

LIFT:

Livelihood & Food Security Technical Assistance Project

LIFT is a flexible Associate Award designed to provide technical assistance to U.S. government agencies and their implementing partners in their efforts to improve food security for vulnerable families through livelihood assistance and economic strengthening.

LIFT is implemented by three core partners—FHI 360, CARE and Save the Children—who bring proven expertise in addressing household economic strengthening and vulnerability factors, such as HIV/AIDS.

RESULTS:

Since its launch in September 2009, the LIFT team has conducted technical assistance assignments on livelihoods, food security, and HIV/AIDS impact in:

- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Ethiopia
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Swaziland



Families around the world face continual challenges in meeting their survival needs. Pandemics, natural disasters and man-made emergencies compromise families' ability to meet their basic subsistence needs, let alone suitable health and nutrition levels. High levels of poverty and food insecurity present additional obstacles to the health and well-being of families attempting to cope with adverse circumstances. For example, one of the challenges in the fight against HIV/AIDS is striking an optimal balance between the provision and maintenance of highly necessary clinical interventions and establishing longer-term investments to develop support systems that enable people who are infected and affected by the epidemic to pursue healthier, more economically secure livelihoods.

The LIFT Project is designed to provide economic strengthening, livelihood and food security technical assistance to the U.S. government and its implementing partners, with a special concern for

supporting the needs of HIV-affected households. Funded by USAID's Global Health Bureau's Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA), LIFT is led by **FHI 360** with partners **CARE** and **Save the Children**.

LIFT Program Areas:

As a global technical leadership mechanism, LIFT addresses economic strengthening, livelihood and food security needs by providing customized, high impact assistance in five key areas:

Mapping and Assessments:

LIFT assists U.S. Government country offices in assessing both promising practices and gaps with regards to livelihoods and food security from a geographic and programmatic perspective within a country or regional context. Using data obtained from a mapping and assessment exercise, LIFT aids country teams in developing a strategic plan to address existing gaps and facilitate scale-up of promising practices.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



fhi360
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

A Household-Centric Framework for Economic Strengthening

In 2010, LIFT led the development of a livelihood and food security framework that integrated an Economic Strengthening (ES) Pathway, the vulnerabilities households face, and the types of ES interventions that are appropriate for them as their needs change. The framework builds on the understanding that a household is economically secure when it can cope with and recover from stresses and external shocks, as well as maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets now and in the future. Key programming recommendations that stem from the framework—which was developed through a collaborative process that involved donors and practitioners from a range of technical sectors—include:

- **Diversify assets and income** so that if one does not provide enough income, there are others that can compensate. This includes income generating activities as well as critical access to supportive social networks.
- **Address coping and risk management, as well as income maximization.** ES activities that only focus on income maximization underestimate the role that risk plays in driving decisions and are therefore less likely to affect the behavior change needed for sustainable impact.
- **Design ES activities for different levels along the Pathway.** "Destitute" households may require direct support to meet basic needs or recover depleted assets, whereas households further along the Pathway may better manage risk, stabilize their asset bases on their own, and be more willing and capable of investing in income generating activities.
- **Address behaviors and needs at different stages of development of HIV/AIDS.** The broader economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on households can include declining labor productivity, availability, and, therefore, household earnings; depletion of financial assets to meet food needs or to cover the costs of medical care or funerals; decreased transfer of knowledge between generations from informal teachers who die early; and diminished diversity of household ES activities because of increasing constraints.
- **Include a focus on food access.** Within this framework, ES refers principally to interventions addressing food access, which includes the ability of households to generate sufficient income which, along with their own production, can satisfy the household's food requirements.
- **Decrease targeting as vulnerability levels decrease.** A significant challenge to health and ES program linkages, targeting is generally more applicable for ES interventions aimed at the most vulnerable households, but decreases in effectiveness for interventions aimed at households further along the Pathway.
- **Include non-traditional ES indicators for different vulnerability levels.** M&E often captures income determinants of ES. While this is more applicable to households at less vulnerable levels of the ES Pathway, less traditional ES indicators related to coping mechanisms and risk management are needed to measure changes at levels of greater vulnerability.

This product is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Establishing and Facilitating Linkages:

LIFT assists country teams in establishing and facilitating linkages that connect individuals in care and treatment or food security programs to economic strengthening opportunities. LIFT technical assistance includes support in establishing or strengthening existing referral and wrap-around mechanisms between clinic and community services.

Monitoring and Evaluation Support:

LIFT assists in developing tools to assess client/household economic and food insecurity at the program, clinic and community levels, and will support capacity building in utilizing these tools at all levels. LIFT supports the development of tools for referral, follow-up, and maintaining a continuum of care that tracks clients over time. LIFT can also provide recommendations on how to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of linkages and support programs.

Capacity Building:

LIFT assesses capacity building needs at both Mission and implementing partner level, designing and delivering appropriate capacity building strategies around economic strengthening, livelihoods and food security. LIFT conducts economic strengthening workshops and facilitates cross-sectoral communication.

Global Perspective:

a primary function of LIFT is to facilitate south-to-south learning, employing a synergistic approach to address common issues. In its role as a global technical assistance mechanism, LIFT facilitates regional cross fertilization, drawing from a compendium of documented best practices.

For more information about LIFT, please contact:

Tim Quick, PhD, MS | 202.712.0974 | tquick@usaid.gov

LIFT Project AOTR

Senior Technical Advisor for HIV/AIDS & Nutrition, USAID/OHA

Co-Chair, PEPFAR Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group

Co-Chair, PEPFAR Care & Support Technical Working Group

Benjamin Rinehart | 202-884-8716 | brinehart@fhi360.org

Technical Specialist

LIFT Project, FHI 360

The FIELD-Support Leader with Associates is an 8-year cooperative agreement awarded by the USAID Microenterprise Development Office to improve the state-of-the-practice of microfinance and microenterprise development. FIELD-Support is implemented by FHI 360 and a consortium of 27 development partners.

Learn more at: microlinks.kdid.org/field-support.