



## LIFT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE FRAMEWORK 2021

LIFT's COVID-19 response in 2021 builds on learning from 2020 which highlighted the importance of strong on-the-ground partnerships with diverse stakeholders, particularly local CSOs, community groups and microfinance institutions, as the foundation for effective emergency interventions that require rapid adaptations in programming and administration.

The 2021 COVID-19 response package leverages LIFT's proven expertise and partnerships to rapidly pivot towards a wide range of effective COVID-19 response measures and adapt programmes for immediate frontline response and longer-term recovery activities to boost community resilience and livelihoods.

In 2021, LIFT's strategic approach for COVID-19 response focuses on 1) providing an immediate frontline response to support communities in preventing the spread of the virus and protecting their wellbeing and 2) supporting medium- and longer-term measures to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 through building resilient livelihoods.

LIFT's COVID-19 response framework is designed to address the following scope of humanitarian and development challenges:

- Mass loss of employment and increased desperation for income to sustain their livelihoods while social safety nets are at a standstill;
- Surging food and nutrition insecurity, particularly for internally displaced people who may be locked down in their camps with no livelihood opportunities;
- Increase in conflict-induced displacement resulting in acute need for shelter support services;
- Rise in violence against women and spikes in psychosocial stress in an increasingly insecure context causing increased demand for shelter and protection services for victims/survivors of violence;
- Limited COVID-19 awareness and vaccination misconceptions, lack of preventive materials and services;
- Standstill healthcare services, catastrophic disruptions to medical supplies;
- Limited capacities and resources to lead the response activities and support longer-term recovery initiatives.

### LIFT's framework for immediate response:

As the third wave of COVID-19 gathers pace in terms of scale and scope, LIFT is supporting communities through the following set of strategic objectives and activities:

- **Prevention and protection** - Providing vulnerable communities (with a focus on the elderly, people with disabilities, migrants and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and their children, and adolescent girls) with scaled-up WASH activities, PPEs and essential medication, while raising awareness to deliver information on the behaviours necessary to prevent transmission of the virus, including advocacy on COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Support to community-based health systems** - Enhancing the provision of community-driven health services to vulnerable groups. Strengthening community-based health service providers and ethnic service providers, community and inter-community networks, local civil society organizations and community groups to expand the outreach of health and nutrition services including through mobile services. Promoting the mobilization of



### Livelihoods and Food Security Fund





peer support and community volunteer assistance to deliver essential services where organizations cannot reach due to restrictions. Supporting locally-led COVID-19 quarantine and treatment centers as well as healthcare facilities with essential prevention services and refurbishment of needed supplies, including medication. Supporting teleconsultation services through engagement of medical practitioners and healthcare volunteers while strengthening the referral systems for patients with severe conditions.

- **Emergency nutrition interventions** - Providing nutrition support to vulnerable groups, with a focus on pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, people with disabilities and the elderly in internally displaced people camps, host communities and villages and peri-urban areas aiming at safeguarding nutritional status. Essential nutrition interventions will be prioritized in the COVID-19 response along with health and WASH interventions, in an integrated approach. Prioritising grants and, if possible, tailored loans to local food producing and agricultural businesses (with a focus on urban and peri-urban areas) to improve access to nutritious food and performance of local food systems.
- **Expanding social protection tools** - Scaling up cash transfers, food assistance programmes (in-kind and vouchers) and cash/food for work schemes to help vulnerable communities mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 while designing job creation programmes as a key element of recovery strategy.
- **Addressing gender-based violence and psychosocial trauma** - Scaling up psychosocial support and counseling for target groups as well as boosting the provision of essential services to survivors of violence such as shelter, nutrition awareness and nutritional supplementation, cash assistance, job matching services and social behaviour change communications activities (SBCC/IYCF).
- **Focus on staff and partner protection** - Scaling up mechanisms to strengthen LIFT's and partners' staff protection and safety, including facilitated vaccination and medical services.

#### **LIFT's guiding principles for immediate frontline response:**

- Merging responses to the current context (with a complex crisis caused by COVID-19 and the 1 Feb military take-over of government) into an integrated response framework to address vulnerabilities and improve access to incomes, nutrition, essential services;
- Focusing on strengthening community-based support mechanisms and local networks while leveraging the local existing service delivery platforms to ensure wider community outreach;
- Building on existing delivery mechanisms such as small grant facilities to enable quick response and wider services outreach;
- Quick reprogramming of existing activities to reallocate budgets for immediate interventions;
- Collaborating and co-programming with Access to Health and other UNOPS-managed funds and programmes; broader coordination with other relevant (humanitarian and development) stakeholders, especially humanitarian actors and civil society organizations and local actors;
- Ensuring gender sensitivity across all response activities while boosting support to prevent gender-based violence;
- Ensuring nutrition sensitivity across all response activities while focusing on connecting the emergency nutrition support with longer-term sustainable improvements in food security;
- Ensuring conflict sensitivity across all response activities by supporting the partners through capacity building in risk analysis and management for assistance delivery;



#### **Livelihoods and Food Security Fund**



managed by UNOPS



- Ensuring that response is in compliance with UNOPS/LIFT procurement, due diligence, accountability and other related policies;
- Linking immediate response activities with medium- and longer-term resilience building programming across all thematic and geographic focus areas.

### **COVID-19 response targeting principles:**

LIFT's geographical targeting for the 2021 COVID-19 response is aligned to its 2019-2023 strategy with a focus on the most vulnerable and affected communities. LIFT will encourage partners to support response activities primarily in their respective project target areas, however, LIFT will support the expansion of target areas provided the partners have capacity (human resources, on-the-ground partnerships etc) to efficiently reach vulnerable groups beyond their project areas. As COVID-19 response activities are designed through reprogramming of existing projects, it is expected that emergency response activities will contribute to the overall project outcomes.

Beneficiary targeting for the 2021 COVID-19 response is based on LIFT's main beneficiary groups across thematic areas including poor smallholders, landless farmers, internally displaced people, conflict-affected communities, migrants (internal and international), people with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and young children. However, LIFT's beneficiary targeting can be expanded in view of increasing vulnerabilities caused by the compounded COVID-19 and political crises.

### **Funding:**

In view of the urgency, LIFT and partners are launching immediate response activities through reallocations within the existing budgets with a focus on any underspends, however, additional funding is required to scale up the response to ensure the response activities are reaching the expansion in vulnerable groups and numbers as well as to connect the ongoing frontline response with longer-terms recovery measures.

### **Lessons from 2020 LIFT's COVID-19 response:**

In 2020, it was the ability to quickly adapt the existing projects to COVID-19 restrictions that enabled LIFT to forge ahead and ensure the efficient delivery of the immediate COVID-19 response while implementing activities planned under LIFT's thematic programmes and cross-cutting areas of work. On-the-ground partnerships with community-based and local civil society organisations as well as highly contextualized response interventions were cornerstones that ensured quick and efficient service delivery. Such interventions included support to internal and international migrants, expansion of social protection initiatives with emergency top-up cash transfers, tailored response in conflict-affected areas and for internally displaced people in particular, boosting of financial inclusion through accessible loans, an increase in specific nutrition interventions and the contribution to the implementation of national COVID-19 relief plans. Within days after the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar, with clear direction and decisions from LIFT's donors, LIFT's partners pivoted and repurposed US\$2.3 million of their existing project budgets to respond to COVID-19. In total, LIFT's donors committed a total of US\$28.9 million for the COVID-19 response which reached over 2.9 million people.



## **Livelihoods and Food Security Fund**

