



PHOTO & CAPTION

AIDS-affected Families Get Help



Photo: USAID/Virginia Foley

The Yesudoss family, stunned by the unexpected death of their middle child, hold a picture of Victor.

It was only after Victor, the middle child of the Yesudoss family, suddenly fell ill and died that his parents learned for the first time that he had AIDS. An alarming 90 percent of the 5.1 million people in India living with HIV/AIDS don't know about their status until a crisis occurs. Due to many communities' fear and ignorance about HIV/AIDS, once a family learns it has been struck by the disease, it is faced with isolation, homelessness and a loss of income.

The USAID-supported Community Health Education Society (CHES) stepped in to help the Yesudoss family after its loss, providing education, emotional support and medical guidance to the family and its neighbors.

Based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu — a geographic “hot spot” with high HIV/AIDS prevalence — CHES operates five family resource centers to bring relief to families like the Yesudosses. The centers teach people how to care for stricken families and corrects myths and misinformation about HIV/AIDS to reduce fear and slow the spread of the disease. A separate CHES shelter houses, educates and nurtures 32 AIDS-affected children who have nowhere to live and no family to turn to.

Each day, CHES centers help more and more people affected by HIV/AIDS live with dignity and respect.