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BACKGROUND

The Livelihoods and Food Security Technical Assistance (LIFT) project was initiated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA) to provide technical assistance and strategic support to US government agencies, their implementing partners, and other public, private and civil society partners to improve the food and livelihood security of vulnerable households, with a particular focus on people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and their caregivers. In addition, LIFT aims to provide global leadership and strategic learning to the field of economic strengthening through development of guidelines, trainings, and other tools to help vulnerable households – and those who serve them – engage in activities that enhance their economic and nutritional security.

Launched in Fiscal Year 2010 as a five-year Associated Award under the Financial Integration, Economic Leveraging, Broad-Based Dissemination and Support (FIELD-Support) Leaders with Associates (LWA) Cooperative Agreement, LIFT is managed and led by FHI 360 (formerly AED) and implemented with the support of CARE International (CARE) and Save the Children USA (Save). The goal of the LIFT project is to build the continuum of care for people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable households by increasing their access to high quality, context appropriate, market-led economic strengthening, livelihood and food security (ES/L/FS) opportunities that improve their economic resilience and lead to better health. An essential component of LIFT's approach is establishing links to integrate economic strengthening and food security activities within HIV/AIDS Nutrition, Assessment, Care and Support (NACS) programs and health systems.

LIFT meets the customized needs of USAID and other United States Government (USG) agencies by undertaking assessments that provide concrete recommendations for strengthening existing ES/L/FS programs as well as identify strategic opportunities for new investments. LIFT works with implementing partners to strengthen their capacity to design and implement livelihood and food security interventions that sustainably improve the economic resiliency and health of their beneficiaries. Through these approaches LIFT aims to heighten the impact and sustainability of investments made by USAID, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Feed the Future, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Peace Corps, as well as local governments, civil society, and the private sector.

I. ACTIVITIES

1. Global

1.1. Input into Global Monitoring (M&E)

1.1.1. LIFT's Research Agenda

LIFT began holding regular (bi-weekly or more frequently as needed) meetings with MEASURE Evaluation to begin developing the LIFT research agenda. After several meetings to discuss LIFT's activities and objectives for building an evidence base for impacts of economic strengthening (ES) activities, a concept note was drafted outlining an approach for MEASURE's collaboration with LIFT. The approach outlined four primary activities including (1) conducting a literature review to identify evidence of linkages between ES interventions, household economic resilience, food security, improved nutrition, and HIV-related outcomes; (2) developing a logic model showing the causal pathways for the possible outcomes and impacts of LIFT's activities on the economic resilience and food and nutrition security of vulnerable households; (3) piloting a network analysis in a LIFT focus country such as Namibia to identify and map organizations for inclusion in a NACS-ES referral network, and to understand the direct results of LIFT's technical assistance to the referral network; (4) hosting a consultative meeting to review evidence from the literature review and define a research agenda. The literature review is underway, and development of the logic model and planning for the network analysis will begin early in the next quarter.

1.1.2. Harmonized Global Indicators for M&E

From February 1-2, 2012 LIFT consultant Gary Woller represented LIFT at the WHO Consultation for Completion and Dissemination of Harmonized Global Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of Nutrition and HIV Activities in Geneva. Prior to this meeting, LIFT assisted in the development of the food security indicators to inform this global indicator list through various meetings and consultations starting in 2010, and helped to finalize these global indicators through this meeting and subsequent discussions. In coordination with USAID, LIFT plans to participate in field testing the final food security indicators in subsequent reporting periods.

1.2. Knowledge Management

1.2.1. LIFT Livelihood and Food Security Conceptual Framework

In the last reporting period, LIFT refined its Livelihood and Food Security Conceptual Framework. The LIFT Framework was published this quarter on the Microlinks website as a key resource for the event entitled *Lessons Learned From Sequenced, Integrated Strategies of Economic Strengthening of the Poorest*. LIFT participated in the event, which focused on innovative, sequenced programming interventions to help the ultra-poor transition from meeting their most basic needs and move towards economic self-reliance.

1.2.2. Development of LIFT website

Revisiting the need for a web presence and platform, LIFT initiated the process of developing a project website. As LIFT grows and matures, the project envisions a website which allows LIFT to publish project-developed materials, provide additional tools and resources to a community of program implementers, share updates on project work, disseminate emerging findings of the LIFT research and learning agenda and provide information for USAID missions, practitioners and host governments who are interested in partnering with LIFT. LIFT held two meetings with internal web developers to discuss the purpose of the site, and

begin to develop the proposed content and site design. Continuing this process and developing LIFT's website will be a high priority in the next quarter.

1.2.3. Development of Technical Briefs

LIFT developed two technical briefs during this reporting period which were disseminated at public events including the USAID OVC Forum and the CORE Group's NACS state-of-the-art technical meeting, both in Washington, DC. The first brief was developed to describe LIFT's proposed approach to integrate ES as a component of NACS. The second brief discusses the relevance and importance of ES activities in the context of OVC programs and highlights LIFT's technical assistance approaches for USAID missions and OVC program implementers.

1.2.4 NACS Guidance Manual

LIFT contributed to the FANTA-3 NACS Guidance Manual by writing a chapter on economic strengthening. LIFT's contribution to the guidance manual outlines the key considerations and elements associated with developing economic strengthening referral systems as a component of NACS, focusing on the key aspects of successful referral systems. The guidance also helps implementers to ensure that ES activities that are linked with NACS are appropriate to the needs and vulnerabilities of PLHIV, OVC and caregivers.

1.2.5 Permaculture Literature Review

LIFT conducted a literature review for internal project use, to understand permaculture activities and the factors that influence permaculture's success or failure, in various contexts. In addition the review aimed to understand what evidence currently exists that positively links the contributions of permaculture to household dietary and monetary needs, as well as considerations for replication and sustainability. The review found that limited research exists to definitively answer these questions, and LIFT will feed these findings into the broader LIFT research and learning agenda with the aim of increasing the evidence base for the effectiveness of permaculture.

1.3. External Presentations and Outreach

1.3.1. Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Support (NACS) SOTA

LIFT highlighted the need for integration of economic strengthening as a part of the continuum of clinical care at the Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Support (NACS) state-of-the-art (SOTA) technical meeting convened by the CORE Group on February 22-23, 2012. The two-day event provided an overview of current thinking and a forum for discussion on the predominant issues surrounding the design, implementation and evaluation of NACS programming. Mandy Swann of FHI 360 and Gareth Evans of Save the Children presented as part of a panel entitled *Promising Practices: Lessons from the Field*. They presented recent research in Ethiopia and Namibia on promising practices for linking economic strengthening with clinical services in the context of HIV programs, as well as LIFT's evidence-based approach for building these linkages through referrals. LIFT discussed its future work in Namibia to incorporate economic strengthening and livelihoods activities as a component of NACS by establishing and supporting referral systems. This referral systems work in Namibia will follow the successful conference that LIFT convened in November 2011 which engaged the nation's leading decision makers in highlighting and prioritizing economic strengthening for vulnerable populations.

LIFT also supported the travel and participation of three international SOTA conference presenters including Elizabeth Jere (CRS), Habtamu Fekadu (Save) and Tina Lloren (Save),

as well as supported the consultancy of Kara Greenblott to document the conference proceedings and produce a final conference report.

1.3.2. International AIDS Society Conference Abstract

In a joint venture with Development Associates, Inc., LIFT submitted an abstract for a skills building session at the International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference to be held in Washington DC in July 2012. The abstract was entitled *Economic Strengthening and Improving Livelihoods for People Living with HIV - Moving Past Jargon and Handouts to Programming Based on Evidence* and the session aimed to increase health practitioners awareness and skills to effectively program or link to ES activities for HIV affected households, providing practical information to support implementers in designing and implementing livelihoods activities. While the abstract was not accepted by IAS, the process of developing it helped the team flesh out new approaches to building the capacity of health implementing partners to provide or link to appropriate economic strengthening services. LIFT will be participating in the IAS Conference and plans to collaborate with FANTA-3 on an IAS Conference satellite session on NACS.

1.3.3. LIFT Outreach Strategy

LIFT engaged long-time consultant Ben Fowler to assist in documenting LIFT's services and to develop outreach materials to use with USAID missions and other USG agencies to highlight LIFT's range of available technical assistance services and the approaches used by the project. The final product will be an attractive brochure accompanied by a series of more in-depth descriptions of each of six main LIFT technical assistance services. The final document will be used in the next quarter to engage in discussions with USAID missions, CDC, Peace Corps and other USG agencies to showcase how LIFT's technical assistance and support can integrate livelihood, food security and economic strengthening activities as a part of the continuum of care.

1.3.4. USAID OVC Resource Fair

LIFT was asked to participate in USAID's Resource Fair on Tuesday, February 14 to discuss the project's objectives and explore areas of potential interest with OVC focal points from a range of countries as part of the OVC Technical Working Group's OVC Forum. LIFT met with mission staff from Nigeria, South Africa, Mozambique and the DRC and discussed potential LIFT strategic support and technical assistance.

2. Country-specific

2.1. Namibia

LIFT finalized a detailed report of the proceedings, outcomes and key messages from its two-day stakeholder conference in Windhoek, Namibia, as well as a four-page executive summary of the meeting. LIFT also wrote and submitted a trip report summarizing meetings, site visits, contacts and key information gathered during the remainder of the trip. These documents were used by USAID/Namibia to reach out to the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MOHSS) to discuss the next phase of LIFT's engagement in Namibia, which will focus on improving access of NACS clients to economic strengthening activities.

In this reporting period LIFT engaged extensively with USAID/Namibia and FANTA-3 to plan for upcoming activities in Namibia, including drafting a strategy to provide technical assistance to support the development of a NACS-ES referral system in two pilot sites. LIFT had planned to begin initial MOHSS engagement, obtain buy-in for its approach and identify

the pilot sites early in the next quarter. LIFT was assigned an MOHSS counterpart in the Nutrition Unit. However this unit is unable to take on this coordination role, therefore meaningful engagement of the MOHSS is on hold until a replacement counterpart within another unit or division can be identified, likely in June.

As a first step in LIFT's technical assistance, LIFT plans to undertake mapping exercises of ES/L/FS and other relevant community services in the identified catchment areas in two pilot sites in Namibia. Results of the mapping will inform the development of a referral directory for ES/L/FS services in each area and, based on the community mapping, LIFT will reach out to appropriate community-based entities to identify the referral system coordinators. During this reporting period LIFT identified and researched several key community mapping approaches including the following:

- Organizational network analysis (MEASURE Evaluation)
- System-wide Collaborative Action for Livelihoods and Environment (SCALE) Approach (FHI 360)
- Hand-held technology data collection and layering (FHI 360-SATELLIFE)

LIFT also identified community engagement and mapping approaches and tools used by the following projects:

- Community Youth Mapping (FHI 360)
- Zambia Prevention Care and Treatment Partnership (FHI 360)
- Global HIV/AIDS Initiative in Nigeria (FHI 360)

In the next reporting period, LIFT will analyze and select the most appropriate mapping methodology to pilot work in Namibia.

2.2. Ethiopia

LIFT finalized the Ethiopia *Promising Practices in Linking Livelihood Strengthening and Clinical Services* research incorporating the input and feedback from USAID/OHA and the PEPFAR Care and Support Technical Working Group. The report was presented at the CORE Group's NACS SOTA event in February 2012. In the next quarter, this report will be published on Microlinks.

2.3. Nigeria

During this quarter, LIFT organized an OVC Microfinance training that will be held in Lagos, Nigeria from April 9-13, 2012. Preparations included adapting and finalizing the training curriculum, tools and materials, engaging external trainers from Village Savings and Loan (VSL) Associates, identifying participants in collaboration with USAID/Nigeria, locating a venue, and other relevant logistical and administrative tasks. Prior to the training, LIFT conducted a needs assessment to understand the capacities, context and interests of participants, allowing for the training to be customized appropriately. The training will be delivered by consultants, Hugh Allen and Mark Staehle, two leaders in the area of VSL, who will train 24 OVC program implementers on community-managed microfinance program implementation. The training aims to enable participants to identify appropriate community managed microfinance methodologies for their target populations, based on knowledge of various approaches and industry best practices.

In this reporting period, LIFT continued discussions with USAID/Nigeria on future long-term programming including a face-to-face meeting with Shola Onifade, OVC Program Manager in Washington, DC which led to LIFT drafting a work plan with key activities to program the

remaining funds from the Nigeria mission and anticipated COP 12 funds. The three areas of focus for LIFT's future work in Nigeria include (1) building the capacity of OVC implementing partners to deliver appropriate ES activities, (2) strengthening knowledge management of ES programs by OVC implementing partners, (3) strengthening linkages between OVC implementing partners and ES service providers, including the Government of Nigeria (GON) and the private sector. The draft work plan will be presented to USAID/Nigeria at the April training and finalized thereafter.

2.4. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Following the submission of a draft scope of work at the end of Year 2, LIFT continued discussions with USAID/DRC about establishing a new FIELD-Support associate award for LIFT activities. After an in-person meeting in Washington, DC in February, the DRC mission informed LIFT that instead of establishing a new associate award, additional funds would instead be put directly into LIFT's award. The DRC mission is drafting a scope of work to focus on improving the food security of HIV-affected families in existing PEPFAR Champion Communities through livelihood assistance and economic strengthening.

2.5. Kenya

Following the NACS SOTA, LIFT met with the Brian Njoroge of FHI 360's Nutrition and HIV Program (NHP) to gain insight into possible integration of ES activities into the NACS framework in Kenya. Brian noted that ES is the missing component in HIV/nutritional care and feels there are a lot of good ideas, but that implementers need support to ensure use of best practices, scale-up and linkages with the health sector. In the next quarter, LIFT will engage in discussions with the USAID mission in Kenya to determine specific areas for support.

2.6 Tanzania

LIFT engaged in initial discussions with Deborah Ash of the FANTA-3 project, who is based in Tanzania, to discuss possible areas of collaboration with current FANTA-3 and IMARISHA project efforts. Identified areas where LIFT support would be important include integration of ES/L/FS into NACS and assisting HIV and OVC implementers to develop implementation plans and frameworks for HES activities. Deborah will meet with IMARISHA counterparts to discuss specific unmet needs that could be filled by LIFT in Tanzania. LIFT also engaged in discussions with DAI's home office team to discuss potential areas of collaboration on the IMARISHA project.

2.7 Uganda

LIFT met with Robert Mwadime of FHI 360's Community Connector Program in Uganda to discuss the objectives of LIFT and the Community Connector project and to identify potential areas of collaboration with this new, comprehensive program. Robert requested some tools to assess poverty levels at the household and LIFT shared the Grameen Bank's progress out of poverty index and the USAID poverty assessment tool for Uganda. Robert linked the LIFT team with Alfred Boyo at USAID Uganda in order for LIFT to begin initial discussions around a scoping visit to Uganda.

3. Operational

3.1. Partners

3.1.1. Save the Children

During this quarter, Ntongi McFayden, Director for Integrated Financial Services and Urban Livelihoods, increased her engagement in the LIFT project, providing regular part-time support to LIFT from their Washington, DC office, along with Gareth Evans who maintained his regular involvement. During this quarter, Save contributed to the revision and finalization of the Ethiopia Promising Practices in Linking Livelihood Strengthening and Clinical Services report for submission to the Care and Support Technical Working Group. Save also worked with FHI 360 to prepare for and present at the NACS SOTA event, as well as led the development of the draft Nigeria work plan and managed the technical preparations for the OVC VSL training in Nigeria to take place in April.

3.1.2. CARE

In February and March, Barbara Monahan reached out to Late Lawson on reengaging CARE in LIFT's future program activities and potential hiring a dedicated staff person to work on the LIFT project. In the next quarter CARE plans to begin participating in weekly LIFT team meetings via phone and CARE will present a strategy for a more defined role on the project, including hiring or identifying dedicated staff.

3.2. Communications and Outreach

3.2.1. FIELD-Support Mission Outreach

As noted earlier, LIFT completed the first draft of technical materials for USAID missions and other USG agencies to highlight LIFT's range of available technical assistance services. The materials will be finalized in the next reporting period.

3.3. Project Administration and Support

3.3.1. Staffing

In January, Ben Rinehart moved on from the LIFT project to become the Chief of Party for a new FHI 360 project in Swaziland. Recruitment continued for a Technical Specialist to fill Ben's role, and Food Security Specialist Meaghan Murphy was identified and offered the position. Meaghan will begin work with the LIFT team early in the next quarter. Meaghan has over nine years of international and domestic project design, management and implementation experience. She brings to the project technical experience in rural agriculture and livelihood approaches, applied nutrition and community based local economic development.

LIFT continued recruitment for a Technical Director to provide high-level leadership, direction and technical management to the program and expected to have the position filled this quarter. This position was posted through FHI 360's website as well as on SEEP's listserv and newsletter, DevEx, Idealist, Global Health Council and disseminated widely through personal networks. LIFT reviewed dozens of pre-screened resumes, worked with an internal executive recruiter and interviewed six highly-skilled candidates, but the requisite combination of skills and experience has not been identified among this pool. LIFT plans to review the role of the Technical Director and hopes to have the position filled next quarter.

3.3.2. Work Plan

LIFT developed a work plan and corresponding budget that would fully expend our current award ceiling, and presented these documents to USAID in our meeting on February 27. These documents were submitted to USAID/OAA to request a full obligation of the LIFT

award to continue activities through the end of the fiscal year when it is anticipated that a second FIELD-Support associate award will be issued to continue LIFT activities.

3.3.3. LIFT/FANTA Collaboration

This quarter saw enhanced collaboration between the LIFT and FANTA-3 projects. LIFT representatives began attending the Nutrition and Infectious Disease Cluster weekly meetings and FANTA has been integrated into LIFT's meetings with MEASURE Evaluation on the LIFT research agenda. In addition, the projects have increased coordination on global strategy development and country-level planning, regularly share resources, and collaborate on presentations and external representation. As an example, the LIFT and FANTA-3 Project Directors meet periodically to share ideas and discuss strengthening collaboration.

3.4. Deliverables

LIFT prepared and submitted the following deliverables to USAID during the quarter:

- Quarterly Report #9 (FY2012, Quarter 1)
- Quarterly Accruals Report
- Quarterly Financial Report

4. Successes

1. LIFT made significant progress in developing the project's research agenda through strategic collaboration with MEASURE Evaluation.
2. Based on a literature review and research in Ethiopia and Namibia, LIFT developed a proposed model for integrating ES/L/FS into NACS services. LIFT delivered a successful presentation on this topic at the NACS SOTA event, which addressed a clear interest and need among NACS implementers to integrate ES services as a component of care.
3. LIFT finalized some key reports (including Save's recent research on *Promising Practices in Linking Livelihood Strengthening and Clinical Services* in Ethiopia and the Namibia conference report, *Collaborating to Improve Health and Nutrition through Livelihood and Economic Strengthening in Namibia*) for publication on Microlinks.

5. Challenges

1. LIFT planned to begin testing its proposed model for integration of ES/L/FS into NACS in Namibia in the next quarter. However, challenges in identifying an appropriate point of contact in the MOHSS in Namibia have led to delays in LIFT activities to support NACS-ES referral systems. LIFT looks forward to working with USAID in Namibia and Washington to address this issue and begin the consultation process, identify pilot sites and begin community engagement and mapping of services.
2. Recruitment of the LIFT Technical Director has taken more time than anticipated but LIFT plans to review the job description and target recruitment efforts in the next quarter to identify an appropriate individual for this key personnel position.

6. Key Learning

1. LIFT has researched several approaches and tools for community mapping, community engagement and network analysis, which will inform this component of LIFT's work on NACS-ES referral systems in specific countries.

2. Enhanced collaboration with the FANTA-3 project has informed LIFT's approach to integrating ES into NACS and has given LIFT a deeper understanding of the context and activities on the ground in LIFT focus countries.

7. Plans for Next Quarter

7.1. Global

7.1.1. LIFT Research Agenda

In the next reporting period, LIFT will continue to work with MEASURE Evaluation to develop the project's research agenda to build an evidence base for economic strengthening impacts on household economic resilience, food security, health and nutrition. MEASURE will begin a literature review of existing evidence, which will be finalized in the next quarter. Through this process, MEASURE and LIFT will begin to map out the causal pathways between economic strengthening and health/nutrition outcomes and determine where LIFT's technical assistance activities can affect change in the pathway, and then determine the most appropriate indicators for LIFT and its partners to monitor and track. This logic model will also be completed in the next quarter.

Where gaps in evidence exist along the pathway, LIFT will begin to develop specific research questions to be tested through operations research or program evaluation. This research will allow LIFT to begin to develop a compendium of best models and practices on which economic strengthening activities contribute to positive health and nutrition outcomes in various contexts.

7.1.2. LIFT Marketing and Outreach Strategy

Next quarter, LIFT plans to contact USAID missions in DRC, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and possibly Uganda to offer technical assistance to integrate economic strengthening into NACS. LIFT will also reach out to USAID's Bureau of Food Security and Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, Centers for Disease Control, Peace Corps and other USG stakeholders to determine how LIFT could support and enhance their programs.

7.1.3. Staffing

LIFT plans to revise the Technical Director job description in light of the revised staffing plan and the successful recruitment of a Food Security Technical Specialist, to ensure we are recruiting for the most appropriate skills to lead the technical direction of the project. This position will be re-posted and recruitment efforts intensified early in the next quarter. In addition, LIFT will begin recruitment for a Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Specialist to manage program M&E as well as oversee the project's research agenda.

7.1.4. New LIFT Associate Award

LIFT will work with USAID/OHA to develop the program description for a new LIFT associate award, and provide other documents such as work plan, budget and any other necessary information in response to a FIELD-Support solicitation.

7.1.5. Standardize Assessment Methodology

In preparation for additional country-level situation and opportunity assessments to analyze existing ES activities and identify opportunities for scale-up and replication, LIFT plans to document and standardize its approach to the different types of assessments it undertakes in support of USG missions. This will allow future assessment teams to learn from the experiences of previous LIFT assessments and engage rapidly and efficiently with mission staff. In addition, a standardized process and approach will bring rigor to the LIFT

assessment methods and increase the comparability of results across assessments in different countries.

7.2. Country-specific

7.2.1. DRC

- LIFT will continue to discuss the scope of an ‘add on’ to the LIFT award from the DRC mission.

7.2.2. Nigeria

- LIFT will present to USAID/Nigeria a detailed work plan for future on-going activities in the country, which will be refined and finalized with their input.
- In April, LIFT will provide an OVC Microfinance Training for implementing partners in Nigeria.

7.2.3. Namibia

- LIFT will continue discussions with USAID/Namibia to plan for upcoming technical assistance to build the continuum of care for NACS patients to include ES/L/FS in two pilot sites. Next steps include engaging the MOHSS at the national level and conducting community mapping of ES/L/FS services.
- LIFT will engage with CDC/Namibia and the Health Care Improvement (HCI) Project to determine how LIFT can support their food security screening initiative.
- LIFT will publish the final assessment report and conference report on the Microlinks website.

7.2.4. Other Countries

- Once Country Operational Plans are finalized, LIFT will engage USAID country missions that received NACS acceleration funds to determine how LIFT can provide support to these missions in developing or enhancing economic strengthening activities within their NACS programs. High priority countries include Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya, among others.