



SUCCESS STORY

Collecting the Evidence

Evidence-based decision-making is the backbone of effective health policy and treatment.



ASHA Project

USAID-funded ASHA Project provides home care services to people living with HIV under its community and home based care program.

Protecting the health of millions of people around the globe against HIV/AIDS comes in many forms. Evidence-based decision-making is the backbone of effective health policy and treatment. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provides funding to numerous groups to help with this effort. An example is FHI 360's ASHA Project (Advancing Surveillance, Policies, Preventions, Care and Support to Fight HIV/AIDS) in Nepal.

About 70,000 people are estimated to be infected with HIV in Nepal. Most remain unreported and untreated. Unsafe sex and drug injection practices, civil conflict, internal and external mobility, and inadequate health care delivery make addressing the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic all the more challenging, and women and children are particularly vulnerable.

The ASHA Project provides technical assistance to the Government of Nepal through the country's National Center for AIDS and STD Control. It coordinates HIV surveillance, case estimation, national monitoring and evaluation, and special research studies. One of FHI 360's most valuable contributions is a client ID system to address the issue of double counting of patients receiving services from multiple outlets during the same reporting periods and to monitor follow-up patient services.

ASHA has also trained more than 750 individuals in monitoring and evaluation, surveillance, and strategic information tools. Additionally, the project supports numerous activities to help estimate trends in Nepal's HIV epidemic, including data quality audits, integrated biological and behavioral surveillance, and geographic information systems (GIS). ASHA is assisting Nepal with incorporation of GIS into its national HIV program since geography is a prime factor for health policy and program decision-making.

Since the first cases of AIDS were reported 30 years ago, more than 60 million people have been infected worldwide, and more than 30 million have died from HIV/AIDS. An estimated 34 million people currently live with the disease. Due to extensive efforts by the international community, including the U.S. Government, the numbers of infections and deaths are falling. As in Nepal, much work remains to be done. An AIDS-free future is the goal.