

LIFT: Promoting healthier, more economically secure lives

LIFT programs can ensure that individuals and families, particularly those affected by HIV and AIDS, are able to pursue healthier, more economically secure lives.



Once HIV and AIDS enter a home, a family already struggling to meet basic needs can be pulled into a downward spiral of poverty and illness. When a breadwinner falls ill, resources may begin to evaporate. While needs increase — for life-saving medication or transport to health clinics — income often goes down. Money reserved for school fees goes toward health care. Healthy family members, usually women, may stop working or reduce their hours to care for sick relatives. Meals can become smaller and less nutritious. Over time, savings may be depleted and household assets sold. With little warning, HIV and AIDS can push economically secure households into poverty and poor households into destitution.

Since its launch in 2009, the Livelihoods and Food Security Technical Assistance (LIFT) project has been working to end this downward spiral. LIFT strengthens the capacity of United States Government agencies — and their public, private and civil society partners — to design and implement livelihood and food security interventions that improve the economic resiliency and health of vulnerable households. LIFT programs can ensure that individuals and families, particularly those affected by HIV and AIDS, are able to pursue healthier, more economically secure lives.

LIFT has provided technical support services to missions of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and their local partners in five countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria and Swaziland. The project has developed and implemented customized guidelines, trainings and other tools to help vulnerable households — and those who serve them — in a number of key, interrelated areas:

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender equality, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries and all U.S. states and territories.



FHI 360 HEADQUARTERS
2224 E NC Hwy 54
Durham, NC 27713 USA
T 1.919.544.7040
F 1.919.544.7261

WASHINGTON DC OFFICE
1825 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009 USA
T 1.202.884.8000
F 1.202.884.8400

ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL OFFICE
19th Floor, Tower 3
Sindhorn Building
130–132 Wireless Road
Kwaeng Lumpini, Khet Phatumwan
Bangkok 10330 Thailand
T 66.2.263.2300
F 66.2.263.2114

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE
2nd Floor, 339 Hilda Street
Hatfield 0083
Pretoria, South Africa
T 27.12.423.8000
F 27.12.342.0046

www.FHI360.org

Health and nutrition

For people living with HIV and AIDS, malnutrition can be both a cause and effect of poor health, so an adequate, well-balanced diet is an essential component of care. Proper nutrition strengthens the immune system, reduces vulnerability to opportunistic infections and can help delay progression from HIV to AIDS.

LIFT technical assistance strengthens referrals between HIV care and community support services. By linking individuals in clinical care to viable economic growth opportunities, LIFT helps people living with HIV and AIDS overcome their vulnerability to food insecurity and improve their overall health.

Economic development

LIFT works with USAID missions and implementing partners to address the economic vulnerability caused by increased medical costs and reduced household earnings. Partners can choose from a wide range of strategies designed to meet each household's evolving needs. For example, the poorest households may receive cash transfers or participate in cash-for-work programs. Struggling households may join informal savings groups that help them protect their assets and maintain their access to adequate nutritious food. LIFT's targeted technical assistance ensures that governments and partners are equipped to deliver appropriate, high-quality interventions that foster long-term economic security.

Special considerations for women

Widows, especially those living with HIV, often lose their homes, inheritance, possessions and livelihoods when a husband dies. These women may adopt survival strategies that put them at increased risk for HIV. LIFT helps local partners develop economic opportunities for women, address gender-related barriers to accessing services and ensure that programs are sensitive to local gender norms. LIFT also assists in the protection and promotion of women's inheritance rights and supports expanded efforts to keep girls in school.

Youth

Children forced to leave school to care for a sick relative or contribute to household income can face a lifelong cycle of poverty and lost opportunities. LIFT's technical assistance enables local partners who work with orphans and other vulnerable children to strengthen the economic capacity of households, helping families meet their nutritional needs and keep their children in school. LIFT also works to expand economic opportunities for older youth through vocational training, business education and private-sector partnerships that develop young people's skills.

Research

Limited research exists that examines the integration of economic strengthening interventions into HIV/AIDS care programs or the impact of such programs on patient health. LIFT will test models that link clinical nutrition assessment, counseling and support programs with sustainable economic strengthening opportunities. LIFT will continue to contribute to the global body of evidence on best practices for developing, implementing and measuring the impact of economic strengthening, livelihoods and food security interventions.

Funding for LIFT is provided by the USAID Global Health Bureau's Office of HIV/AIDS. FHI 360 manages the LIFT project, with technical support from its core partners Save the Children and CARE International.