

Empowering women and girls

KEY POINTS

FHI 360 promotes girls' education to improve their lives, their families' health and their larger communities.

FHI 360 empowers women and girls to make informed decisions about family size by increasing access to modern contraceptive methods.

Ensuring better income, vocational and leadership opportunities for women and girls is key to achieving FHI 360's broader development goals.



FHI 360 programs work to eliminate gender disparities and promote gender equality. As women and girls bear a disproportionate share of the world's poverty and have less access to resources than men, we promote the rights of girls and women to high-quality education and health care and to full participation in social, economic and civic activities. Educating and empowering girls and women yields significant individual and collective benefits such as lower family size and infant mortality, raised household earning power and increased employment opportunities. Our programs therefore advance women and girls' status and opportunities as a part of our comprehensive development strategy.

Program highlights

Women-initiated HIV prevention. FHI 360-led clinical trials have fostered important breakthroughs by enabling women to put HIV prevention into their own hands. The CAPRISA 004 study showed, for the first time, that the use of a topical gel could reduce HIV infection in women by 39 percent. HPTN 052 showed that providing early initiation of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy led to a 96 percent reduction in HIV transmission among serodiscordant, heterosexual couples. The FEM-PrEP trial tested whether HIV-negative women, who are at higher risk of being exposed to HIV, could safely use a daily, oral dose of the ARV drug Truvada to prevent infection. Because of low adherence, FEM-PrEP was unable to demonstrate that Truvada could reduce HIV infections but highlighted the key role of adherence in future HIV prevention studies and programs. FHI 360's research and programs advance the options for women to prevent HIV infection.

Growing girls' potential through education. Our Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program (AGSP) has provided more than 215,000 scholarships for more than 70,000 girls to attend school in 15 African countries. In addition to paying school fees that were out of reach for many families, AGSP helped local nongovernmental organizations support girls' education and trained female teachers where same-sex instructors were needed or preferred. In Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, girls funded by AGSP were more likely to complete primary or secondary school, and in Uganda, some of its graduates serve as mentors for female students. In addition to making girls'

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.



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school attendance possible, our gender-sensitive peer counseling curricula enable girls, boys and teachers to have open dialogue about adolescent health, self-esteem and involvement in civil society.

Building women leaders. FHI 360's community-led approach fosters new generations of women grassroots leaders and connects them with well-established women leaders managing services that primarily benefit women. These diverse groups of women leaders have been crucial in the fight against HIV and other communicable diseases. With our training, women's networks and community knowledge have been key in expanding tuberculosis detection and education in Southeast Asia. In Kenya, USAID-funded projects have trained women to become both community health workers and paralegals; they now help other women register births, write wills and know their legal rights of inheritance and child custody.

Reproductive health care and family planning. Since the 1970s, our efforts to get contraceptive products approved, introduced and made more accessible have empowered women to plan their families, time pregnancies and reach their fertility goals. In sub-Saharan African countries, FHI 360 initiatives have increased women's access to injectable contraceptives by improving supply and training nonmedical workers to administer contraceptives in the women's home communities. This approach reduces the need for travel and increases use of modern contraceptive methods. FHI 360's integration of health services — including referring women living with HIV for family planning or providing infant immunizations at the same time as other medical appointments — help women and girls receive vital care.

Fostering economic security. FHI 360 programs create sustainable economic livelihoods for the poor, including women, orphans and other vulnerable children. Our programs have boosted women's agricultural and animal husbandry skills and provided small business development for struggling families. We have launched community-operated savings and loans that redistribute funds to women farmers and entrepreneurs. Our LifeWorks program has helped Ethiopian women produce valuable silk and introduced Kenyan women's crafts to new export markets. These initiatives ensure vital income for low-resource households and provide alternatives to the transactional sex that contributes to HIV's spread. In Malawi, the Mkuta Mwana (Surround the Child) program supported families in need, many of them woman-headed, giving technical expertise and seeds to help their farms become more productive and yield healthier meals, crops for local markets and profits that cover children's school fees and health care costs.

Confronting gender-based violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, FHI 360 promotes healthier social and gender norms to prevent and reduce sexual violence among school children in the country's Katanga Province. In more than 30 schools, teachers and school administrators learn how to identify, discourage and respond to sexual violence. Both boys and girls are taught what sexual violence is, how to report it and how to discuss attitudes about gender-based violence. In other central and eastern African communities, volunteers with the Roads to a Healthy Future (ROADS II) project identify gender-based violence as a barrier to HIV prevention and treatment. In response, volunteers develop local mechanisms that link affected community members with appropriate health and legal services.

For more information, go to www.fhi360.org.