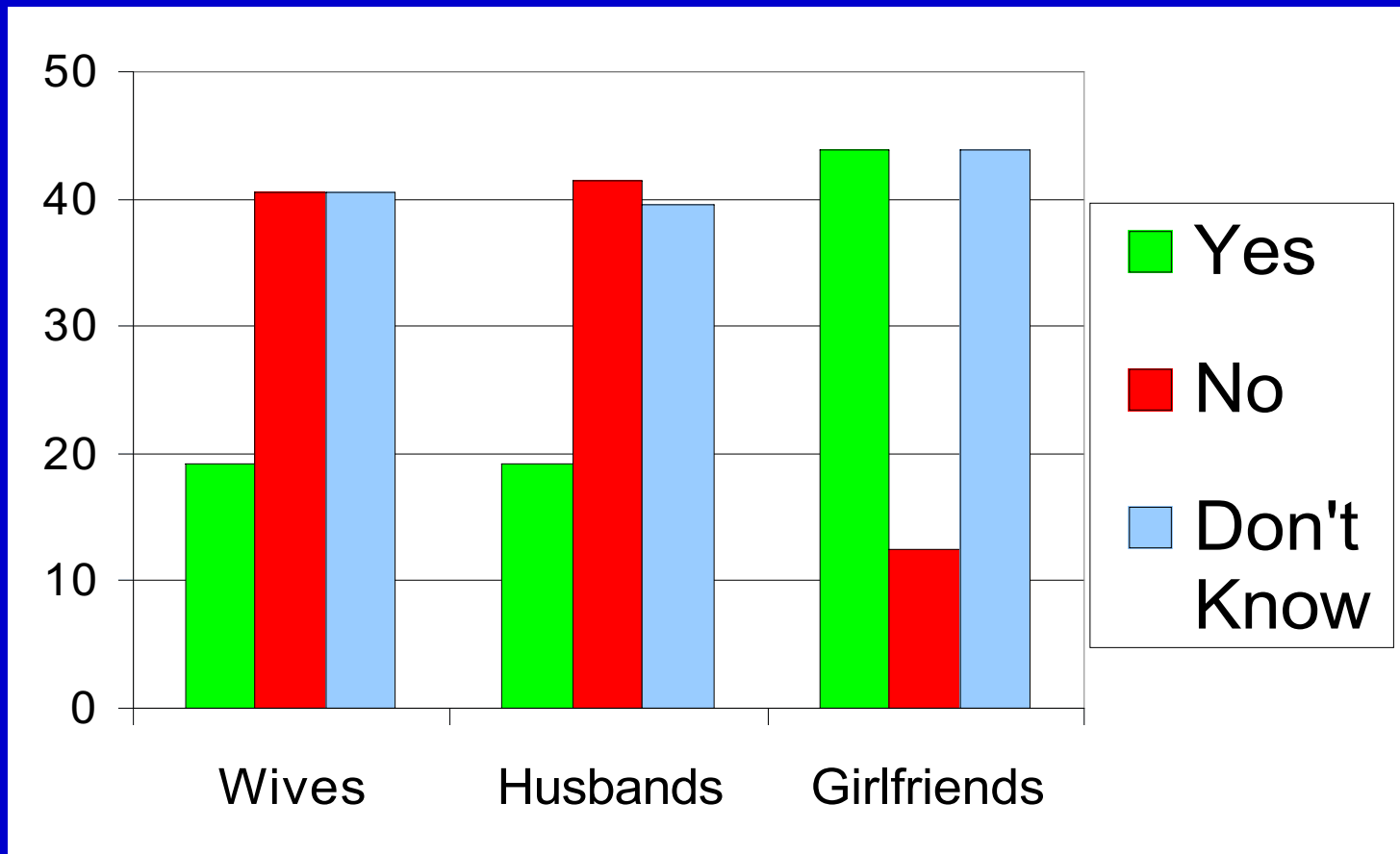
Have you discussed sexual issues in the last 3 months?



Idealistic versus realistic discussions of sexual issues

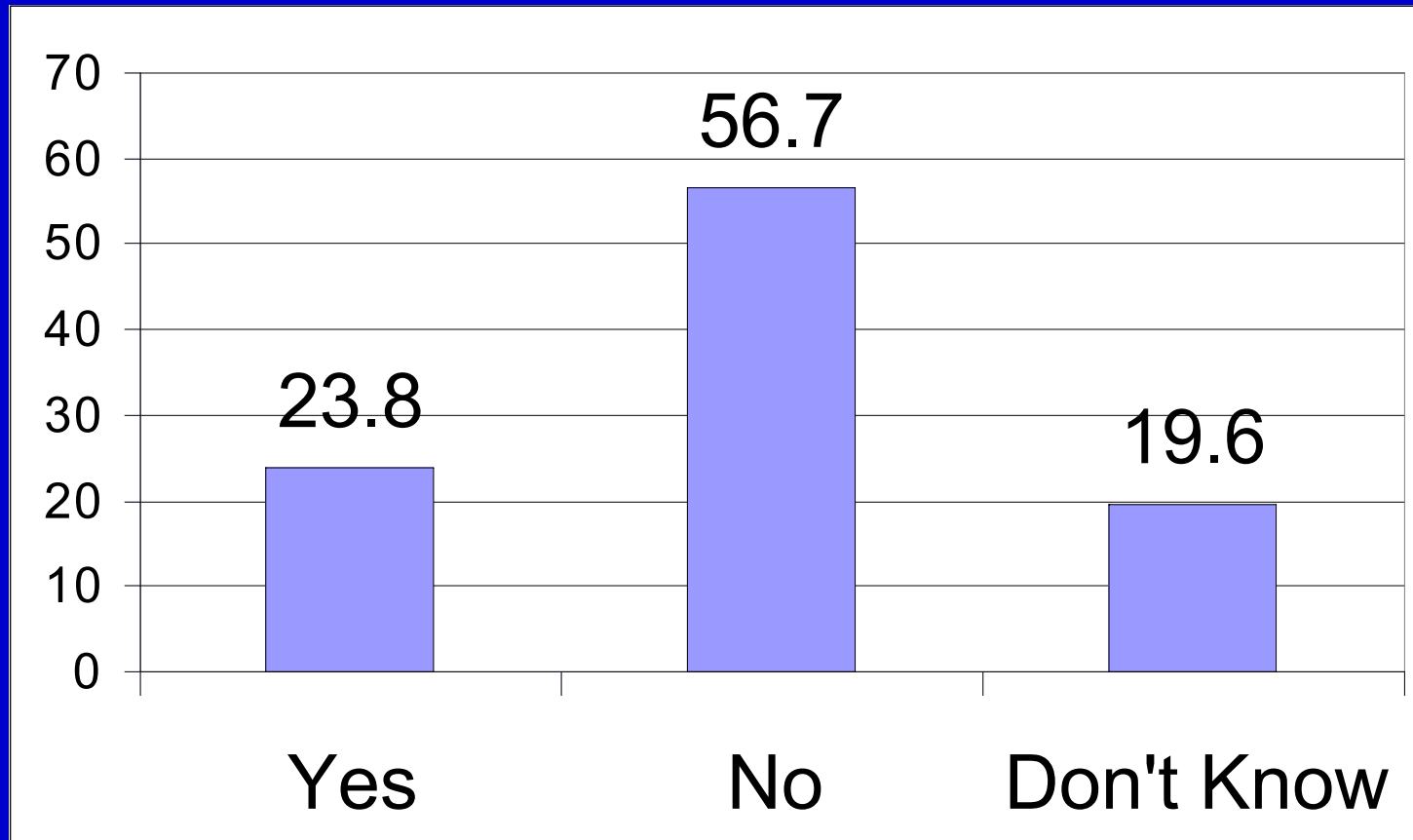


Results: Is it OK for partner to ask for condom use?



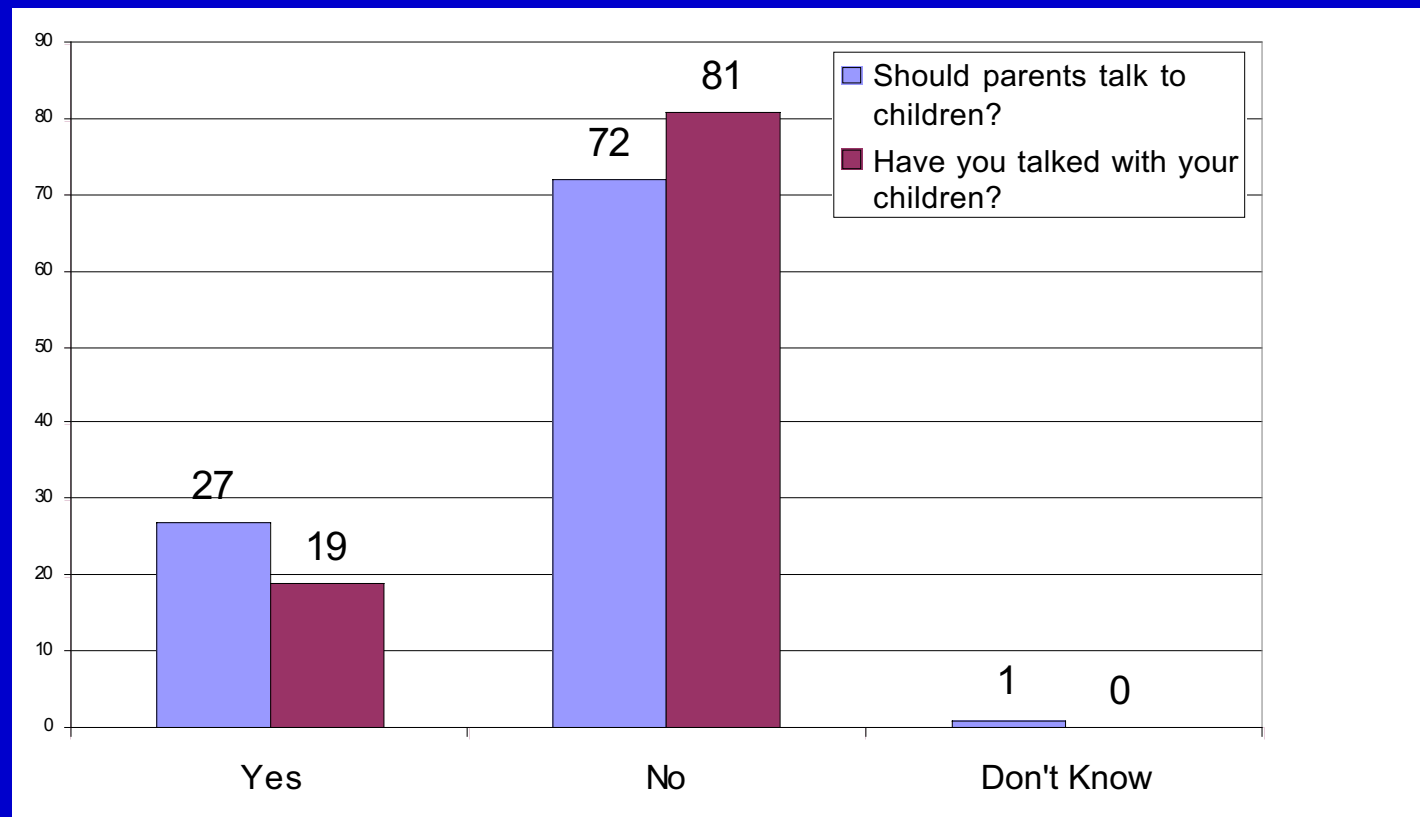
Results:

Would you agree to condom use if your partner asked?



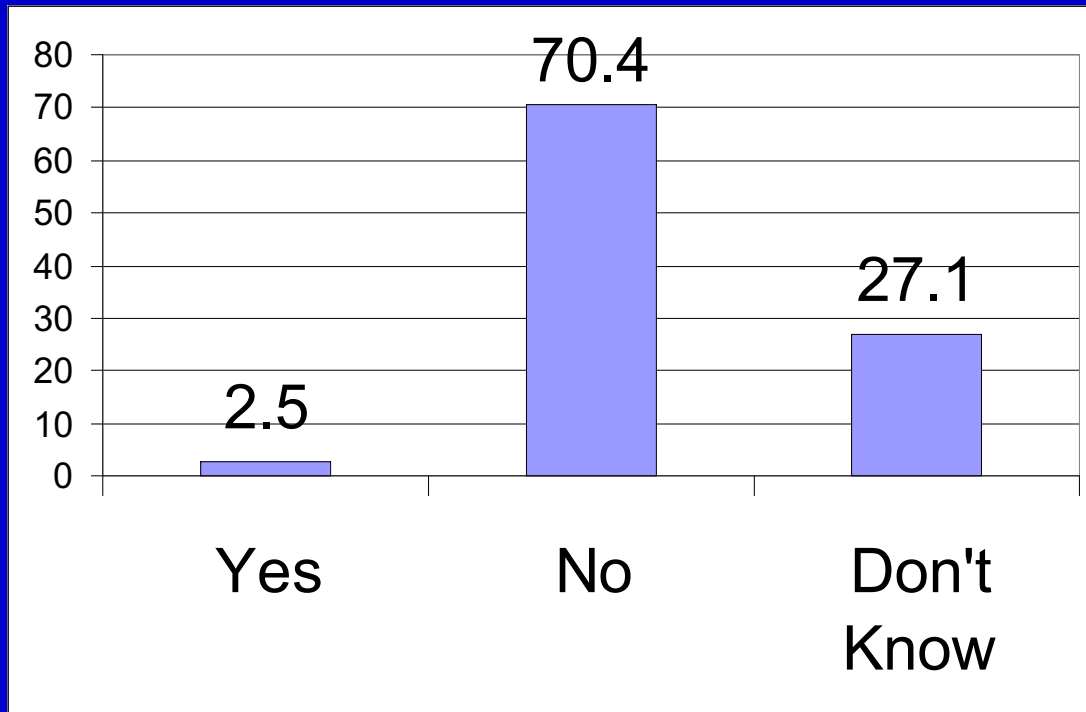
Family Communication:

- Should parents talk to children about sexual issues?
- Have you discussed sexual issues with your children in the last 3 months?



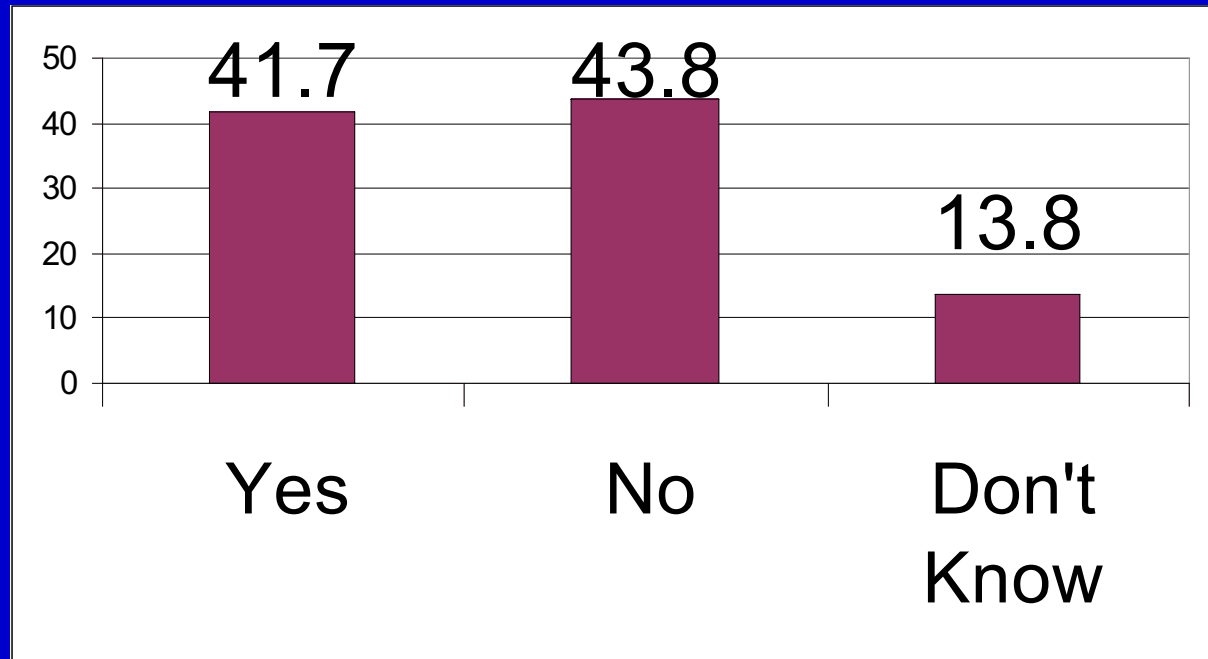
HIV Stigma

Have you
cared for or
helped
someone
who has
HIV/AIDS?



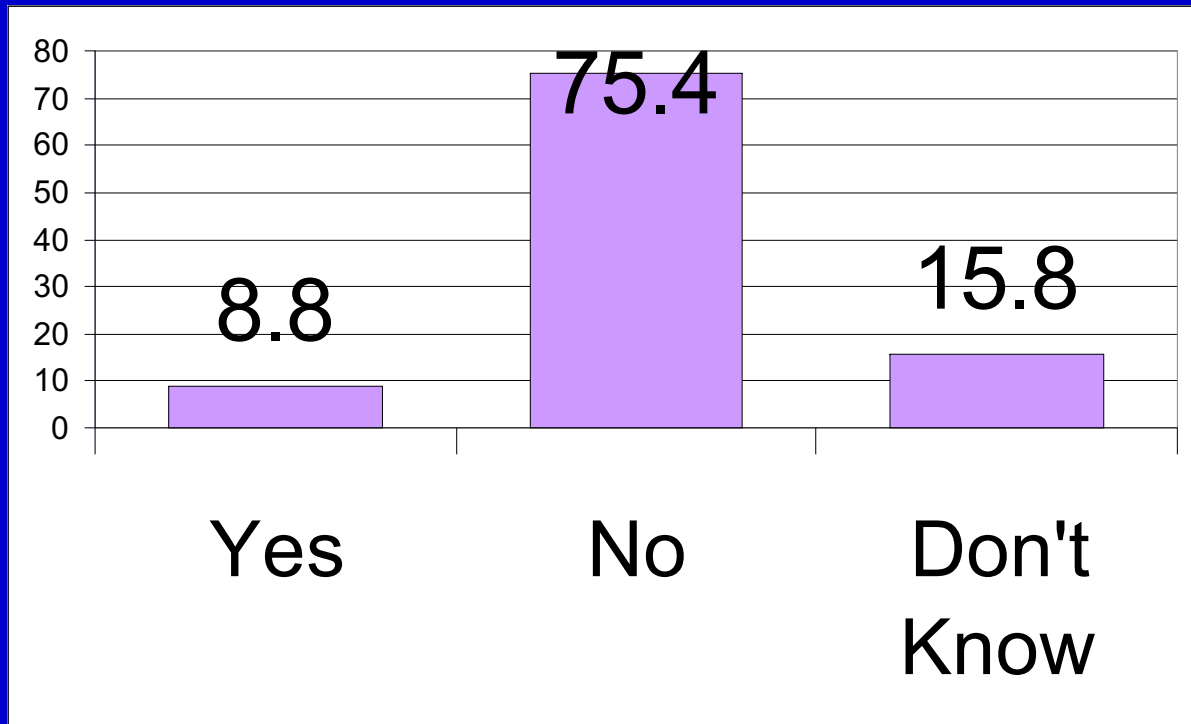
HIV Stigma

Do you think that people with AIDS should be cared for?



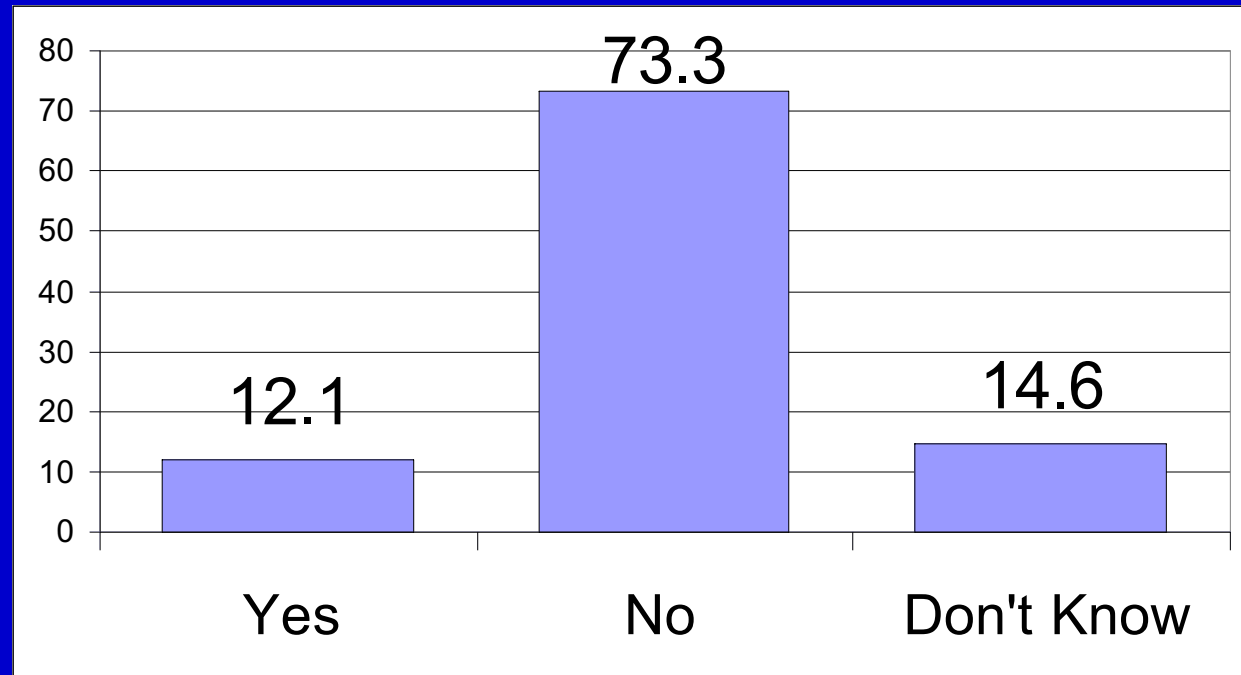
HIV Stigma

Is it possible for someone with HIV to live a normal life?



HIV Stigma

Should someone who is sick with AIDS still be involved in community life?



Was the program successful?

Comparing Intervention and Non-Intervention Sites

People in intervention sites discussed issues of condoms, sexuality, relationships, gender equity much more freely and easily than non-intervention sites



Project Observations

- Participatory, discussion-oriented methods worked well
- Participants liked discussions in peer groups, but...
- Need to find ways to work with both parts of a couple
- Assurance of confidentiality



Project Observations

- Young people dropped out of program more often
 - Young men travel extensively to find work
 - Young women spending much time looking for food



Project Observations

- AIDS is not yet a reality for most people: most did not know anyone personally with HIV or AIDS
- The component of the Stepping Stones material that focuses on dying from AIDS needs to be adapted in a post-conflict setting



Conclusions

- Access to condoms is a significant issue!
- Family communication issues about sexual issues and especially condom use is critical
 - Parents with children
 - Between partners



Conclusions

- Economic recovery in rural Sierra Leone is an issue – agricultural work takes up significant time
- Young people in rural Sierra Leone are at high risk for HIV and AIDs, and difficult to reach.
- Stigma of HIV should be addressed.



Recommendations

- Facilitate improved condom access
- Dealing with sexuality and sexual issues is hard, but we have to improve people's skills and comfort in communicating about this
- Need to be creative in reaching young people, consider micro-credit, skills training, other economic activities
- Prevention of HIV stigma

