



STRIVE: Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity & Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening

Through a strategic combination of field implementation and rigorous monitoring and evaluation, STRIVE, an associate award under the **FIELD-Support LWA**, is designed to identify and produce replicable methodologies for economic development that demonstrably benefit vulnerable children.

Background and Goals

In October 2007, USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), in close collaboration with the USAID Microenterprise Development office, initiated the STRIVE (Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening) Program. A 7.5-year, \$16 million effort, STRIVE uses market-led economic strengthening initiatives to benefit vulnerable youth and children. The program aims to fill current knowledge gaps about effective economic strengthening approaches and their impact on reducing the vulnerability of children and youth.

Managed by FHI 360 in partnership with Action for Enterprise (AFE), ACDI/VOCA, CARE, MEDA, Save the Children, and USAID, STRIVE implemented four field projects in Africa and Asia between 2008 and 2013. STRIVE projects are exploring economic strengthening approaches, ranging from savings-led finance to workforce development to value chain interventions. Coupled with a robust monitoring and evaluation framework and learning strategy, STRIVE is tracking and documenting the impacts of these diverse interventions on child-level indicators related to both economic (financial), and non-economic (health, education, nutrition, etc.) vulnerability factors. As a result, STRIVE aims to identify and demonstrate interventions that can sustainably increase household incomes and/or assets and document how such increases improve (or fail to improve) the lives of children.

RESULTS

Since October 2007, STRIVE's field operations have:

- Supported 17,000** households across the Philippines, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Mozambique;
- Strengthened 636** local organizations and enterprises; and
- Directly **assisted** more than **31,000** people.



STRIVE Field Activities:

The Philippines

Implemented by AFE from 2008-2012, the project aimed to improve child well-being by strategically linking producers in low-income coastal areas with key market actors in other parts of the value chain. The project's causal model proposed that these linkages will assist in increasing household income among coastal communities, resulting in increased expenditures on children's education, healthcare and nutrition, thereby reducing their economic vulnerability.

Mozambique

The STRIVE Mozambique project, implemented by Save the Children, aims to improve nutritional outcomes for children under the age of five by expanding the amount and quality of food they eat. By increasing household access to cash through savings and income-earning opportunities, STRIVE Mozambique will increase the dietary diversity of children's food provisions within their households. Save the Children will facilitate savings and income earning opportunities in communities by mobilizing village savings and loan groups and promoting a rotating shared labor scheme that increases the amount of labor available to each household.

Research Agenda: Save the Children will measure impacts of VSLs and rotating labor group participation on household income, assets and social capital – as well as child-level education, nutrition, and health outcomes – through a randomized control trial. Design is based on random assignment of project activities to four groups of paired districts, with comparison of research groups at endline. Peer-reviewed results will be published in 2014.

Liberia

Agriculture for Children's Empowerment (ACE) Through the ACE Project in Liberia, which concludes in 2013, ACDI/VOCA is developing entrepreneurship and bringing farmers into profitable value chains with the goal of increasing income, improving nutrition, and enabling caregivers to better support their children. The project aims to increase local production of key staple foods and provide smallholders with the skills and information they need to successfully engage in farming as a primary livelihood strategy.

Research Agenda: A rigorous impact evaluation led by FHI 360 will examine links between value chain interventions and well-being at the household and child levels. The evaluation employs a quasi-experimental panel design with a control group developed using propensity score matching. Peer-reviewed results will be published in 2014.

Afghanistan

FHI 360 and MEDA collaborated on the Afghanistan Secure Futures (ASF) project, which was aimed to improve the quality of informal apprenticeships by helping small and micro-businesses in the Afghan construction industry grow. ASF facilitated improved linkages between small enterprises that employed apprentices and other actors within the construction industry value chain. The project aimed to improve working conditions and educational opportunities for apprentices through business development and supplementary education for out-of-school apprentices. ASF concluded operations in 2011.



STRIVE Philippines supported a series of new producer trainings on behalf of lead firms for enhanced crafts production.



STRIVE Mozambique beneficiaries cooking in groups to feed their children.



Farmer Melvin Duo and his wife from Talk Camp in Liberia participate in a value chain strengthening initiative under ACE.

The FIELD-Support LWA is an 9-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 led by FHI 360 and a consortium of 25 development partners. Learn more at: www.microlinks.org/field-support

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