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ASPIRES South Africa

Integrating Economic Strengthening Interventions with HIV Prevention Education for Orphans, Vulnerable Children & Youth

The Accelerating Strategies for Practical Innovation & Research in Economic Strengthening (ASPIRES) project, funded by USAID/PEPFAR and managed by FHI 360, supports gender-sensitive programming, research, and learning to improve the economic security of highly vulnerable individuals, families, and children. We offer research and technical assistance activities for economic strengthening programs around the world, including a major technical assistance program to support youth resilience to the effects of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

ASPIRES South Africa helps young people build economic resilience and the skills they need to pursue HIV-free lives by providing economic strengthening (ES) interventions integrated with a comprehensive HIV prevention education program. Launched in January 2015, ASPIRES South Africa is strengthening the capacity of five PEPFAR Implementing Partners (IPs)* in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces to carry out integrated ES and HIV prevention programs either directly in the communities they serve or through their non-profit partners. This will be combined with research to better understand the effects of integrated programming on youth and explore its effects on HIV risk behavior.

ASPIRES South Africa targets low-income youth ages 14 to 17 who are considered orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), meaning that they are infected with, affected by, or at risk of contracting HIV. The project also incorporates young adults ages 18 to 24 years old, especially young women, who were formerly classified as orphans and vulnerable children. It also engages OVC caregivers to strengthen their capacity to support the youth in their care.

* Children in Distress Network (CINDI), Future Families, HIVSA, National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), Networking HIV/AIDS Community of South Africa (NACOSA).

The ASPIRES Approach

- Using current evidence and state-of-the-art approaches to promote scalable, high-quality programming for vulnerable populations.
- Carrying out research science to expand the evidence base and promote innovation.
- Building the capacity of national stakeholders to implement evidence-based programming as well as to monitor and evaluate programs.
- Integrating an explicit gender perspective in research, tools, policy and standards recommendations, and technical assistance.



Economic Strengthening

Save the Children USA provides training and support to five IPs to implement a comprehensive ES program that helps vulnerable youth to enhance their economic self-sufficiency and make positive life decisions. Save the Children USA also builds the capacity of IPs to provide ongoing technical assistance to their CBO partners for improved integrated economic strengthening programming.

Key components of the ES package include:

- Building financial capability through the provision of financial education and access to youth-friendly savings mechanisms
- Practical employability and entrepreneurship training
- Support to students in grades 11 and 12 to pursue tertiary education

HIV Prevention Education

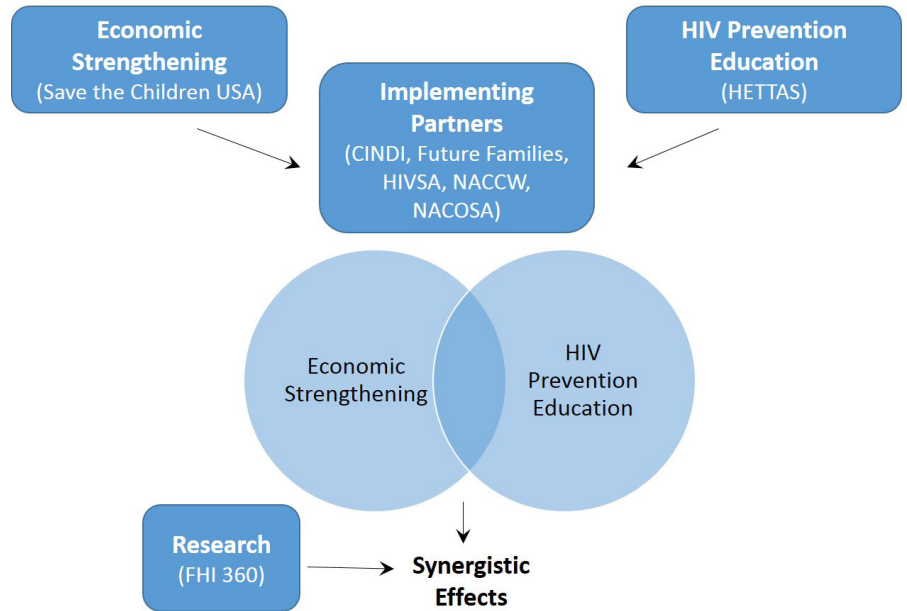
FHI 360, in collaboration with Health and Education Training and Technical Assistance (HETTAS), a South African NGO specialized in HIV prevention education, has updated the Vhutshilo 2 HIV Prevention Education curriculum which targets youth ages 14 to 17. Vhutshilo 2.2 promotes HIV prevention by addressing behavioral norms, gender-based violence, and negotiation skills around condom use and sexual activity, in addition to fostering linkages to HIV testing, treatment and care and support services.

Research

FHI 360 is carrying out research on the effectiveness and impact of integrated programming. There are two main research components:

- 1) A major randomized controlled trial (RCT),

ASPIRES South Africa



using quantitative surveys with complementary qualitative components, asks: Does the integration of an ES program with an HIV prevention education program produce synergistic effects on economic and HIV prevention outcomes? Researchers are also collecting costing information to determine the cost-effectiveness of the intervention.

2) A mixed methods research component explores causal connections between economic factors and HIV risk behavior among adolescent girls and qualitatively assesses the synergistic effects of combining HIV and economic strengthening educational programming on participants' attitudes, behaviors, and inter-personal relationships.

For more information on ASPIRES, contact us at ASPIRES@fhi360.org or visit our page on Microlinks.

Technical Assistance Partners:  Save the Children



Implementing Partners:



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