



When Faith Intersects with Development: Searching for Sustainable Impact in the Community Work of Life in Abundance International

A Report of the Institute for Urban Initiatives

"We thank LIA for giving us the wakeup call since now the community is not sleeping anymore, and most widows are now hopeful, and stress is a thing of the past. Thank you!"

LIA Program Participant, Kisumu, Kenya

Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

Life in Abundance (LIA) is a non-government organization (NGO) whose mission is “to mobilize the local Church to restore health, renew hope, and inspire lasting transformation for the world’s most vulnerable children and families”. Life in Abundance currently works in Africa and the Caribbean, with a pilot program in the US. Since 2000, LIA has partnered with foundations, churches and individual donors to implement development projects that not only transform individuals, but also result in lasting change for their communities (For more information see www.lifeinabundance.org).

In June and July of 2015, LIA invited the Institute for Urban Initiatives to embark on a focused study to examine the extent to which LIA’s model of development has a lasting impact on the communities that it serves. LIA has a strong philosophy of empowering the communities with which it works, rather than creating dependence on LIA or other external support services. It therefore adheres to a strict policy of partnering for at most three years in a given community. At the end of its three year programs, LIA has consistently met targeted outputs and outcomes, including improved health, increased prosperity and renewed hope among participants. However, prior to this study, LIA has had only anecdotal evidence that after departing from a community, the members of that community continue working toward transformation. Understanding the long-term sustainability of LIA’s work therefore became the driving force behind this study.

To engage in this assessment, we chose to use Participatory Action Research (PAR), a community-based approach to research, in which community members are trained in research methods and participate in the research process (see p. 14 for more information on PAR). Six program sites, three in Kenya and three in Ethiopia, were selected to participate in the study. LIA contacted leaders in each of the sites who selected 12 community researchers (2 from each participating site). At all of the sites except one, LIA handed the projects over to the communities between two and five years ago. At one site, Kibera, LIA conducted two distinct projects in separate villages, one of which was phased out 4 years ago and the other phased out 6 months ago in December 2014. Participants from both programs were included in this study (see Chart 3 p. 17 for a list of specific programs at each site and dates of implementation).

AREAS OF TRANSFORMATION

We utilized LIA's transformational development model to evaluate the sustainability of its programs across six key programmatic areas: economic empowerment, community health, education, environment¹, social engagement and spiritual transformation (see Chart 1 on p. 15 for a graphic representation of LIA's development model and see p. 12 for additional context on transformational development work).

Economic Empowerment

Across all six sites we noted that when financial security is achieved, the quality of life both at the individual level and at the community level is greatly improved. People received training and education in how to run a business, how to do "table banking", and how to build the capacity to establish financial security in their homes. Seed money, in combination with this training, has resulted in multiple projects that have restored dignity and confidence in communities once overwhelmed by their poverty (see p. 18 for the story of the Savings and Credit Association in Makueni, Kenya, an example of economic empowerment).

➡ SOME KEY FINDINGS:

- At all six of the sites, we met beneficiaries whose lives were fundamentally transformed through participation in income generating programs. Micro-loans in coordination with savings plans had a significant impact, especially when combined with holistic support.
- Group income generating projects seemed to be more impactful in transforming the mindset and skills of the participants, than when loans were directed solely to individuals.

¹ In LIA's model, the environment is considered part of community health; however, for the purposes of this study, we reported findings on the environment separately.

- An important aspect of the program is motivating the community to discover their assets, multiply those assets, and then use those assets for the good of the whole community. The solidarity that develops between participants, along with hope in the word of God, is part of the reason the economic empowerment programs are working.
- Many participants have learned to leverage the loans they receive from the revolving fund with money from other sources to build their businesses.
- Embedded in the learning about economic management is the idea of community responsibility. Recipients are now also giving loans to their neighbors to help them get training. Thus, a ripple effect throughout the community is created.

Community Health

This research shows the phenomenal impact that church/community volunteers who are trained with basic health skills and knowledge, combined with a spirit of service obtained through spiritual teaching, can have on the health of a community. The volunteers or Community Health Evangelists/Educators (CHEs) feel empowered when they know how to care for their families and friends, and have the skills to teach others to do the same. These skills fill an important gap in the lagging healthcare systems in these impoverished communities. Across the sites, the CHEs have remained active working to improve the health of their communities. The CHE's energy and effectiveness was not only sustainable, but also contagious (see p. 22 for a story on reducing disease in Kibera, Kenya).

➡ SOME KEY FINDINGS:

- At all six of the sites, interviewees reported that the health benefits achieved in their communities during the time of the LIA program were sustained, and in some cases had even been expanded upon since LIA's departure. Interviewees reported significant reductions in infectious diseases, particularly diarrhea, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as reductions in transmission of HIV and improvements in caring for those suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- Many of the CHEs also participated in economic empowerment projects. The combination of obtaining income generating skills, as well as healthcare skills has been particularly powerful in transforming the lives of these beneficiaries. They are empowered and confident to take on the challenges of their communities.
- In Kisumu and Kibera, the CHEs were effective in preventing or halting the recent cholera outbreak from reaching their communities by teaching about the importance of boiling water and keeping their homes clean. Thus, the CHE's have been effective not only in reducing existing diseases, but also in preventing future outbreaks.
- The CHEs in Makueni and at the WASH Project in Addis Ababa focused on teaching good hygiene and sanitation practices in order to reduce the rates of infectious disease. Since LIA's departure in 2012, the CHEs in Makueni, took it upon themselves, in partnership with the churches, to train

every household in the larger community (approximately 500) how to build pit latrines, and have helped build ones for widows and elderly people.

- In Adama, a strong emphasis on teaching hygiene and appropriate waste disposal continues at the Green School, where improvements in health have been maintained since LIA's departure. As part of the Street Children Program, the boys were also taught the importance of good hygiene, a nutritious diet, and how to care for themselves when ill.

Education

Education, both formal and informal, provides the basis for transformational development and occurs at multiple levels throughout LIA's holistic development model. In fact, informal education is embedded within each of LIA's programmatic areas and is therefore highlighted throughout the full report. In this section on education, we have emphasized the critical role that LIA has in furthering formal education, including enrollment in primary and secondary schools, as well as vocational training programs (see p. 26 for the story of Emmanuel Church in Merkato, Addis Ababa, and p. 27 for a story on orphan and vulnerable children programs in Adama, Ethiopia, and Kisumu, Kenya).

➔ SOME KEY FINDINGS:

- Education takes a variety of forms in the programs we visited and is integrated throughout everything that is done. Education is like life giving oxygen that enables transformation to occur and continue. It enables the cycle of poverty to be broken.
- A focus on getting vulnerable children into and keeping them in school has repercussions across all segments of the social network. When children are kept off of the street, or reintegrated into society after living on the street, crime and drug use is reduced, creating a better living environment for the entire community.
- LIA's intensive and holistic work with street children is very unique. As one participant states, *"there is no organization who did this before"*. LIA's OVC Program in Addis Ababa received an award from the government of Ethiopia.
- Education, by its very nature, is sustainable. Once people have developed skills, knowledge and an empowered mindset, they have these capabilities to draw upon throughout their lives, as well as the ability to teach these same skills to others. A beneficiary from Adama sums up the importance of education. *"You know, teaching the children is better than anything. Food and other supplementary things do not have long term value like education."*

Environmental Transformation

At all six of the sites, positive and sustainable environmental impact was clearly present. Developing systems for rubbish and human waste disposal were critical to improving health and quality of life at four of the six sites. Systems were still in place, well maintained, and in many cases improved at the time of our visits. In addition to waste disposal, the LIA programs also included an emphasis on

beautifying the environment through tree planting, recycling and environmental education (see p. 29 for the story on the award winning Green School in Adama, Ethiopia).

➡ SOME KEY FINDINGS:

- In several of the sites, the LIA program had an important impact on the cleanliness of the environment by using trollies to pick up and dispose of waste, and by significantly reducing the use of “flying toilets”² which cause major health risks to the community, as well as environmental problems.
- In Kisumu, pastors who embraced the holistic gospel used community clean up days as a way to serve their communities. Trash was picked up and disposed of and trees were planted. As a result of the church’s commitment to the community in such a practical way, some community members became interested in the church and became Christians.
- In Addis Ababa, Emmanuel Church was instrumental in organizing the community to build cobblestone pathways to make their environment cleaner and safer. As we walked through the Merkato, we were impressed with its cleanliness, due in large part to these cobblestone walkways. Thick mud during the rainy season and heavy dust during the dry season are now a thing of the past!
- The Green School in Adama, a project accomplished in only one year, is a source of pride for the whole Adama community. Upon our visit, four years after the completion of the project, the school campus was an oasis of beautiful, tall green trees. The environmental club at the school currently includes 19 teachers and 410 students who are continuing to teach their family and friends about good environmental practices!

Social Engagement

Mobilizing communities to take ownership, achieve leadership and work toward systematic change in their communities is essential to long-term transformation. Across the sites, we saw many examples of social engagement within the communities. LIA has helped to equip communities to represent and protect themselves from systems that oppress them, encouraging partner churches to use their unique position in the community to give voice to the most vulnerable. At the same time, LIA is training local leaders and building community capacity as a core strategy to achieving long-term sustainability. Leadership training begins with pastors and religious leaders, but also involves community, youth, and even civic and government leaders. This strategy of mobilizing the community and equipping leaders to carry out transformational development was evident at all six of the sites we visited (see p. 34 for an example through the story on the WASH program in Addis Ababa).

² Flying toilets refers to a form of collecting human waste in paper or plastic bags and throwing them away, often in the street or nearby ditch.

⇒ SOME KEY FINDINGS:

- In Kibera, the CHEs brought the landlords who did not provide latrines to the village Chiefs and insisted that latrines be installed. The CHEs understood the power structure within the community and mobilized together to achieve structural change that could not be realized by individual tenants.
- Government officials in both Addis Ababa and Adama expressed the highest praise for LIA. They valued the training provided by LIA, the management systems created by LIA, and most importantly LIA's integrity and transparency.
- Tensions between different tribes have lessened considerably because of the networks developed by praying, planning and working together on various LIA programs. This was especially evident in Kibera, where there was no inter-tribal violence during the most recent election, as there had been during the previous election.
- Across sites, interviewees explained how LIA taught them simultaneously to work and pray for their communities. As the members of the community initiated change, structural change would often follow. Residents in Kibera are very hopeful as they finally see the government responding with water, electricity, and other services. At Emmanuel Church, as the community began building cobblestone roads, the government came in behind them and moved the project forward.
- Women across sites repeatedly said that before the LIA project they were just sitting waiting for help. After learning income generating and healthcare skills, the women have become more active members in the economic and social fabric of their communities. As stated by one woman, *"Before, not only me, but many women, just stayed back at home and waited for their husbands or friends to come at night carrying everything. But after we were taught, we knew that even we could produce for our families. So from that time on, many women, plus I, know how to work with our own hands, small businesses, making things, we save and get money!"*

Spiritual Transformation

Interwoven into the education and training that LIA does during the three years it is in the community is a deep sense of dependence on God. For LIA staff, only God deserves the credit for anything that has been accomplished. This is further emphasized by a model that brings together churches as the core institutions within the community who learn to embrace and partner with other local institutions, businesses and religious groups such as mosques. Across all six of the sites, we saw evidence of spiritual transformation among pastors in their approach toward leading their congregations and serving their communities, as well as among the beneficiaries and their families (see p. 39 for the story of Pastor Michael in Kibera, Kenya).

⇒ KEY FINDINGS:

- Spiritual transformation is the heart of LIA's development model, as it provides people with the hope, passion and will to create long-standing change within their lives and their communities. Development becomes transformational development when the spiritual aspect is in place. As people's hearts and minds are transformed, the impact is irreversible.
- Prayer is at the core of all that LIA does. As one staff member said, *"Each Monday is a day for staff corporate prayer and fasting. We pray for each other, the work of LIA in our country, and also for the international LIA family."* In the community, we witnessed people praying in meetings and talking about the impact of prayer on what they did and continue to do. Every deed of kindness, every act of compassion, every skill utilized is seen as the result of a prayerful, changed life.
- Beneficiaries describe their transformation by explaining how God has empowered them to provide for their families and has healed them, enabling them to be more loving. Across the sites, beneficiaries said that there was more harmony in their households as a result of LIA's spiritual teaching. They also speak of developing spiritual practices such as prayer and tithing.
- In addition, beneficiaries explained that with their spiritual transformation, they also experience a psychological transformation of breaking out of the dependence mode and taking ownership for creating change in their lives.
- Diverse groups of people who were previously divided are now working together as a result of the LIA partnerships. People from different denominations, different religious affiliations and different tribes are all coming together with the unified goal of transforming their communities.

LEVELS OF SUSTAINABILITY

In order to understand the depth of sustainability achieved, we have evaluated the sites not only based on programmatic areas, but also using a second framework to evaluate the level of transformation achieved within each community (see Chart 2 on p. 15 for further information on this framework). Transformational development, according to the LIA model, occurs within individuals, families and communities, with strong interaction between each of these levels. With this analysis, we have therefore addressed three critical questions:

- Did beneficiaries who participated in the program gain skills and access resources that enabled them to continue to transform their lives after completion of the LIA program?
- Did this transformation spread beyond the lives of the beneficiaries to positively impact others in the community and did this impact occur on an ongoing basis?
- Lastly, did the community develop the capacity to sustain this program or other transformational development programs after LIA completed its work, thus replicating the benefits in either the same or another community?

Level 1: Beneficiaries

At all six of the sites, we met many beneficiaries whose lives had been sustainably transformed through participation in the LIA programs. Achieving sustainability at the beneficiary level involves acquiring skills and/or accessing resources that continue to be utilized to achieve ongoing improvements after the LIA program is complete. Case studies from each site that tell the story of these transformed lives are presented in the full report. In addition, we have provided a brief summary of beneficiaries we met at the different sites whose lives were sustainably transformed through their involvement with the LIA program (See p. 42 of the full report). This is in no way an exhaustive list, but provides one or two representative examples from each community.

Level 2: Community

Level 2 transformation exists when the beneficiaries of the program, or the implementation of the program itself, creates positive impact in the community beyond the lives of the participants. This level of transformation is like the ripples that occur when a stone is thrown into water. Often the participants will teach their family and friends the skills they have learned which extends the impact beyond the beneficiaries and into the community. In other cases, the program builds capacity within the community by training leaders or building management systems, which continue to benefit the community after the program has been completed.

At all six of the sites, we witnessed significant impact in all areas of the development model: communities were healthier, economic activity increased, environments were cleaner, and lives were touched by God's presence and healing. Beneficiaries explained to us over and over how transformation in their own lives led to transformation in their families and also empowered them to reach out and serve their neighbors. As this positive impact spreads, the community becomes empowered with skills and resources, just like the individual beneficiaries, to carry out this work at the community level.

At several of the sites, we noticed that the ripple effect of impact within the community actually increased over time rather than dissipating. For example, at the WASH Project in Addis Ababa, the community used the funds they had saved from the program to build a fence and lights, creating a safer, more secure environment for everyone. Having now built up additional savings, the community committee plans to start up a second community business to increase their earning potential. Thus, the impact is continuing to increase over time (see p. 45 for other examples of ongoing community level impact)!

Level 3: Program

The strongest level of sustainability is when the community itself develops enough capacity to carry out transformational development programs on its own. The community may take ownership of the program initially started in partnership with LIA or it may choose to initiate other transformational

development projects, with the key being that the work is entirely community led. At this level of sustainability, it is as if another stone has been thrown into the water creating a new ripple effect of benefits within the same or a new community. Program benefits are replicated over and over, creating a movement toward achieving even greater transformation.

At three of the six sites, including Kibera, Kisumu, and Emmanuel Church in Addis Ababa, the community is carrying out the program initiated in partnership with LIA. In Makueni, Beulah Savings and Credit Association has a plan for replicating its program in a neighboring community, but it has not yet realized this vision. Across these sites, a consistent characteristic is very strong capacity building within the partner churches. Passionate church members provide a willing group of volunteers to serve in carrying out transformational development work. In Kibera, a particularly strong partnership has developed among the seven churches that worked together during implementation of the LIA program. The partnership currently works in six of the Kibera villages and has a vision to replicate the LIA program in each of Kibera's seventeen villages (see p. 46 for more information on this level of sustainability at the other sites).

In Ethiopia, achieving programmatic sustainability is difficult because the government requires a separation between church and development activities. Steering committees and community committees are therefore established to create a group of volunteers, which include representation from the churches, who are prepared to carry on the program. At the WASH Project in Addis Ababa, the strength of the community committee is creating the necessary leadership to mobilize the community toward this level of sustainability as it plans to start up a new community based business (see p. 34 for the story of the WASH Project).

LIA has also achieved another model of program replication through national recognition. In Ethiopia, the WASH Project, the Green School and the OVC program have all received awards from the government of Ethiopia as model programs to be replicated in other communities. Similarly, the Kenyan government has recognized the CHEs in Kibera for their skills and impact, thus enhancing their status and enabling them to work on a larger scale. LIA is therefore influencing the government's attitudes and approaches toward development work. Achieving this high level of national recognition is an outstanding accomplishment by LIA, particularly in Ethiopia given the government's philosophy to keep religious and development work separate.

CONCLUSION

Our overall conclusion is clear: the community work established by LIA continues to flourish even after LIA is no longer present. In all the sites we visited, there is no question that the people are engaged in effective and transformative ways to bring change to their communities. Over and over we heard, in their own words, "our eyes have been opened". They have learned the effectiveness of

working together, they have gained the capacity and skills to think creatively about the challenges they face, and they agree that there is no turning back. This has been the key result: what they call a “*change in mind set*”. Most of the people we interviewed are excited and passionate about what is happening, especially when they have been able to overcome difficulties in new ways that they learned through the program.

At each of the six sites, we saw that long after LIA has gone, communities continue to seek ways to improve their health and vitality, to learn new skills and gain knowledge, to use those skills to increase their incomes, and to care deeply for one another. And beyond this, they demonstrate to the broader community that by working together (churches, businesses, neighborhoods) they do not have to wait for someone to save them, but that they themselves are the agents for their own transformation.

In the researchers’ opinion, LIA has accomplished a tremendous amount of work with a small amount of funds. Central to LIA’s teaching is that money is not the answer to a community’s problems. Education, skills, taking ownership and working together create lasting change. LIA follows its own teaching, by using a small amount of money to instigate great change, which is replicable and sustainable into the future.

To achieve this transformational change, a holistic model of development is essential. The components of LIA’s development model all work together and none can be isolated to achieve success. The interdependencies were evident across all sites on deep and complex levels. Spiritual transformation is both the seed which ignites change as individual hearts and minds are awakened, and it is also the mechanism by which the work is carried on into the future. Church congregations provide a body of volunteers who are willing to passionately, and with compassion, serve their community and take ownership for continuing the transformation process.

In the course of our data collection and analysis, we also were made aware of areas where community members would like additional support and training from LIA, such as marketing skills and managing budgets that map out the future. In addition, we received some feedback related to specific aspects of the programs in the relative communities that is too detailed for this report. These findings are therefore provided to LIA in a separate document.

Finally, we had hoped that by using Participatory Action Research, community researchers would be trained in the methodology and left with the capacity to continue this type of work once the project was over. We were not disappointed. Across all six sites, the researchers reported over and over how they, themselves, have been changed by listening to the stories of the people they interviewed, and how they are excited about furthering the work. Their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in the community, combined with the research skills they have developed, positions them to now be a central part of the process.

LIA Evaluation of Long Term Sustainability

1) Introduction

The barbershop was no more than 10 feet by 10 feet. Simply constructed out of plywood and metal sheet roofing, its walls were papered with images from magazines and calendars, demonstrating to customers the hope that a similar haircut will give them a new look, a new lease on life. “J” was sitting in his own barber chair, telling us his story. He quietly tells us that poverty drove him away from his family and home and to the city where he felt he would have a better chance. His “chance” came on the streets of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and then on to the smaller city of Adama, which is where we met him.



Barber in Adama. Former street boy.

Ethiopia has an estimated 4.6 million orphans, one of the largest populations of these children in the world (UNICEF 2006), many of them orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Addis Ababa gathers many of these children who find themselves joining countless others like “J” on its streets, struggling to survive in the midst of deep poverty. Survival is the key word. Often these children are forced to work to earn an income and are exposed to various forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. “J” continues with his story. It was hard to survive, he said. The abuse and deprivation crushed any sense of hope he may have had for the future. To escape, if only temporarily, from this hardship, many of the children turn to drugs and sniffing benzene and glue. And then he met someone who began to talk to him and to other children like him, with a promise to give them training and find them jobs. This “someone” was a staff member of Life in Abundance (LIA).

Today “J” owns the little barbershop where we met him. After going through the 3 year LIA program, he now finds himself, years later, dreaming about the future. Whereas before he felt hopeless, he now plans for his future. He is currently attending college and his dream is to grow his business so that he can hire others who are in need. He says *“LIA has educated us and this has changed our mind-set, helped us to think about ourselves in a new way; how to live in a community, how to be accepted”*.

The story of “J” provides a beautiful example of the long-term, sustainable impact that LIA achieves through its work among poor communities in low-income countries. LIA was founded by Dr. Florence Muindi and first established in Ethiopia in 2000 with a mission “to mobilize the local Church to restore health, renew hope, and inspire lasting transformation for the world’s most vulnerable children and families”. In June and July of 2015, LIA invited the Institute for Urban Initiatives to

embark on a focused study to examine the extent to which LIA's model of development has a lasting impact on the communities that it serves.

II) Purpose of the Study

Non-governmental organizations, more commonly referred to as NGOs, represent an important element in the development of both Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as other countries in Africa. When societies are struggling politically and economically, NGOs often provide a relatively efficient mechanism for addressing poverty alleviation. As Jeffrey Clark from the World Bank says, "They provide channels for involving self-motivated groups and skillful individuals in the nation-building and societal development processes."¹

The World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations lists 1,189 such organizations working in Eastern Africa in 2015.² Amongst these are religious NGOs, or faith-based NGOs, who are important sources of humanitarian aid seeking to provide basic services where the welfare programs of governments fail. But for these religious NGOs, particularly Protestant or Christian, the provision of basic services is not enough. As Erica Bornstein found in her study on faith development in Zimbabwe, "working with the 'poorest of the poor' requires an attention to poverty that is both material and spiritual."³ This is what such NGOs call holism or holistic development. Bryant Myers in his book *Walking with the Poor* elaborates on holistic development but rather uses the term transformational development, a process of seeking "positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually."⁴

Life in Abundance is a religious NGO addressing poverty alleviation within the framework of Christian transformational development. LIA currently works in Africa and the Caribbean, with a pilot program in the US. The 10 countries in Africa are Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somaliland, South Sudan, Eritrea, DR Congo and Sudan. Since 2000, LIA has partnered with foundations, churches and individual donors to implement development projects that not only transform individuals, but also result in lasting change for their communities. The following statistics bear witness to the scope of LIA's initiatives in 2014 alone:

- 6,000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as well as their families/caregivers received support
- 6,591 children and youth received education services

¹ Jeffrey Clark. Civil Society, NGOs, and Development in Ethiopia: A Snapshot View. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2000.

² World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO), 2015, www.wango.org. Retrieved from the web on October 16, 2015.

³ Erica Bornstein. The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality and Economics in Zimbabwe. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 47.

⁴ Bryant Myers. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999, p.3.

- 342 people received micro-loans and are operating businesses
- Almost 2,000 people gained access to clean and safe water supply
- Hundreds of households began using ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPL)
- 1,364 people are known to have developed a relationship with Christ⁵

The success of LIA's programs has been tremendous, with lives changed and communities moving toward greater health and prosperity every day. LIA's core values are the pillars sustaining their transformative model:

- **Prayer** - *"in everything we do, we humbly seek God's guidance."*
- **Beyond Relief** - *LIA helps the local church partners to implement sustainable solutions.*
- **Mobilize the Church** - *the local Church is the driver of transformation in its own community.*
- **Local Leadership** - *local ownership and initiation is key to developing the community for the long term.*
- **Empowerment** - *LIA walks with their partners, equipping them to be their own agents of change.*
- **Lasting Transformation** - *LIA uses an integrated approach and addresses the root causes of poverty.*
- **The Poor** - *LIA focuses on serving the poor and vulnerable with an end to restore dignity.*

LIA conducts regular and systematic evaluations of its projects both during implementation and at the completion of a project, consistently measuring the desired outputs and outcomes.⁶ These have included increased economic stability, improvements in health, improved family relationships and renewed hope among participants. LIA's achievements are considerable given the focus on the poor and vulnerable in difficult contexts, and the number of obstacles that must be overcome on an almost daily basis (For more information see www.lifeinabundance.org).

Prior to this study, what LIA had not yet formally evaluated was the long-term impact of its programs. LIA has a strong philosophy of empowering the communities with which it works, rather than creating dependence on LIA or on other external support services. It therefore adheres to a strict policy of partnering for at most three years in a given community. To date, LIA has had only anecdotal evidence that after departing from a community, the members of that community continue working toward ongoing transformation. Understanding the long-term sustainability of LIA's work therefore became the driving force behind this study.

⁵ Life in Abundance International: Transform Together, 2014 Annual Report

⁶ Outputs are defined as the services delivered, such as the number of people trained or loans provided. Outcomes are defined as the changes that have taken place because of the services delivered, e.g., improvements in health.

III) Methodology

To engage in this assessment, we chose to use a community-based approach to research. This method is more consistent with LIA's model of empowerment than traditional research methods. Participatory action research (PAR) is a process of collective, community-based investigation, education, and action for structural and personal transformation. Though the process is often instigated by an outside researcher, ideally the research question or problem is defined by the community.⁷ Our goal in using this methodology was not to come as the experts to inform others about what is happening in the community, but rather to enable members of the community to engage in asking questions about and making decisions for their community. PAR gives community members the research tools to investigate and address social problems that affect their lives. So while we were engaged in doing an assessment of the impact of LIA's programs, community members also gained research and analytical skills for future work within their communities.

Benefits of Participatory Action Research

- Insiders and outsiders are involved in setting research priorities, and designing research.
- Research that has a high risk to people who are vulnerable and marginalized, but that is potentially of great value, is easier to conduct and better accepted
- Responsibility for inputs and recording of measurements can be shared between insiders and outsiders.
- The information from this research is often more realistic and useful, because it involves real situations, shows variation in sites, is more realistically managed in terms of labor inputs, and may facilitate better interactions.

Six LIA program sites were selected to participate in the study. Based on funding constraints, the sites were limited to the two countries where LIA has been at work for a long time and that are politically open: Ethiopia and Kenya. The criteria for selection was as follows: 1) LIA was no longer working in the sites; 2) there were distinct types of projects within each site; and 3) there was a mixture of city center slums and more rural centers of poverty in order to determine if the model was effective in both.

LIA then contacted leaders in each of the sites who selected 12 community researchers (2 from each participating site). The researchers were paid a stipend for each day of participation. In addition, they were required to participate in a two-day training program. One training was held in Nairobi and the other in Addis Ababa.

The training manual was created by the Urban Initiatives team. However, it was tested with a focus group of ten LIA staff who made sure it was relevant to the context and was clear to people whose

⁷ Dyrness, Andrea, *Mother's United, An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education*, University of Minnesota Press, 2011

first language is not English. During the training of the community researchers, a significant section allowed for issues specific to each community to be added to the interview guides. By the end of the training period, each site had its own interview protocol specifically outlined by the community researchers.

After the two day training, the community researchers worked in pairs at the sites, with each pair conducting ten interviews or more. The two principal investigators from the Institute for Urban Initiatives, Grace Dyrness and Karinn Sammann, also visited each of the sites, conducted one to two interviews, and led focus groups at four of the six sites. A total of 67 interviews were conducted and 29 people participated in the focus groups. After gathering the data, all six of the community researchers in each country came together again for data analysis with the Urban Initiatives team.



Chart 1: LIA's Transformational Development

The researchers used two frameworks to evaluate the data. First, we looked across the areas of transformation as defined in LIA's transformational development model (see chart 1). These areas include economic empowerment, community health, education, social engagement and spiritual transformation. We also evaluated the programs' impact on the environment, which is included in LIA's model within the community health category. This analysis enabled us to evaluate in which programmatic areas sustainable transformation occurred at each of the six sites.

Second, we developed a model to understand the level of transformation achieved at each of the sites (see chart 2). Transformational development according to the LIA model occurs within individuals, families, and communities, with strong interactions between each of these levels. This analysis assesses:

Second, we developed a model to understand the level of transformation achieved at each of the sites (see chart 2). Transformational development according to the LIA

- Whether beneficiaries who participated in the program gained skills and accessed resources that enabled them to continue to transform their lives after completion of the program.
- Whether this transformation spread beyond the lives of the beneficiaries to positively impact others in the community and whether this impact occurred on an ongoing basis.
- Lastly, whether the community developed the capacity to sustain this program or other transformational development programs after LIA completed its work, thus replicating program benefits.

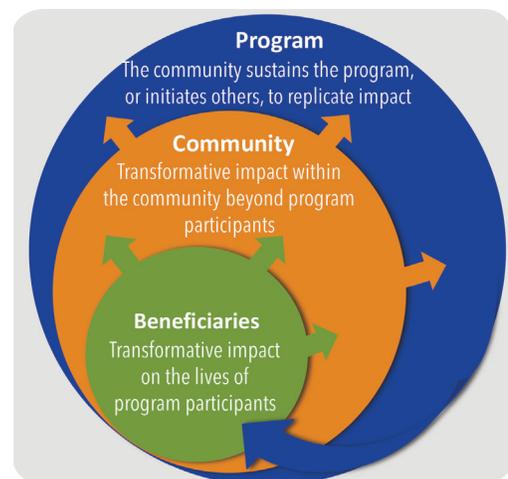


Chart 2: Levels of Sustainable Development

IV) Background on Participating Sites

When LIA enters a new site, its initial activity is prayer and prayer walking. In this process, connections are made with churches strategically located in the target community. Pastors from these churches and other relevant community members are then invited to a one-day meeting where LIA shares the status of the community and reminds the church of their role to serve the poor. Since the church members are community members who are equally poor, LIA commits to partner with these churches in order to disciple them and equip them to succeed.

Not all the churches that come for this envisioning commit to serve, but those who do, choose a team of 5-10 people from their congregation who train with LIA to be facilitators of the transformational development process⁸. Together they conduct a baseline survey to identify priorities and engage in joint interventions that mobilize the community. As ownership grows, the community is divided into clusters and more community members are trained to address the community's needs. With a mobilized and participating community, initial seed projects are then jointly implemented that often evolve into larger projects. Programs usually last for three years, at the end of which LIA disengages, leaving an equipped church to serve their community. As described by one beneficiary in Adama, this process is like *"discovering what is deep inside the community's heart"*.

In Ethiopia, it is important to note that the government requires a separation between ministry and development work. The envisioning with the pastors is therefore conducted under a different non-profit registration, called Mulu Hiwat Ministry (MNH), which means Life in Abundance in Amharic, the local Ethiopian language. Development work is conducted separately under the LIA registration, and the LIA team seamlessly coordinates activities between the two.

Because LIA's development model is truly holistic, all of its programs address all dimensions of the development model. That being said, each community determines its area of focus and specific projects. Below is a description of the six sites, the projects/interventions implemented, and the dates of implementation (see Chart 3).

For all of the sites, except Kibera, LIA handed the projects over to the communities between two and five years ago. In Kibera, LIA conducted two distinct projects in separate villages and beneficiaries from both were included in this study. The first Kibera project was completed four years ago and the second six months ago in December 2014. Emmanuel Church in Addis Ababa is the site with the longest time frame since LIA phased out nearly five years ago in October 2010. In both Kibera and Kisumu, LIA continued to operate medical clinics in partnership with the pastors' fellowships until 2015. These medical clinics have now been phased out, but are continuing to provide dental services.

⁸ These facilitators are called Transformation Development Trainers (TOTs)

Chart 3: Overview of the Six LIA Sites

Site and Dates of LIA's Involvement	Area of Focus	Project / Intervention
Kibera, Kenya ⁹ 2009 - 2011 2012 - 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Healthcare services • Economic empowerment • Spiritual education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health for Income Project • Zion Project • Konjo Shoe Project • Medical and Dental Clinic • Community Health Evangelists • Pastor's Fellowship and Training
Nyalenda, Kisumu, Kenya ¹⁰ 2009 - 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Healthcare services • Economic empowerment • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Children Program • Project for Orphans and Vulnerable Children • Abundant Life Health Clinic • Community Health Evangelists
Makueni, Kenya 2010 - 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Food security • Environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health Evangelists • Food Storage Silos and Water Tanks • Environmental Clean Up
Adama, Ethiopia 2010 - 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Economic empowerment • Environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Children Program • Orphan and Vulnerable Children's Program • Adama Green School
Emmanuel Church, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2007 - 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Economic empowerment • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Citizen Program • Outreach to HIV/AIDS • Orphan and Vulnerable Children's Program
WASH Program, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2009 - 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education • Environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of community owned latrines, showers & wash basins • Environmental Clean up • Education on hygiene and sanitation

⁹ Two distinct interventions were conducted in separate villages of Kibera. The pastors' fellowship formed at the beginning of the first project, with additional pastors joining during the second. Both projects included training CHEs, and beneficiaries from each project are included in this study.

¹⁰ A second project was conducted in Kisumu from 2012-2014 in Obunga and Nyawita, areas adjacent to Nyalenda. However, only Nyalenda participants were included in this study. The LIA medical clinic was located in Nyalenda and operated until 2015.

V) Areas of Transformation

To evaluate sustainability at each of the sites, we utilized the programmatic areas identified in LIA's transformational development model: economic empowerment, community health, education, environment¹¹, social engagement and spiritual transformation (see chart 1). Although we have reported our findings along these areas, it is important to recognize that the research clearly reflects the critical interdependencies between them. For each programmatic area, we have highlighted a story from one or more of the sites that illustrates LIA's long-term impact.

A) Economic Empowerment

Economic transformation was evident at all six of the sites. We heard numerous stories of lives transformed through LIA's economic empowerment programs. Often the beneficiaries were women, but not necessarily. Many received small loans to open a business such as selling goods at market, tailoring, knitting and other micro-enterprises. The beneficiaries spoke of the loans as being provided alongside training on how to run a business and manage their finances, including an emphasis on savings. They also mentioned the importance of other kinds of support to achieve their goals, in particular social emotional support and spiritual teaching.

The Story of a Savings and Credit Association in Makueni, Kenya

We bounced in the back of the van, our heads nearly hitting the roof, as we drove over the dry, bumpy road to Makueni from Nairobi. We had been in route for over three hours and the sun was beating brightly upon the car. Carole, an LIA staff member, explained that Makueni is a dry and arid area with a short rainy season. During the rainy season, people successfully grow maize and beans on small farms. At harvest time, the prices are low and in most cases, traders from outside the community come and cheaply buy the harvest. Prior to the LIA project, farmers were forced to sell their entire harvest because it would spoil during the dry season due to weevils and other insects. However, the farmers would then end up buying back the grain at high cost during the off-season months in order to feed their families. As a result, many in the community suffered from malnutrition and severe poverty.

We passed through the small town of Makueni and then veered off the road to park alongside a church. We squinted as we got out of the van to meet our hosts. A focus group had been organized with the members of the Beulah Savings and Credit Association. As we entered the church, the temperature immediately cooled. The roof and mason walls of the church were in place, but the doors and glass windows were still under construction, so the air flowed freely through.

¹¹Environment is considered part of community health in LIA's development model, but for the purposes of this study it was evaluated separately.

Pastor Titus and the members of Beulah greeted us with warm handshakes and a meal of chicken stew and rice. Men and women were present, some were elderly and others were young. English was limited so Shadrack, our community researcher, translated for us.

The members were eager for us to know the meaning of Beulah, which comes from the book of Isaiah and stands for “The land will not be desolate again”. When LIA came to Makueni, a partnership of 11 pastors was established who identified food and water security as the community’s most pressing issues. In coordination with LIA, a plan was developed to install tanks at participating churches to harvest and store water during the rainy season and distribute it for free during the dry season. In addition, several table-banking groups¹², such as Beulah, were provided seed capital, as well as



Members of the Beulah Savings and Credit Association.

financial management and business training to pursue income-generating activities. Beulah decided to purchase three silos to store grain with its seed capital. The community researched what type of silo would be necessary for their environment. The silos enabled Beulah to not only store their own grain during the dry season, but also purchase grain from other community members at low cost during the harvest. The ability to store grain provided a source of both food and income during the driest times, because they could sell the stored grain at peak prices when food shortages occurred.



Storage silo and grain in Makueni.

The Beulah members explained with pride that they currently had 1 million Kenyan Shillings (US \$10,000) as profit in the bank! The group had been very successful storing and selling grain. With this success, members explained that they would take out loans from Beulah in order to buy household necessities or goods to start-up their own small businesses. The loans further enhanced wealth creation, both for Beulah because the group charged interest, and for the members because they engaged in further income generating activities. As Beulah’s savings increased, the group began using their savings to buy and sell cattle for a profit, and their success has continued.

¹² Table banking is a process of manual accounting

The members were quick to point out that they were not the only beneficiaries of Beulah's success. *"More money is in the community now"* and more food is available during the dry season. Friends of members receive loans, because members are willing to borrow for them. In addition, Beulah members provide training and materials when other people want to start up similar groups. A total of 12 other groups have been started with Beulah being the strongest.

Beulah also provides outreach in the community in coordination with other church members across various denominations. For example, Beulah sewed uniforms in support of a school and provides care for orphans and widows. In addition, Beulah members, along with CHEs from several churches, became actively involved in building pit latrines and creating a much-needed waste disposal system for the community. The members of Beulah believe that LIA has helped them to come together in a *"much stronger way;"* the community now has *"less hostility"* and *"has harmonized around a common goal."*

The group is currently building a much larger storage facility in the marketplace to expand their capacity and impact. They acknowledged that this project has been a big undertaking. It is still not complete, and has taken more time and money than they expected. We could feel their frustration. The members said that they would have liked to have had even more training from LIA, to have *"more skills"* to manage their success. For them, table banking was no longer sufficient to manage their funds. Who would have expected such success?

In closing, the group described their dreams for Beulah. An elderly woman, who was the treasurer of the group and who initially hadn't felt confident to even join Beulah, said that her dream is *"to buy a tractor!"* She explained that the tractor would allow many people to cultivate their fields in the first week of the short rainy season, would be used to carry food to market for higher prices, and could be hired out to other communities during the dry season. Others also chimed in with their dreams: *"to educate our children"*, *"build more tanks for fresh water,"* and *"all the families receive Jesus."* The chairman of the group surprised us when he said that his dream is to *"provide an office for LIA."* He said that after three years, he would like to invite LIA back to train Beulah how to train others with the same skills they learned from LIA. Beulah would like to *"tithes their knowledge to a nearby society"* and give from their earnings to provide seed funding for other neighboring communities. He feels that *"they had been suffering so much and want to help their neighbors."* What a beautiful dream!

➡ KEY FINDINGS ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Income generation is clearly a critical component of achieving long-term, sustainable transformation. Across all six sites we noted that when financial security is achieved, the quality of life both at the individual level and at the community level is greatly improved. People are receiving training on how to run a business, do *"table banking"*, and build financial security in their homes. Seed money, in combination with this training, has resulted in multiple projects that have restored dignity and

confidence in communities once overwhelmed by their poverty. The following are our salient findings.

- Micro-loans in coordination with savings plans make a significant difference in the lives of people, especially when combined with holistic support. In five of the six sites - Makueni, Kibera, Kisumu, Adama, and Emmanuel Church - we met beneficiaries whose lives were fundamentally transformed. At the WASH site, beneficiaries experienced similar economic empowerment at the community level through the WASH Project, instead of through micro-loans.
- Across all six sites, the beneficiaries stated the same goals for spending their income: buying basic necessities for their home, providing meals for their children and paying school fees. Across all sites, beneficiaries expressed great pride in having enough economic stability to keep their children in school.
- Group income generating projects seemed to be more impactful in transforming the mindset and skills of the participants, than loans directed solely to individuals. In both Kibera and Makueni, there was an empowering impact of the group working together and building skills, which then led to follow on individual businesses that furthered wealth creation for the participants.
- An important aspect of the program is motivating the community to discover their assets, multiply those assets, and then use those assets for the good of the whole community. The solidarity that develops between participants, along with hope in the word of God, is part of the reason the economic empowerment programs are working.
- Participants at Emmanuel have learned to leverage the loans they receive from the revolving fund with money from other sources to build their businesses. This can be a model for other sites.
- Embedded in the learning about economic management is the idea of community responsibility. At several of the sites, including Emmanuel Church and Makueni, recipients are now giving loans to their neighbors. The people who are non-members have members sign as surety for them and they pay with an interest rate for non-members.
- The increased economic activity clearly impacts all other sectors of people's lives: food security, health, education, social outreach, and hope for the future.
- Marketing skills are still needed. Participants find that sometimes it is hard to grow their businesses beyond the immediate community. More training is needed in marketing.

B) Community Health

Improving the health of vulnerable communities is central to LIA's mission. At all six of the sites, we witnessed improvements in health whether the program was focused on the environment, economic empowerment, or specifically on health. At four of the sites - Kibera, Makueni, Kisumu, and Addis Ababa WASH - LIA trained Community Health Evangelists or Educators (CHEs). The CHEs are volunteers from the churches and the broader community who are trained in hygiene, sanitation, nutrition and medical care. These volunteers reach out to serve the sick through home visits and

other community activities, and also train others to enhance the health of the community. In all four of the sites, the work of the CHEs remained active at the time of this study, although LIA had handed the programs over to the communities six months to four years ago.¹³ In all six of the sites, interviewees reported that health benefits achieved in their communities during the time of the LIA program had remained, and in some cases had even been expanded upon since LIA's departure.

The Story of Reducing Disease in Kibera, Kenya



Community Health Educators in Kibera, Kenya.

It was a cold morning and the quiet room in the back of the health clinic began to come alive as the CHEs arrived. They greeted each other with warm welcomes. One woman held her baby in a brightly colored cloth slung across her chest. You could feel the energy as they entered. We listened carefully as each woman, and one man, began telling their stories.

Kibera is one of the largest slums in Africa, with estimates of up to one million residents living in extreme poverty and typically earning less than \$1 per day. Living conditions are tremendously challenging. Space is extremely crowded with limited access to water, electricity and sanitation facilities. Kibera is one of the most

studied slums in Africa with hundreds of non-profit and social service organizations working to alleviate these conditions. The CHEs are an important part of this story.

The CHEs described to us the many health issues in Kibera. There are *"lots of fevers and infections, especially among the children"* and *"HIV/AIDS is a huge problem"*. The CHEs launched into describing how they have helped HIV/AIDS patients. One woman explained, *"The way people with HIV/AIDS were living makes you feel so sad."* She went on to describe the social stigma related to AIDS and how people would often stay in their homes and not go to the hospital for diagnosis or treatment. Many were bedridden and had no money. The CHEs described how they were trained by LIA to provide outreach. *"I learned how to visit and talk to people and the skills needed to help people. This gave me courage."*

After the LIA training, the CHEs began going door to door to provide support for those living with HIV/AIDS. The CHEs cared for people and prayed for them, brought them to the clinic to get medicine, taught them how to eat well, took them to support groups and encouraged

¹³In Kibera, some of the CHEs were trained during the first program which ran from 2009-2011 and others were trained in the second which ran from 2012-2014. The time frame since LIA's involvement at the other three sites was two to four years.

them to “live positively.” The CHEs explained that now there is “much more awareness” and “less stigma” regarding HIV/AIDS in Kibera.

The CHEs went on to emphasize how they are also working to prevent transmission of HIV, especially among young pregnant women. In the words of one CHE,

“Young men and women thought that when you are infected, it is the end of life, but after being taught by the CHE program, we came to realize that after being infected you could continue with your life. We went out and told the young women and girls that when you are infected, you can still give birth, and give birth to a negative child . . . When people got the education, we now have young girls, women and men at the hospital who have negative children . . . so the education helped the people much.”

The CHEs also explained how they learned to recognize the signs of common diseases, such as pneumonia, malaria and tuberculosis, and how to help people get the right medicine. They described how they have been particularly effective in reducing the rate of tuberculosis. They taught people that tuberculosis is curable and helped them know where to go for treatment. As one CHE stated, “there is a lot of change in our community.”

CHEs also reduced the disease rates by improving the cleanliness of the community. One CHE explained, “I am able to educate people how to live well, how to eat well, how to see the way of cleanliness.” The CHEs taught hygiene skills and also created awareness about the importance of using latrines. The CHEs reported that the rate of diarrhea sickness was very high and has now been significantly reduced.

The work of the CHEs continues even though LIA is no longer present. One month prior to this assessment, an outbreak of cholera occurred in Kenya. With the onset of the outbreak, many people died in Kibera. The CHEs mobilized to teach people how to treat the water and make the environment clean in order to prevent transmission. With this mobilization, the CHEs proudly reported that the cholera epidemic “is gone.”

The CHEs in Kibera are truly inspiring, with their passion to serve and commitment to improve the health of their community. One CHE stated in closing, “We are here doing the work. We are doing it because we have the skills.” And another adds, “We do the work because the community belongs to us not LIA. It is our community. We are the people who live here!”

➡ KEY FINDINGS ON COMMUNITY HEALTH

This research shows the phenomenal impact that church and community volunteers who are trained with basic health skills, combined with a spirit of service obtained through spiritual teaching, can have on the health of a community. The volunteers feel empowered when they know how to care for their families and friends, and have the skills to teach others to do the same. These skills fill an important gap in the lagging healthcare systems in these impoverished communities. Across the

sites, the energy and effectiveness of the CHEs was not only sustainable, but also contagious. Below are additional findings related to the six sites.

- CHEs were trained in Kibera, Makueni, Kisumu, and the WASH program in Addis Ababa. Because the WASH program in Addis Ababa involved a partnership with the Ethiopian government, government health workers were trained in addition to the CHE volunteers.
- In Kibera, the majority of CHEs in the focus group had also participated in the Konjo Shoe Project, an economic empowerment program. The combination of obtaining income generating skills, as well as healthcare skills, has been particularly powerful in transforming the lives of these beneficiaries. They are empowered and confident to take on the challenges of their environment.
- In Kisumu, the CHEs were effective in preventing the recent cholera outbreak from reaching their community by teaching about the importance of boiling water and keeping their homes clean. Similar to the CHEs in Kibera, the Kisumu CHEs explain how prior to the LIA training *“they would just take drugs without a prescription, but after the trainings, they now go for diagnosis in the clinic before medication.”*
- The CHEs in Makueni focused on teaching good hygiene and sanitation practices, and were instrumental in mobilizing the community to build pit latrines. In fact since LIA’s departure in 2012, the CHEs, in partnership with the churches, took it upon themselves to train every household in the larger community (approximately 500) how to build pit latrines, and have helped build ones for widows and elderly people. Significant improvements in health have been achieved, especially in reducing infectious diseases, particularly diarrhea and malaria.
- At Emmanuel Church in Addis Ababa, Church volunteers were trained on how to take care of the elderly, an underserved population in this community. Church volunteers visit the elderly in their homes to help them with bathing, preparing food, washing clothes and cleaning. In addition, they help the elderly access medical care and provide emotional support to *“live peacefully at this stage of life.”*
- In Adama, a strong emphasis on teaching hygiene and appropriate waste disposal continues at the Green School, where improvements in health have been maintained since LIA’s departure. As part of the Street Children Program, the boys were also taught the importance of good hygiene, a nutritious diet, and how to care for themselves when ill.



CHEs in Kisumu.

- In Kibera and Kisumu, LIA previously operated health clinics in partnership with the pastors' fellowships. Because the Kenyan government has established a new initiative to provide government clinics in every village, LIA has recently phased out its medical clinics to avoid providing duplicative services. This initiative has been an answer to prayer for the LIA staff, although the CHEs expressed disappointment that the clinics are closing. The CHEs described how they took pride in bringing their friends and neighbors to LIA's clinics where they were known and were confident the care would be high quality. The dental clinics, whose services are not being covered by the government initiative, will continue under the LIA program.

C) Education

Education, both formal and informal, provides the basis for transformational development and occurs at multiple levels throughout LIA's holistic development model. In fact, education is embedded within each of LIA's programmatic areas and is vital to achieving transformation. For example:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Beneficiaries learn specific skills, like beading or shoe making, by which they can earn income. In addition, they learn financial management skills on how to effectively run a business.
- **Healthcare:** The CHEs learn basic healthcare skills that they use to improve the health of their families and their communities.
- **Environment:** Environmental preservation and conservation are taught along with the importance of achieving a clean environment in order to improve health.
- **Social Engagement:** Participants learn how to address structural issues, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty. In addition, LIA partners with government and other community organizations to teach them new skills.
- **Spiritual:** Beneficiaries gain a deepened understanding of a holistic gospel, which empowers them to transform their lives and to serve those in need.

LIA's work in promoting informal education is highlighted throughout this report. In this section, we have therefore emphasized the critical role that LIA has in furthering formal education which includes:

- Establishing sustainable and quality church based elementary schools
- Providing vocational training for street children
- Providing structured tutoring for street children and those who are at-risk
- Offering a two-year, diploma-based, theology training program for pastors
- Offering English as a second language courses

Of the sites included in this study, LIA's Orphan and Vulnerable Children's (OVCs) Programs best highlight LIA's work toward furthering formal education. Of the sites studied, LIA implemented OVC programs in Adama, Kisumu and at Emmanuel Church in Addis Ababa. The OVC Programs have two main components. The first is to prevent children who live in at-risk families from ending up on the street. This program provides support for the caregivers and their children with the objective of keeping the families together and the children healthy and in school. The second is a comprehensive program for children who are currently living on the street. The program includes vocational training, loans to start up businesses, support with housing and food, as well as social emotional support. Below are the stories of some of these children and their families.

Emmanuel Church in Merkato, Addis Ababa: Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children to Stay in School

The Merkato district is the commercial center of the city of Addis Ababa with the largest open-air market in all of Africa. *"Within the labyrinthian alleyways it is possible to purchase anything you desire from cheap electronics to exotic fruits. Let the products be your landmark, for there is no map for getting around the miles wide trading center. . . Spices, papayas, mangos and passion fruits, lamb, beef, jewelry and over one hundred coffee merchants, hawking their region's variety, are crammed into the narrow streets."*¹⁴

But behind the exotic bustling market is another world where the people who serve the market live in poverty and ill health. HIV/AIDS is rampant. Children work the streets, begging or unloading trucks and carrying baskets to vendors. These children are often abused and exploited, and many live on the streets. The area is dense and filled with migrants from other parts of Ethiopia. Tensions rise between different people groups, fires and fights break out, and gangs, drugs, prostitution and other criminal behavior are challenging the government's efforts to create a thriving business district.

It is in this context that a small church had been struggling to bring the hope of the Gospel to the people of Merkato. In the midst of a predominantly Muslim community, Emmanuel Church felt overwhelmed with the challenges it faced. Not too far away, LIA was working with street children to help them break addictive habits, get rehabilitated, and transition back into school and society, so Emmanuel asked LIA to help them with their ministry. LIA's approach was to work with the government as a partner and then equip the church leadership with the skills needed in order to enhance the work they had begun.

When LIA and Emmanuel Church approached the government, they were asked to serve not only the OVCs but also the elderly in the community whose families might have either abandoned them or have died from HIV/AIDS. Many are widows struggling to survive and others are infected with HIV/AIDS, still highly stigmatized. Responding favorably to this

¹⁴Alyssa Moxley, "Addis Ababa Mercato" www.pilotguides.com downloaded from the web on September 13, 2015.

request, a partnership evolved between LIA and the church to support the government's efforts. The program began with 5 children and 5 elderly people being supported.

LIA taught the leadership at Emmanuel Church how to care for the whole community and gave them training to reach out, especially to the many Muslims who live in that area. Pastor Thaddeus, who coordinates the program, explains, *"From LIA we learned how to visit people. Before LIA, we would only visit church members. We have kept up this outreach and seen tremendous change."* Five years after LIA's departure, Emmanuel Church is now serving over 250 OVCs and 20 elderly people. Pastor Thaddeus explains that more elderly people were in the program, but several have recently passed away.

Emmanuel Church employs Pastor Thaddeus as the program coordinator and two social workers to run the program. The church has twenty volunteers who have been selected based on their vision to serve the elderly and OVCs. To train these volunteers, Emmanuel Church continues to use the same manual that LIA brought to them. Pastor Thaddeus says that even though LIA transitioned out of the area five years ago, they still feel like LIA is with them.

The children and their families who participate in the OVC program receive holistic support from Emmanuel Church including supplementary food, help with making their homes secure and livable, micro-loans to start-up small business, and education oriented support services, including:

- Assistance for caregivers in registering for schools in their neighborhood
- School uniforms
- Basic school supplies
- Tutoring and general guidance on how to perform well at school
- Home visits at least once a month
- Awards for children who are performing well

Pastor Thaddeus explains that the last Saturday of the month, the church holds a coffee ceremony for all the beneficiaries, their families and the volunteers. The gathering provides an opportunity for parents and children to raise questions and discuss problems. Pastor Thaddeus tells us that these families "are often afraid that no one is listening and no one cares, but little by little they see that the Church cares." Pastor Thaddeus proudly explained that almost all of the children who are in the program are currently attending school! See Box A for the detailed story of one family who is currently receiving support.

Orphan and Vulnerable Children Programs in Adama and Kisumu

We sat sipping Fanta sodas, as the women of Kisumu told us their stories. Of the seven women, three were widows. One told us that after her husband died she was barely able to

speak. Another spoke about the difficulty of living with her alcoholic husband. And another was a single mother of three girls. No doubt these women's lives are challenging.



Community members share stories at Emmanuel.

The Kisumu women explained to us that some of the children who were on the street before the LIA program are now back home and are in school. One woman described how her son was living on the street, she prayed for him to come home, and now he is back in high school. The women explained how important the loans and training they received have been in helping them support their families. One woman who was interviewed individually said that she has a business selling chapatis and beans. Before the LIA program, she could only sell chapatis from one packet of flour per day, but after the LIA program she now sells chapatis from 12 packets a day. All of her children are now in school. The oldest is in 4th grade and the remaining two are in high school. Another

woman explained that her daughter has finished high school and college, and now has a job! The women discussed how high school is more expensive than primary school and requires taking their businesses to the next level. The women beamed with pride when they told us they are capable of supporting their families. One woman exclaims, "I can do business. I can take a child to high school. Even men have a challenge with that!"

"J" the barber, whose story you heard in the introduction, was a beneficiary of LIA's OVC program for children living on the street in Adama. After completing the program two years ago, "J" now supports his family with earnings from his barbershop, attends college classes and dreams of owning a larger business. "J" emphasizes that *"LIA has educated us and this has changed our mind-set, helped us to think about ourselves in a new way; how to live in a community, how to be accepted."* We also met a tailor who participated in the same program and is now running a successful business. Just during the time we were interviewing him, 5 customers came into his shop! He tells us that he has recently taken a driving course and plans to be a driver as well in order to expand his earnings. He comments, *"LIA helped most teenagers from the street, around 50, one at a time. It is a big deal. As far as I know, there is no organization who did this before for the street children."*

Similarly, a parent in Adama describes the success of the program serving at-risk families. *"Most of [the families] began sending their children to school regularly. They feed them as much as possible and good care is given to them. Their families have a hope of better days to come in the future."* Another parent states the benefits in a different way, *"Before*

the intervention of LIA, we were the poorest of the poor mentally, as well as economically, but after its involvement everything in our life is going the right way. Even we can send our children to school by providing them breakfast, lunch and dinner, and they are very effective in their education."

➔ KEY FINDINGS ON EDUCATION

- Education takes a variety of forms in the programs we visited and is integrated throughout everything that is done. Education is like life giving oxygen that enables transformation to occur and to continue. It enables the cycle of poverty to be broken.
- A focus on getting vulnerable children into and keeping them in school has repercussions across all segments of the social network. When children are kept off of the street, or reintegrated into society after living on the street, crime and drug use is reduced, creating a better living environment for the entire community. Furthermore, education is necessary for training the future work force of the community.
- LIA's intensive and holistic work with street children is very unique. As the tailor states, *"there is no organization who did this before"*. LIA's OVC Program in Addis Ababa received an award from the government of Ethiopia for its outstanding work.
- Education, by its very nature, is sustainable. Once people have developed skills, knowledge and an empowered mindset, they have these capabilities to draw upon throughout their lives, as well as the ability to teach these same skills to others.
- A beneficiary from Adama sums up the importance of education. *"You know, teaching the children is better than anything. Food and other supplementary things do not have long term value like education."*

D) Environmental Transformation

Environmental preservation and conservation is critical to the long term health of a community. At all six of the sites we visited, positive and sustainable environmental impact was clearly present. Developing systems for rubbish and human waste disposal were essential to improving health and quality of life at four of the six sites - Kibera, Makueni, Addis Ababa WASH, and Adama. At all of these sites, these systems were still in place, well maintained, and in many cases improved at the time of our visits. In addition to waste disposal, the LIA programs also included an emphasis on beautifying the environment through tree planting, recycling and environmental education.

The Award Winning Green School in Adama, Ethiopia

We were picked up by our host on a rainy morning in Addis Ababa to travel two hours to visit the Adama Green School, a project that we heard had won an award from the President of Ethiopia as a model school for environmental education. As we emerged from Addis and the city receded into the distance, the air became hot and dry with brush covering the



Trees and grass in Green School in Adama.

landscape. Adama is one of the driest areas in Ethiopia and we wondered how it could host a “model green school”?

With a population of 220,000¹⁵, we drove through the city center of Adama, and turned off to the outskirts of town. The streets were dry and dust rose from the road. As we approached the school, we saw the green canopy of trees emerging from the school compound. We entered the oasis and quickly found our way under the shade of a large tree, where we met a teacher, “H” who has been at the school since 1993 and leads the school’s environmental program.

“H” toured us around the school campus, showing us the different trees that had been planted, many of which had grown to grand heights. In all, 560 trees were planted on the school campus. “H” proudly explained that with daily care and nurturing all of the trees had lived except 12 which had been replaced. “H” also pointed out the well kept latrines and washbasins that had been built by the LIA project. He explained that the water from the washbasins is recycled to water the trees. The air was fresh and light, and “H’s” young daughter played with the fallen leaves as we spoke.

The Adama Green School is a unique pilot project conducted by LIA in coordination with UNICEF and the Ethiopian Government. The objective of the project was to improve the health of over 3,000 students at Adama Primary School No. 3 by improving the school’s environment. The project worked with the school to promote good hygiene and environmental sanitation practices, to educate the children regarding environmental responsibility and conservation, and to improve access to sanitation facilities at the school. This entire project was completed in only one year!

Access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is relatively low in Ethiopia, and is a particular problem at school facilities. Less than one in five primary schools has a dedicated, functional water supply. While most primary schools have some sort of latrine facility, the facilities are often inadequate (averaging 170 students per seat, with combined facilities for girls and boys). Only one third of the latrines are clean and less than one school in twenty boasts of having a hand washing facility¹⁶.

¹⁵ Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, 2007 Census

¹⁶ Project Proposal for Green School Pilot Project in Adama Town, Life in Abundance, June 2010

Prior to the Green School Project, poor personal and environmental hygiene practices both at the school and within the community at large led to significant health problems among the children. Students frequently missed school due to acute episodes of diarrhea, intestinal parasites, and respiratory tract infections. Furthermore, the school was located on an arid plot of land with hardly any shade. The wind blew through the school creating dust and carrying unpleasant fumes from the latrines. The environment led not only to poor health, but also poor performance in school.

At the time of the project, the school created two environmental clubs, each having 7 members, including both teachers and students. These student leaders were responsible for teaching the other students what they had learned in the environmental club and for holding the student body responsible for adhering to these new practices. Upon our visit, three years after completion of the project, 19 teachers and 410 students were currently enrolled in the environmental club!



Teacher and researchers at Green School.

A teacher comments that in comparison to before the project, *“The students have shade everywhere. They can sit under the trees on the grass and read, do their homework, and chat with friends. I have to tell you that everyone is happy, even people who pass by the school feel happiness. When they tell us, we enjoy what we did together”*. Another teacher comments that after completion of the project the students became healthier and more productive, missing fewer days of school, and that this improvement has remained over time.

In part, these improvements were achieved because the program empowered the students to bring the lessons they learned at school home to their families. In addition to planting two trees at the school, each student was given one tree to plant at home. One father of a student points out a kitchen garden that his son grows at their home. *“You see some various kinds of plants here. He planted sugar cane, carrots, onions, salad, and such kinds of things. The compound is very good, green as you see it yourself . . . All of our children began doing like him and following his lead. He is just like a role model for all of us.”* In addition, we learned that parents came together after the completion of LIA’s work to build a fence around the school compound in order to keep the goats and cattle from coming in and eating the green grass.

The Green School provides a great source of pride in the community that extends even beyond the participants' families. In our interviews, many community members, even those unaffiliated with the school, mentioned the school and the great work that had been done. The chairman of a table-banking group states, *"The project planted trees in one school and made the school green, which is difficult to believe. As a result, the impact of the project is not only in the school but the society became encouraged to make their compounds green."* A teacher states, *"All the eyes of the people are toward this school."*

The community feels extremely grateful for the work that LIA did to bring this program to fruition in Adama. Additional trees are no longer being planted at the school, but the educational component continues through the active environmental club. In addition, the school stands as a model, both for the Adama community and other communities to follow. Ensuring us of the sustainable impact LIA has created, a government representative shares *"Behind every tree the name of LIA is remembered."*

➡ KEY FINDINGS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

At all six of the sites, a cleaner environment was critical not only to the health of the communities, but also to creating a more pleasant living space. Education and community mobilization were critical to creating this transformation.

- In several of the sites, the LIA program had an important impact on the cleanliness of the environment by using trollies to pick up and dispose of waste, and by significantly reducing the use of "flying toilets"¹⁷ which cause significant health risks to the community, as well as environmental problems.
- In Kisumu, pastors who embraced the holistic gospel used community clean up days as a way to serve their communities. Trash was picked up and disposed of and trees were planted. As a result of the Church's commitment to the community in such a practical way, some people became interested in the Church and became Christians.
- In Addis Ababa, Emmanuel Church was instrumental in organizing the community to build cobblestone pathways to make their environment cleaner and safer. Once the community began the process, the government came and facilitated it. As we walked through the Merkato, we were impressed with its cleanliness, due in large part to these cobblestone walkways. Thick mud during the rainy season and heavy dust during the dry season are now a thing of the past!

E) Social Engagement

Mobilizing communities to take ownership, achieve leadership and work toward systematic change in their communities is essential to long-term transformation. Across the sites, we saw many

¹⁷Flying toilets refers to a form of collecting human waste in paper or plastic bags and throwing them away, often in the street or nearby ditch.

examples of social engagement within the communities. LIA has helped to equip communities to represent and protect themselves from systems that oppress them. In part, this is accomplished by encouraging partner churches to use their unique position in the community to give voice to the most vulnerable. At the same time, LIA is training local leaders and building community capacity as a core strategy to achieving long-term sustainability. Leadership training begins with pastors and religious leaders, but also involves community, youth, and even civic and government leaders. This strategy of mobilizing the community and equipping leaders to carry out transformational development was evident at all six of the sites we visited.

Steering Committees and Community Committees

In sites where the development work is separate from ministry, a steering committee and community committee oversee the programs. The steering committee is composed of government officials, pastors and members of the community. The community committee is composed primarily of community members, including church members. It makes decisions that impact the work at the community level and manages funds that are collaboratively generated by community projects.

Committees' effectiveness varies depending on the capacity and cohesiveness of the members. However, we found that because of the empowerment, skills and training received, when a committee was dysfunctional, the community with confidence disbanded it and reconfigured a new one that functioned better. Serving on these committees has provided a stabilizing network of relationships that has brought unity and better governance.

In the case of programs that are initiated by the churches, the partnership of pastors creates, in effect, a steering committee, and the church members who receive training create an interdenominational group that achieves this same level of community engagement as the community committees.

Government Leaders

In some cases, government officials are integral to the successful functioning of the programs. These leaders are also given training to develop skills to effectively run programs. In Ethiopia this was especially evident. Government officials in both Addis Ababa and Adama expressed the highest praise for LIA. They valued the training provided by LIA, management systems created by LIA, and most importantly LIA's integrity and transparency. This type of modeling has continued on the committee since LIA phased out. Working together they continue to oversee the work within a collaborative fashion with beneficiaries and church leaders. Community members now feel they are partners with the government rather than dependent on it.

Family and Tribal Relationships

One of the results of the partnership with LIA has been strengthened family relationships. Over and over again people told us how the ability to provide for their family has brought respect from spouses and children. In addition, the training, skills and knowledge gained through the LIA

programs have been brought into the home, resulting in better health, more harmony and more effective parenting.

Because of the networks developed by praying, planning and working together either as TOTs or CHEs, on committees or in table banking groups, tensions between different tribes have lessened considerably. This was especially evident in Kibera where several ethnic groups live side by side. We were told that because of these strong social networks, there was no inter-tribal violence during the most recent election, as there had been during the previous election. For the pastors in Kibera, this was a miracle and they attribute it to the friendships and respect they have gained working together as partners in transformation and recognizing the purpose of God. For LIA, this was a great answer to prayer because the previous violence was one of the reasons LIA began work in this area.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program in Addis Ababa

We stood under umbrellas, as the community committee leader, “K”, described to us the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project in Kirkos sub-city of Addis Ababa. The project was undertaken by LIA in partnership with the Ethiopian government and funded by USAID.

Kirkos sub-city is located in the center of Addis Ababa. The project was implemented in three villages, all marked by high population density and severe poverty. Before the LIA project, people had no method for disposing of rubbish or human waste. Many people used “flying toilets” and would leave garbage on the side of the road. Unsanitary conditions resulted and high rates of diarrhea and other diseases occurred. “K” explained that the dignity and security of the people also suffered. Open defecation occurred at night when it was dark, which was unsafe especially for women and children. The only option for bathing was a river beside the community, which was dirty, and unsuited for the elderly, women and children.



Children and Manager at the showers at the WASH Project in Addis Ababa.

“K” showed us the latrines, showers and wash basins built by the WASH Project. He explained that a community committee for each village was established to manage and service the facilities. The community committee determined the price that each community member pays to use the facilities. For residents, the fee is minimal and each resident has their own key to enter. The community committee in “K’s” village decided to charge people who live outside of the community a higher rate, so that a small profit is made for the community to reinvest in itself. “K” explained that the original community committee was corrupt and mismanaged these finances. The community chose to elect all new members and “K” became the committee chair at that time.

We watched as a woman who is employed by the community greets visitors and takes payments. Young children played around her as she worked. "K" told us that they currently collect 2,000 Ethiopian Birr monthly (US \$96) and have 23,000 Ethiopian Birr in savings (approximately US \$1,000). In addition to the woman who collects payments, the community also employs two people to clean the latrines and showers. Since LIAs departure over two years ago, the community has not only maintained the facilities but has also made improvements. They installed new, more secure doors on the latrines and added hot water to some of the showers, for which they now charge a higher price.

"K" also described the trolley system for removing garbage that was developed in coordination with LIA. Now, three times a week the garbage is collected and disposed of properly. "K" also explained how LIA trained community health workers on the importance of good hygiene and environmental sanitation, and how these people then taught others in the community. Some were volunteers from the churches and others were government employees. Now the community understands the value and importance of using and maintaining the new facilities. He said that open defecation is no longer a problem, but some people still urinate outside of the latrines, so further education is required.

"K" described how the environment has become more livable as a result of the LIA program. *"We are breathing clean air. No bad smell of urine, feces and damp household leftovers."* Second, health has improved. Interviewees report that there are fewer regular visits to the health center for diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Economically, people are saving time and money traveling to and from a place where they can get a shower. Furthermore, people who are clean are better positioned to obtain work.

Interviewees also reported improvements in their feelings of self worth. *"Our privacy is kept and we are dignified." "We think that we are modern people using standard WASH facilities."* Prior to the program, beneficiaries reported that women, in particular, felt depressed due to a lack of privacy, especially during their monthly cycle. Beneficiaries also reported feeling greater pride in their community and a sense of improved social stature. *"We are not ashamed when we have guests in our house. We feel proud to show them the facilities for them to use."*

The interviewees reported that relationships within the community have improved. Prior to the program, the disposal of waste on the roads and in ditches created conflict among people and neighborhoods. The program has *"brought our day to day encounters into a stronger network."* Where the waste was once disposed, the community is now growing plants and trees.

Our findings show that the benefits of the WASH Project are not only sustainable, but are actually continuing to expand throughout the community as time passes. For example, "K" showed us street lights which the village built along its main road and beside the toilets and showers with community committee funds. Previously, the road was dark and unsafe at night



Electric lights and pole installed by community committee for security in WASH project, Addis Ababa.



The wall the community built to keep out hyenas at the WASH project, Addis Ababa.

so people were fearful to go out. Women were especially afraid to go out to use the toilets. In addition, “K” showed us a fence that his village built along the river to prevent the hyenas from entering. With the lights and the fence, people now feel much more secure. “K” told us that with their savings the community committee plans to initiate another community-based business to increase their earnings.

Both the government representatives and the beneficiaries were extremely grateful to LIA for their involvement in this project. The government representatives who we interviewed said that LIA was “different from other NGOs” because LIA “invests everything and doesn’t keep anything for themselves” and is “transparent in managing finances.” The government continues to use the management systems that LIA established which makes it “like LIA is still here.” The government interviewees said that they would like to work further with LIA to build drainage ditches and sewers in this community, and to do similar projects in other areas of the city.

The beneficiaries were similarly deeply thankful for LIA’s involvement. “After LIA built the facility, our eyes opened to see our environment and our ears opened to hear the learning messages. We are better.” Another beneficiary states, “Thanks to God that LIA has come and solved our problems.”

➔ KEY FINDINGS ON SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social engagement that focuses on working toward systematic change is essential to long-term transformation in these communities. In addition to the WASH example above, we saw many other examples of social engagement across the sites.

- In order to solve the problem of “flying toilets” in Kibera, the CHEs brought the landlords who did not provide latrines to the village Chiefs and insisted that latrines be installed. The CHEs understood the power structure within the

community and mobilized together to achieve structural change that could not be realized by individual tenants.

- Through advocacy, the CHEs in Kibera were recognized by the Kenyan government for their skills. This recognition enhanced their status within the community and enabled them to work on a larger scale to expand their impact.
- Across sites, interviewees explained how LIA taught them simultaneously to work and pray for their communities. As the members of the community initiated change, often structural change would follow. Residents in Kibera are very hopeful as they finally see the government responding with water, electricity, and other services. At Emmanuel Church, as the community began building cobblestone roads, the government came in behind them and moved the project forward.
- Women across sites repeatedly said that before the LIA project they were just sitting waiting for help. After learning new skills, the women have become more active members in the economic and social fabric of their communities. As stated by one woman, *“Before, not only me, but many women, just stayed back at home and waited for their husbands or friends to come at night carrying everything. But after we were taught, we knew that even we could produce for our families. So from that time on, many women, plus I, know how to work with our own hands, small businesses, making things, we save and get money!”*
- At the national level LIA has been able to influence government in its attitudes towards development and working with the poor and vulnerable. This is evidenced by the number of awards the organization has received from the Ethiopian government as well as the personal testimony of various government officials interviewed for this project.

E) Spiritual Transformation

Interwoven into the education and training that LIA provides during the three years it is in the community is a deep sense of dependence on God. For LIA staff, only God deserves the credit for anything that has been accomplished. This is further emphasized by a model that brings together churches as the core institutions within the community who learn to embrace and partner with other local institutions, businesses and religious groups such as mosques. LIA strives to strengthen the spiritual life within these communities as a component to long-term success, helping local churches identify the root causes of poverty in their context and equipping them to address those issues in an integrated, customized way.¹⁸

¹⁸See Life in Abundance International, Community Impact Overview, March 25, 2015, p. vi.



Woman tailor in Kibera



Woman using her newly acquired skill. She has bought her own machine.

As previously discussed, LIA's initial activity in a community is prayer, envisioning and identification of partner churches (see p. 16). Central to this process is reflection on the Holy Scriptures and understanding what God intends for the people. On one of the days when we began our training of community researchers, Dr. Yared Mekonin, Regional Director, provided a beautiful example of LIA's approach to spiritual reflection. Dr. Yared read a Biblical passage, Mark 2:1-12, to remind participants of the story of the paralytic. In this story, four people bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus for healing. These were innovative, creative, visionary friends who did not accept this man's paralysis. The friends of the paralytic convinced him to be willing to change, to not believe that his physical state was hopeless, but rather to risk everything and see if this rabbi, Jesus, would heal him. For LIA, this change in mindset is the beginning of transformation and of wholeness. Transformation starts with relationships with each other and then a person's relationship with Jesus is restored because there is always hope, no matter how desperate the situation. Development is then unfolding that potential.

Clear evidence of spiritual transformation having taken place was that we heard over and over: *"We have a changed mind set."* People talked about how engagement with the project has changed the way they see and do things. Pastors told us about how their eyes have been opened to see their ministry as holistic. Before, they only preached for people to get saved. Now they think differently. They realize that the Bible is about more than just being saved, it is about caring for and loving our neighbors. James 1 was quoted to us: *"Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress."* Pastor Romanus from Kisumu said it clearly: *"LIA has made me see God in a different way."*

One of the pastors in Kibera told us that when his denomination assigned him to Kibera it was almost like a death sentence. *"You are sent to the slums and it almost seems like a punishment."* He encountered a people who were completely dependent on outside agencies and expected the churches, his included, to give them things. *"People expected you to give to them."* But, through the LIA interventions people have learned to work with their own hands. They no longer need to be paralyzed by their poverty. One Beulah member in Makueni eloquently states,

"Many people have learned to be self-reliant. Now they are not waiting for people to come from other places to come and help them to do things for them. People have been changed psychologically. They know that they have to depend on themselves, to do things for themselves. Through the learning, people from different areas, even those not in the group, have been able to improve their lives."

The churches who partner with LIA model collaboration across ecumenical and sometimes religious lines in order to bring about lasting change. At all six of the sites, participants stated that denominations were now working together. LIA's emphasis on "our community" rather than "our church" and the teaching that all are members of Christ's body has encouraged this shift. In many cases, the Training of Trainers program (TOT) was instrumental in that people of all denominations were working closely together toward common goals, which broke down barriers that previously existed between them. Similarly, Christians are working alongside Muslims in the LIA projects.

One of the Muslim CHEs in Kibera told our community researchers that “[their] eyes have opened” and added that “[they] can go far if they walk with others” and therefore need to be united for the common good, irrespective of challenges of religious affiliations. He told them that the LIA partnership is making this possible.

As a result of this change in mindset, a growing number of people are attending the churches. For example, Emmanuel Church, since their partnership with LIA began, has grown from a small group of people to one of over 500. They have had to expand their building to accommodate everyone. This also means more income as members donate their tithes and offerings. With these added funds, the church has been able to increase their services provided to community members. In Kisumu, we were told that many of the churches have grown and some have even expanded into other areas, establishing daughter congregations. As one beneficiary told us: *“This is a church that cares about the community so I want to be a part of it.”*

With Church growth, there has been a social impact as well. Pastor Titus from Makueni explains, *“Some people took alcohol but now they have stopped. Some people were working as barmaids, but now they don’t have to.”* And other beneficiaries describe how their families have changed:

“My family is saved because of the word of God. How I talk to the children is nowadays different than before. Before I didn’t know the word of God, I was just a church-goer. But when I got saved I understood the meaning of being washed with the blood of Jesus and I followed the teachings of Jesus Christ. So you have to love people, be a good parent, be an example, a mentor for the children . . . Before I was harsh because I was alone. I was bitter. I hadn’t healed in my life. Through training, through Church, I got healed. Now, I know to serve others.”

Over and over again, people told us that once your mind is changed and your eyes are opened, there is no turning back. A vision, a passion, a hope for the future has been unleashed.

The Story of Pastor Michael and Spiritual Transformation in Kibera, Kenya

Pastor Michael sat down with us to talk about the changes he has seen in Kibera since the LIA partnership. He recalled the early days when LIA invited the pastors to come together and envision a future and a hope for Kibera. *“Many of us were coming and waiting for relief. But LIA only offered empowerment! So we got the skills to serve the community. [Pastors responded by saying] ‘Wow, this isn’t what we were waiting for! We should run away.’ So the partnership went from 13 churches to only seven churches.”*

Yet the seven remaining churches gained so much from their work together and saw such a transformation in the community, that once LIA left, they realized that it was important to keep the partnership going. With the new independence, the partnership has decided to pay a full-time coordinator to manage the programs. This coordinator is paid through the partnership and through a tithe from the LIA medical and dental clinic in Kibera. Pastor Michael says: *“The partnership has now strengthened. Before, the pastors treated the programs as only part-time.”*

Now they come to the office everyday to see what is happening. And the churches that left now want to come back."

Pastor Michael explained that the pastors in the Kibera fellowship have shifted toward a more holistic theology, realizing that they were wasting time preaching when people were starving. He also described how the denominations are now working together effectively. Before the LIA partnership, he said they were divided based on tribes, level of education, and by denomination. For example, Pentecostals did not work with the Anglicans. Baptists ran their own churches and did not partner with others. The cohesive church partnerships and shared TOT experience in Kibera have served not only to bring the denominations together, but have also had the ancillary result of diminishing tribalism. For Pastor Michael and the others, this is *"Miraculous work that has never been done with any organization in Kibera."*

Pastor Michael also explained to us how the Christians and Muslims are now working together. Interestingly, many of the landlords in Kibera are Muslims. The original settlers of Kibera were Sudanese soldiers who had fought with the colonial British Empire, and out of gratitude were given land rights to this area. Over the decades, streams of unauthorized Kenyans moved onto the land and paid rent to these predominately Muslim landlords.¹⁹ According to Pastor Michael, these Muslim landlords do not want Christians to bring their fellowship to their plots of land. But since the LIA partnership, Muslims and Christians are interacting together, doing medical camps, cleaning up the community, and in other ways working for the transformation of Kibera.

One Muslim elder, who is a spiritual leader at the mosque, is also a community health educator (CHE). According to Pastor Michael, he had been depressed because of the dire physical and environmental conditions in Kibera. But now he values the solidarity he has found with the other CHEs because there is no talk of violence or hatred, but only about the future, hope and bright things. He is also bringing more Muslims to join as they, too, especially appreciate the message of peace. In return, they take the training to the mosques. In some cases, Muslims are also coming to the churches. This has resulted in greater respect for one another's religious traditions and created an atmosphere of peace instead of animosity amongst neighbors.

➡ KEY FINDINGS ON SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

- Spiritual transformation is the heart of LIA's development model, as it provides people with the hope, passion and will to create long-standing change within their lives and their communities. Development becomes transformational development when the spiritual aspect is in place. As people's hearts and minds are transformed, the impact is irreversible.

¹⁹Brian Eckdale. "A History of Kibera," May 4, 2011, www.brianeckdale.com. Downloaded from the web on September 2, 2015.

- Prayer is at the core of all that LIA does. As one staff member said, *“Each Monday is a day for staff corporate prayer and fasting. We pray for each other, the work of LIA in our country, and also for the international LIA family.”* We were told that this practice has been in place since LIA was founded. Indeed the founder and international director, Dr. Florence Muindi, said she and her family have prayed every Monday since the very first church and community were engaged. In the community, we witnessed people praying in meetings and talking about the impact of prayer on what they did and continue to do. Every deed of kindness, every act of compassion, every skill utilized is seen as the result of a prayerful, changed life.
- By working with LIA, pastors at all of the sites refer to developing a new, more holistic understanding of the gospel that involves serving those who are most in need in their communities.
- Beneficiaries describe their transformation somewhat differently than the pastors. They emphasize how God has empowered them to provide for their families and has healed them, enabling them to be more loving members of their families. Across the sites, beneficiaries said that there was more harmony in their households as a result of LIA’s spiritual teaching. They also speak of developing spiritual practices such as prayer and tithing.
- In addition, beneficiaries explained that with their spiritual transformation, they also experience a psychological transformation of breaking out of the dependence mode and taking ownership for creating change in their lives.
- Diverse groups of people who were previously divided are now working together as a result of the LIA partnerships. People from different denominations, different religious affiliations and different tribes are all coming together with the unified goal of transforming their communities.

VI) Levels of Sustainable Transformation

Understanding how to achieve long-term sustainable transformation is at the top of the global development agenda. Many nonprofit organizations struggle to achieve the expected outcomes of their programs, not to mention achieving sustainable impact over time. In order to understand the depth of sustainability achieved by LIA, we have evaluated the sites not only based on programmatic areas, but also using a second framework to determine the level of transformation achieved within each community (see Chart 2).

Transformational development according to the LIA model occurs within individuals, families and communities, with strong interaction between each of these levels. With this analysis, we have therefore addressed three critical questions:

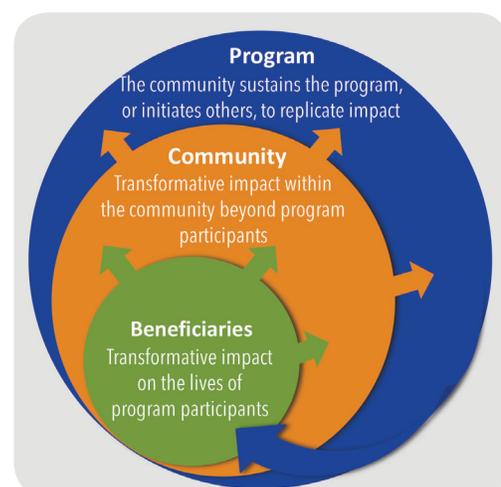


Chart 2: Levels of Sustainable Development

- Did beneficiaries who participated in the program gain skills and access resources that enabled them to continue to transform their lives after completion of the LIA program?
- Did this transformation spread beyond the lives of the beneficiaries to positively impact others in the community and did this impact occur on an ongoing basis?
- Lastly, did the community develop the capacity to sustain this program or other transformational development programs after LIA completed its work, thus replicating the benefits in either the same or another community?

A) Level 1: Beneficiaries

At all six of the sites, we met many people whose lives had been sustainably transformed through participation in the LIA programs. Achieving sustainability at the beneficiary level involves acquiring skills and/or accessing resources that continue to be utilized after the LIA program is complete. For example, individuals who participated in income generating projects, learned skills related to managing a business and their personal finances. In many cases, they also learned skills specific to a craft, such as how to make beads or leather shoes. In addition, participants were given access to seed capital to help them start or expand their business. After completion of the LIA project, these beneficiaries were able to continue using these skills and resources to achieve ongoing improvements in their lives. Furthermore, these skills and resources were provided in the context of a holistic development program that supported their transformation.

In the case studies presented, we have already introduced you to many of these people. They include “J” the barber from Adama, the members of Beulah Savings and Credit Association in Makueni, the CHEs from Kibera, the beneficiaries of the OVC program in Kisumu and many others. Below is a brief summary of beneficiaries we met at the different sites whose lives were sustainably transformed (see Chart 4). This is in no way an exhaustive list, but provides one or two representative examples from each community.

Chart 4: Beneficiaries who Experienced Life-changing Impact

Site	Description	Project
<i>Kibera, Kenya</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “P”, the tailor, stopped talking when her husband passed away and she was left alone to care for her three children. Today she is an optimistic woman running her own tailoring business and all three of her children are successful students. <i>“My business is doing very well. I am now going on with my life and my children.”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health Evangelist • Konjo Shoe Project

Site	Description	Project
Nyalenda, Kisumu, Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “M” could hardly support her children. She had a chapati business that only sold chapatis from one packet of flour per day. After receiving support from LIA, her business is growing and she sells chapatis from twelve packets of flour per day. All of her children are in school. • Mr. “N” in Kisumu learned necessary skills to run his motorcycle transport business. After buying one motorcycle, he has now been able to buy an additional three and has created employment for local young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest Project for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
Makueni, Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “S” the treasurer of Beulah, who initially didn’t feel confident to even join Beulah, now manages the funds for the group which currently total over US\$10,000 in savings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Storage Silos and Water Tanks • Income Generation
Adama, Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “J” the barber had been living on the streets of Adama before the LIA program. Today he runs a successful business that supports his extended family. He is currently taking college courses and dreams of owning a large business. • “T” the tailor was also living on the streets, but now runs a successful tailoring business. “T” completed the national exam for grade 10 and states, <i>“the best thing I got from LIA is I have no addiction and I am not idle. My mind is on my business.”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Children Program for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Site	Description	Project
<i>Emmanuel Church, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “G” became infected with HIV while caring for an elderly patient with HIV. With support from Emmanuel Church, she has improved her home, started a knitting business, and kept her two girls in school. Her girls enjoy singing in the church choir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program for Orphan and Vulnerable Children
<i>WASH Project, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “L” describes being able to use the latrine and change menstrual pads in private as feeling like <i>“I am born again.”</i> She says, <i>“There is great change in our life. . . The shower is cleaner than our own houses. We love it!”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of community owned latrines, showers & wash basins • Environmental Clean-up

B) Level 2: Community

Level 2 transformation exists when the beneficiaries of the program, or the implementation of the program itself, creates positive impact in the community beyond the lives of the participants. This level of transformation is like the ripples that occur when a stone is thrown into water. Often the participants will teach their family and friends the skills they have learned which extends the impact beyond the beneficiaries and into the community. In other cases, the program builds capacity within the community by training leaders or building management systems, which continue to benefit the community after the program has been completed.

At all six of the sites, we witnessed significant impact in the community beyond the lives of the beneficiaries. This impact occurred in all areas of the development model: communities were healthier, economic activity increased, environments were cleaner, and lives were touched by God’s presence and healing. Beneficiaries explained to us over and over how transformation in their own lives led to transformation in their families and also empowered them to reach out and serve their communities. As this positive impact spreads, the community becomes empowered with skills and resources, just like the individual beneficiaries, to carry out this work at the community level.

At several of the sites, we noticed that the ripple effect of impact within the community actually increased over time rather than dissipating. For example, at the WASH Project in Addis Ababa, the community used the funds they had saved from the program to build a fence and lights, creating a safer, more secure environment for everyone. Having now built up additional savings, the community committee plans to start up a second community business to increase their earning potential. With this plan, this site is well on its way to moving to the next level of sustainability where

the community itself is initiating its own transformational development projects. A second example is that the CHEs in Kibera and Kisumu halted a recent outbreak of cholera. The skills, knowledge and work of the CHEs, has not only reduced the prevalence of existing diseases in the community, but also prevented future outbreaks of other diseases. In both of these examples, the impact on the community is increasing, not dissipating over time!

In the case studies, we have presented many stories that highlight how transformation spread beyond the lives of the beneficiaries to positively impact others in the community, and a brief summary is provided below (see Chart 5). Again, note that we have provided only the most salient examples and have not tried to document an exhaustive list.

Chart 5: Sustainable Impact at the Community Level

Site	Impact at the Community Level
<i>Kibera, Kenya</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHEs have reduced disease, cared for those with HIV/AIDs, trained friends and family with health skills and recently stopped an outbreak of cholera. • Through the Konjo Shoe Project, beneficiaries have brought greater economic activity to the community and are keeping their children in school. • Greater harmony now exists between tribes, religious groups, and denominations, as well as within families.
<i>Nyalenda, Kisumu, Kenya</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have been kept nourished, in school and off of the street, thus reducing potential crime and developing the community's future workforce. • CHEs have improved community health by teaching basic health skills to their family and friends, and prevented the recent outbreak of Cholera.
<i>Makueni, Kenya</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition in the community has been significantly reduced. • More economic activity exists. Friends and family receive loans from beneficiaries who participated in the LIA project. • Sanitation and hygiene have improved, resulting in less disease throughout the community.
<i>Adama, Ethiopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students at the Green School teach their families what they have learned about sanitation, hygiene and tree planting, thus expanding impact. The school is a source of pride for the community and serves as a model program.

Site	Impact at the Community Level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are kept nourished, off the street and in school, thus reducing potential crime and training the community's future workforce.
<p><i>Emmanuel Church, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly are cared for improving the social fabric of the community. • Children are nourished, kept in school, and off the street. • Greater economic activity exists in the community. Friends receive loans from beneficiaries.
<p><i>WASH Project, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community installed lights and a fence to create a more secure environment for all. • Management systems set up in the WASH Project are continuing to be used by the government. • Training government employees has had a lasting impact on programs implemented in neighboring communities

C) Level 3: Program

The strongest level of sustainability is when the community itself develops enough capacity to carry out transformational development programs on its own. The community may take ownership of the program initially started in partnership with LIA or it may choose to initiate other transformational development projects, with the key being that the work is entirely community led. At this level of sustainability, it is as if another stone has been thrown into the water creating a new ripple effect of benefits within the same or a new community. Program benefits are replicated over and over, creating a movement toward achieving even greater transformation.

At three of the six sites - Kibera, Kisumu and Emmanuel Church - the community is carrying out the program initiated in partnership with LIA. In Makueni, Beulah has a plan for replicating its program in a neighboring community, but it has not yet realized this vision. At many of the other sites, especially in Ethiopia, a second model of replication has also been achieved. Several programs have received national recognition as model projects to be replicated in other communities.

At the three sites where the community is carrying out the program initiated by LIA, a consistent characteristic is strong capacity building within the partner churches. Passionate church members provide a willing group of volunteers to serve in carrying out transformational development work. In Kibera, a particularly strong partnership has developed among the seven churches who worked together during implementation of the LIA program. The partnership currently works in six of the

Kibera villages and has a vision to replicate the LIA program in each of Kibera's seventeen villages. In Pastor Michael's words, we want to *"work with the face of Kibera in every village."*

In Kisumu, a similar structure is in place. A strong church partnership has been developed and the partnership is employing a program coordinator. As the churches in the Kisumu partnership have practiced holistic ministry, they have experienced *"massive growth."* With this growth, tithing and capacity has increased to carry forward the LIA program, although the partnership and future vision is not yet as strong as in Kibera.

At Emmanuel Church, the structure is different. Emmanuel Church partners with the Ethiopian government to deliver social services to the elderly and OVCs. Emmanuel has hired a program coordinator and two social workers to carry out this work. In coordination with these programs, the congregation practices holistic ministry in a variety of areas, including rebuilding homes, providing loans to needy families and bringing hope to those who are discouraged.

Makueni, although it has not yet reached programmatic sustainability, has created a vision to do so. The pastors' partnership in Makueni is still active but has struggled because some pastors have moved away and the new pastors do not have the same vision. In addition, transportation is difficult in Makueni, because the area is very spread out, making it challenging for the pastors to meet and maintain momentum. Currently three pastors remain in the partnership. That being said, the Beulah group has established its own vision to train neighboring communities what they have learned through the LIA program and to tithe off their earnings to provide these communities with seed capital for income generating projects.

In Ethiopia, achieving programmatic sustainability is difficult because the government requires a separation between church and development activities. Without a close church partnership, it is difficult to have a group of volunteers who are ready to carry on the program. Steering committees and community committees are therefore creating a group of volunteers that includes representation from the churches and is positioned to sustain the program. At the WASH Project in Addis Ababa, the strength of the community committee is creating the necessary leadership to mobilize the community toward this level of sustainability.

LIA has also achieved another model of program replication through national recognition. In Ethiopia, the WASH project, the Green School and the OVC program have all received awards from the government of Ethiopia as model programs to be replicated in other communities. For its work on the WASH Project, LIA was identified as the third most effective development organization in the nation. Similarly, the Kenyan government has recognized the CHEs in Kibera for their skills and impact, thus enhancing their status and enabling them to work on a larger scale. LIA is therefore influencing the government's attitudes and approaches toward development work. Achieving this high level of national recognition is an outstanding accomplishment by LIA, particularly in Ethiopia given the government's philosophy to keep religious and development work separate.

"G's" story in Merkato

The story of a woman we visited in the Merkato district of Addis Ababa provides an example of the integrated way in which the interventions initiated years ago by LIA are still improving the lives of the people. We walked with Pastor Thaddeus for several blocks along the cobblestone pathways of the Merkato until we came to a wall with a metal door. A lady named "G" welcomed us and led us through a courtyard into a small living room lined with comfortable chairs, just enough space for all of us to sit. We sat down and listened to her story, translated for us by one of our community researchers.

"G" tearfully told us that she contracted HIV/AIDS while caring for elderly neighbors who were ill with the disease. When she learned that she, too, had now become infected with the virus, "G" collapsed in despair. A member of the church told Pastor Thaddeus about her and the church reached out to her. They found her house messy and smelly. She and her daughters slept on the floor, and



Community Researchers knocking on door of Emmanuel member.

VII) Conclusion

Our overall conclusion is clear: the community work established by LIA continues to flourish even after LIA is no longer present. In all the sites we visited, there is no question that the people are engaged in effective and transformative ways to bring change to their communities. Over and over we heard, in their own words, *"our eyes have been opened"*. They have learned the effectiveness of working together, they have gained the capacity and skills to think creatively about the challenges they face, and they agree that there is no turning back. This has been the key result: what they call a *"change in mind set"*. Most of the people we interviewed are excited and passionate about what is happening, especially when they have been able to overcome difficulties in new ways that they learned through the program.

At each of the six sites, we saw that long after LIA has gone, communities continue to seek ways to improve their health and vitality, to learn new skills and gain knowledge, to use those skills to increase their incomes, and to care deeply for one another. And beyond this, they demonstrate to the broader community that by working together (churches, businesses, neighborhoods) they do not have to wait for someone to save them, but that they themselves are the agents for their own transformation.

In the researchers' opinion, LIA has accomplished a tremendous amount of work with a small amount of funds. Central to LIA's teaching is that money is not the answer to a community's problems. Education, skills, taking ownership and working together create lasting change. LIA follows its own teaching, by using a small amount of money to instigate great change, which is replicable and sustainable into the future.

To achieve this transformational change, a holistic model of development is essential. The components of LIA's development model all work together and none can be isolated to achieve success. The interdependencies were evident across all sites on deep and complex levels.

Spiritual transformation is both the seed which ignites transformational change as individual hearts and minds are

dirt was everywhere. There were holes in the roof where water seeped in when it rained.

The church members felt the first thing that was needed was an improvement in her housing situation and so they got together and rebuilt her house. Now with a nicely painted and safe house she was ready to rebuild her life. She learned that she could overcome the illness by taking medication. And she learned that with training and a micro loan from LIA through the church, she could start a business and earn money to buy food and clothing for her daughters and proper nutrition for herself in battling the virus. The church gave her a small loan and some training to start a knitting business.

By the time we met her, "G" had taken out two loans from the church and already repaid them. She has been able to rent a knitting machine and is saving money to buy one for herself. She makes sweaters and scarves and sells them in the market. Pastor Thaddeus proudly told us that he was wearing one of the sweaters she had made. And much to our surprise and joy, she gave us scarves so that we would never forget her!

But more important than the economic support that "G" has received from the Emmanuel Church is the hope that now infuses her life. Far from being doomed, she has come to see that she can have life and have it abundantly! She is providing for her family, she is sending her daughters to school, she has a savings account, and above all she and her daughters are participating in the church, joining them in efforts to reach out to the community.

awakened, and it is also the mechanism by which the work is carried on into the future. Church congregations provide a body of volunteers who are willing to passionately, and with compassion, serve their community and take ownership for continuing the transformation process. Our research reinforces the findings of Stanczak, Miller, and Dyrness in Tanzania who found in their study of World Vision, another large faith-based NGO, that spirituality is *"a catalyst that motivates action, inspires innovation, mollifies cultural tensions, and bridges fractured communities."*²⁰ It is an important analytic variable in development research that holds compelling answers to the success and sustainability of development accomplishments.

In the course of our data collection and analysis, we were made aware of areas where community members would like additional support and training from LIA, such as marketing skills and managing budgets that map out the future. In addition, we received some feedback related to specific aspects of the programs in the relative communities that is too detailed for this report. These findings are therefore provided to LIA in a separate document.

Finally, we had hoped that by using Participatory Action Research, community researchers would be trained in the methodology and left with the capacity to continue this type of work once the project was over. We were not disappointed. Across all six sites, the researchers reported over and over how they, themselves, have been changed by listening to the stories of the people they interviewed, and how they are excited about furthering the work. Their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in the community, combined with the research skills they have developed, positions them to now be a central part of the process going forward. Additionally, they learned from the community researchers in the other sites. When we gathered together at the end for data analysis, they all took notes and each other's contact information to stay in touch so they could help one another later. In Ethiopia, the two researchers from the Merkato and Mexico site told us that

²⁰Greg Stanczak, Donald Miller and Grace Dyrness, 2006. Spiritually Engaged Development: Faith and Community Transforming Tanzania. University of Southern California: Center for Religion and Civic Culture.

they were going to continue volunteering together because they now feel like they are brothers! All of the researchers said they want to continue engaging in research. In Kisumu, the youngest researcher said he now wants to go to school to study applied research methods. And a pastor researcher enthusiastically told the group that from now on he was going to use this methodology in his church as they engage in strategic planning! This was a hoped-for result of PAR and while it may have had its limitations overall it proved to be a successful methodology.

VIII) Research Constraints

As in any research project, there are certain constraints that limit the conclusions that were found. We mention some here that may have impacted our results.



Some of the researchers in Ethiopia

- Selection of community researchers. The participatory aspect of this research project dictated that the community researchers come from within the community, something that was accomplished here, but they had to have enough education and English language capacity in order to work with the principal investigators who did not speak their languages. As a result we may have omitted members of the community who would have been key to further research and strategic planning within the community. We especially felt the language restrictions in Ethiopia where even our selected researchers struggled with English. Nevertheless, we were grateful for the level of commitment of each of these researchers and of their effective communication within their communities.



Community Researchers in Makeni working on interview protocol.

- Further, it was unfortunate that only one of the community researchers was a female, but more than half of the beneficiaries being interviewed were women. We wonder if the results might have been different if there had been at least one female researcher per site. When we questioned the choice of mostly males, we were informed that few women in their communities have enough English skills to participate in this research. While this is understandable, it provides a real limitation to our findings.

- Language barriers. The principal investigators conducted two interviews and a focus group in most of the sites. Because we did not speak the language, we relied on the translation of one of our community researchers. This meant that we were dependent on their interpretation of what was being said and we could not corroborate with

our own additional questions. This barrier was overcome somewhat by the fact that our community researchers were trained in the methodology and understood very well the goals of the research project.

- Of the beneficiaries interviewed, all spoke of sustainable transformation in their lives. This does not mean that every beneficiary of the LIA programs experienced sustainable transformation, because we only sampled a select number. And because of time constraints, the selection of the sample may have been flawed by who was available for interviews during that time framework. However, community researchers conducted a stakeholder analysis during the training and the expectation is that they followed the list of selected stakeholders to obtain interviewees.



Kenya research team.