Founded in 1991, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) has proven to be a major catalyst for change in the health care systems of the world's developed nations. Building on several years of intense exploratory activity in Peru and sub-Saharan Africa, IHI has now expanded its mission to help in the world’s most resource-poor countries.

The IHI team is focusing its energies on rapid expansion of treatment for AIDS for children and adults in South Africa, and on significant reduction of neonatal and maternal mortality in Malawi, applying thoroughly tested approaches to collaborative improvement, spread of innovation and chronic disease management in order to meet its aims.

**mission**

The IHI Developing Countries team exists to make a unique contribution to efforts to broadly spread efficient and effective models of health care provision that will save millions of lives in resource-poor settings. The team uses modern improvement methods to help design and aggressively scale-up high-quality interventions, operating within local resource constraints (optimizing existing resources) while working closely with local partners in order to develop local capacity to lead change.

The team pursues the following goals in its work:

- **Life-saving results:** In South Africa, the IHI team seeks to contribute to the HIV/AIDS treatment of at least 100,000 people in the next 12-18 months through ongoing projects in five provinces. IHI aims to reduce maternal mortality by 30% over three years in three districts in Malawi.
- **Sustainability:** In order to ensure long-term success, the team must build skills and capacity among leaders and partner organizations in the countries where it does its work, providing clear explanations of its approaches and valuable tools for continuous learning.
- **Dissemination:** Through publication in peer-reviewed journals and on IHI.org, the team will proactively harvest and disseminate best practices from its own work and the work of its partners in developing countries.
**methods and approaches**

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer support for health care initiatives in the developing world by bringing clinical expertise on the disease in question, by bringing necessary drugs and supplies, or by building state-of-the-art tertiary care facilities. While these approaches have great merit, IHI focuses first on redesigning how care is actually delivered, building lean and efficient models of treatment for a variety of settings (urban, suburban, and rural) and then offering methods to broadly and rapidly spread those models across a province, country or region.

The IHI team gives special attention to understanding the process of each patient’s care, and to optimizing the roles of all patients and health workers (including clinicians, administrators and volunteers). The team also focuses on developing models of care that utilize all levels of the health care system (tertiary, secondary, and primary), developing interdependent relationships between facilities and fostering ongoing collaboration and learning between them.

Key elements of IHI’s approach include:

- Explicit, ambitious aims for spreading effective health care interventions (e.g., antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS) combined with optimism about what is possible;
- A relentless focus on the pace at which successful interventions are spread and thorough application of different strategies for disseminating effective models;
- Improvement of the health system within existing care resources (using approaches like down-referral of patients to primary care centers);
- Development of learning networks (e.g., collaborative improvement projects) to spread successful innovations;
- Crisp, straightforward measurement of results; and
- Local capability-building in the use of improvement methods in order to ensure sustainability.
funding

Historically, IHI has financed its work in developing countries through a combination of small grants and contracts, and its own direct investment. The Institute is presently seeking comprehensive funding for two years to support a coordinated set of activities in developing countries that align with its strategic areas of work and together represent the foundation blocks of a high-functioning network for expanding needed interventions in the developing world. Among other critical activities, funds would underwrite the following:

- Collaborative improvement projects
- Intensive regional training sessions
- Fellowship exchange programs
- Data collection tools
- Communications network development
- Meeting scholarships for local personnel to attend improvement-related training
- Local personnel
- Local and international travel

The total amount required to support these activities over two years is $2.5 million. More details are available upon request.