

Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Support

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT (CDS)

The CDS project (2014-2019), funded by USAID/South Africa, contributes to the goal of mitigating the impact of HIV, STIs and TB by providing capacity strengthening to civil society organizations and the South African Government, increasing their effectiveness in achieving expanded and high-quality services.



Staff members practice conducting a MUAC in Hlabisa Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

For more than 25 years, FHI 360 has been working as a strategic partner to the Government of South Africa and South African civil society. We have implemented a wide range of technical assistance projects at national, provincial and community levels to strengthen policies and programs that prevent the transmission of HIV, provide high-quality HIV care and treatment, strengthen nutritional assessment and counselling and support, improve reproductive health, increase access to family planning, and strengthen partners' technical and organizational capacity.

Nutrition is critical for vulnerable populations such as orphans and vulnerable children and people living with HIV. Among children, nutrition is a key element for physical and mental development. Inadequate nutrition is responsible for nearly half of the deaths in children under five years old – over three million children worldwide each year.ⁱ

Nutrition is related to disease progression as well as treatment adherence and outcomes. Research shows that a lower body mass index is associated with higher mortality among people living with HIV at both diagnosisⁱⁱ and initiationⁱⁱⁱ of anti-retroviral therapy.

NUTRITION ASSESSMENT, COUNSELING AND SUPPORT

The Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Support (NACS) program is being implemented by the Capacity Development and Support (CDS) project with USAID funding. The program works to strengthen the capacity of the South African Government and PEPFAR-funded partners to integrate nutrition assessment, counselling and support into treatment, care and support programs in order to deliver a comprehensive set of nutrition interventions and improve the nutritional and overall health status of vulnerable South Africans. CDS is providing technical assistance to PEPFAR District Support Partners (DSPs) assisting health facilities and organizations implementing programming for orphans and vulnerable children and youth (OVCY) in communities.

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, 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 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

NACS focuses on vulnerable populations, including:

- Pregnant and lactating women
- Children under two years old
- Orphans and vulnerable children over two years old with evidence of faltering growth
- People living with HIV and tuberculosis in care and treatment programs

NACS builds on an integrated model for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV implemented across South Africa since 2006. The model emphasizes capacity strengthening that fully integrates NACS, PMTCT, maternal health, and infant and young child feeding into HIV service delivery at health facilities and community services. This approach reinforces the integration of nutrition interventions into existing services at both facility and community levels.

Major components of the program include:

- **Applying a multi-sectoral approach** to increase investment in nutrition interventions, policy and guidelines
- Strengthening **knowledge and skills development** including mentoring and coaching, pre-service training and curricula development
- Improving provision of **essential nutrition supplies** and technical support to manage distribution and storage of NACS commodities
- Implementing **quality improvement** and **monitoring and evaluation**

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- Improved the capacity of six DSPs, 65 DSP-supported health facilities across seven provinces, and eight OVCY partners to integrate NACS through the provision of site readiness assessments, knowledge and skills building, mentoring and coaching, and distribution of nutrition tools and job aids.
- Supported 86 health facilities to implement NACS, which provided nutrition assessments to more than 36,300 people living with HIV and provided nutritional supplements to more than 80% of those found to be undernourished.
- Supported the South African Government to develop an integrated Food Security and Nutrition Plan for the country.
- Provision of technical assistance to develop NACS, breastfeeding and early childhood development curriculum for health professionals and community health workers.

ⁱ UNICEF. 2015. Available at: www.unicef.org/statistics/

ⁱⁱ van der Sande et al. Body mass index at time of HIV diagnosis: a strong and independent predictor of survival. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*. 2004 Oct 1;37(2): 1288-94.

ⁱⁱⁱ Paton et al. The impact of malnutrition on survival and the CD4 count response in HIV-infected patients starting antiretroviral therapy. *HIV Medicine*. 2006 July;7(5): 323-330.

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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

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