

# Where in the world is RTI



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BIMONTHLY FEBRUARY/MARCH 2006

## Starting Up

### Community-Based Water Sector Management: Is It Really Working?



According to UN statistics, only about 78% of rural areas in the Dominican Republic have access to improved drinking water. [PHOTO: Maurine Crouch]

In February 2006, RTI and its partner PA Government Services began implementing a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project to evaluate USAID's strategy and approach in increasing access to potable water in rural areas of the Dominican Republic over the past five years. The strategy included implementation of a pilot project, using the Total Community Participation (TCP) model, to manage community-based rural water systems. TCP facilitated the creation of community water boards and trained community members in health and hygiene practice.

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### Where Is the Money? A Snapshot of Education Financing in El Salvador

In the past decade, National Health Accounts (NHAs) have become a critical tool in helping more than 60 countries track the flow of private and public funds through their health care systems. The national accounts method, which uses a series of standardized tables to classify sources and uses of funds, is now gaining momentum in the education sector. Under a recently awarded USAID subcontract to the Academy for Educational Development, RTI will assist the El Salvador

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### Battling Tobacco Use in Southeast Asia

Since October 2004, RTI has been providing technical assistance in seven Southeast Asian countries to 15 tobacco control research projects supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Chicago, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Thai Health Foundation, and South East Asia Tobacco Control Alliance. Tobacco control has become increasingly relevant in middle- and low-income countries. According to the World Health Organization, tobacco is the second leading cause of death in the world—approximately 500,000 people in Southeast Asia die from tobacco use each year. A recent extension to the contract granted additional funding for the project through April 2006.

An RTI health economist, Dr. Hana Ross, has been providing technical and research assistance to local grant recipients through the program. She gives strategic advice to grantees on future tobacco control economic research and helps with the development of their research projects and reports. Through this support, and regional workshops and training sessions, the project is building capacity and intellectual capital in the region while cultivating a network of researchers. The research funded by the project will allow policy makers to weigh the economic implications of their decisions while formulating tobacco control measures. For example, the



*A man smoking tobacco in a traditional Vietnamese pipe. [PHOTO: Hana Ross]*

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# A Possible Breakthrough in TB Drug Development

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the leading killers worldwide. Nearly one-third of the world's population is infected with latent TB, and even though only 10 percent of those infected are likely to become sick, the disease still kills one person every 15 seconds—the equivalent of 2 million people a year.

Increasingly resistant to traditional treatment, the disease is spreading rapidly in some developing countries, which often lack affordable medications, adequate health care systems, and the diagnostic tools necessary to recognize the disease in its early stages and prevent its spread. The current treatment for TB infection, which has been used for more than 40 years, is long and cumbersome. A typical regimen lasts 6 months, involves four separate drugs, and includes an 8-week period of taking up to 22 pills a day. Poor compliance with this complex drug regimen contributes to the development of drug-resistant strains of TB that no longer respond to standard treatment. Indeed, to enforce compliance and help stem the emergence of resistant strains, patients can be jailed for refusing to adhere to treatment in many countries, including the United States.

Working with the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance), RTI is managing the development of a promising new treatment. With funding from the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), RTI began searching for possible treatments in 1999. Seven years later, the search has paid off. PA-824, one of a class of compounds known as nitroimidazoles, entered human trials in June 2005.

According to Dr. Doris Rouse, director of IDG's Global Health Technologies, the anti-TB drug has the potential to reduce treatment time from 6 to 3-4 months. Because much of the cost of current TB treatment comes from treatment monitoring—most patients are required to go to a health clinic daily so their compliance with the drug regimen can be



*A district health team nurse visits the house of an elderly female TB patient in Samoa. Today, TB infects more people in the world than at any other time in history and is the leading killer of HIV-infected people. [PHOTO: Andy Crump (1999), CREDIT: WHO/TDR/Crump]*

monitored—shorter treatment duration will significantly reduce the cost of treatment and likely improve patient compliance. In laboratory tests, PA-824 also has been effective against resistant TB strains.

## Public-Private Partnership

This breakthrough drug is unique not only because of its health benefits, but also because it has been developed through a public-private partnership. In 2000, recognizing the need for innovative approaches to developing anti-TB drugs,

representatives from academia, industry, major agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and donors—including RTI—met in Capetown, South Africa, and called for the creation of the TB Alliance. As a nonprofit public-private partnership, the TB Alliance is devoted to developing new drugs to treat TB and making them accessible to those who need them. RTI remains a member of the TB Alliance Stakeholder Association. RTI's activities in support of the TB Alliance include preparing epidemiology and market assessments; and partnering with pharmaceutical companies, research labs, foundations, and international organizations to cooperatively develop, test, and introduce new TB therapies. RTI led a global collaboration of public and private sector organizations to prepare a report on the *Economics of TB Drug Development*; this comprehensive report examines the epidemiology of TB, potential markets for new TB drugs, cost of creating new TB drugs, and options for funding and conducting drug development.

In its role under the initial NIAID contract, RTI was charged with accelerating the commercial availability of TB treatments developed by universities or pharmaceutical companies. To do this, Rouse's team began a worldwide search for promising drugs. One such drug, PA-824, had been developed by researchers at PathoGenesis (acquired by Chiron in 2000). In 2002, Chiron licensed PA-824 to the newly formed

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### El Salvador (continued)

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Offices of the Salvadoran Ministry of Education; the Ministry and RTI are working jointly to establish a National Education Account.  
[PHOTO: Gilberto Acevedo]

Ministry of Education (MINED) to establish a functional, sustainable National Education Account (NEA) that will provide a comprehensive view of education sector investments and outputs.

Together with counterparts in MINED, RTI will identify key issues to be examined through the NEA and assess available databases. For example, existing data from the country's household survey include the amount a family spends on textbooks, school supplies, and transportation for education; however, no information on business investments in employee training is currently collected. In addition, new school surveys will be conducted to measure, among other things, how schools allocate and spend the resources they receive from local and central governments.

Training sessions and consultations will help involve and inform public and private education stakeholders about the value of the NEA. Engaging senior government officials and public and private sector leaders throughout the process will result in better participation in data collection, higher-quality data, and greater appreciation for NEA as a policy tool.

"As part of the NEA process, RTI hopes to strengthen El Salvador's system of identifying, collecting, and analyzing education indicators, and help support the integration of data from existing education databases," says Dr. Amber Gove, senior education analyst at RTI. Also, having a functional NEA is critical in helping improve dialogue: "National and local policy makers, donors, and other stakeholders can use NEA findings and discuss strategies for improving education services."

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This effort is a task order under the Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP2), led by AED and funded through the USAID.

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### Water (continued)

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This five-week project will work at three levels in the country—national, subnational, and community—to produce a situational assessment of the rural water sector and the National Potable Water and Sanitation Institute (INAPA). RTI staff will meet with stakeholders to inventory strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) in order to identify issues, constraints, and key factors for success. Secondly, the team will evaluate the USAID water sector strategy and the TCP model as a method for adoption throughout the country. Finally, a review of multilateral and bilateral development work being carried out in the sector will be completed to determine possible future areas of collaboration.

Based on the evaluation's findings, the RTI team will provide recommendations to USAID regarding its current strategies and future participation in the sector. According to Aldo Miranda, team leader for the project and director of RTI's El Salvador office, "The TCP model is a departure from centrally operated systems, which are still common in Latin American and the Caribbean, as TCP sought to bring in citizen involvement to show operational improvements and behavior change results. Similar models have been proven to be effective in other countries in the region, and we now have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the USAID's TCP intervention in the Dominican Republic."

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This project is a new task order under the USAID Environmental Health Indefinite Quantity Contract, which RTI holds as prime contractor.

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### Tobacco (continued)

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Vietnamese government is now considering introduction of a uniform cigarette tax as the result of one of the studies, which demonstrated that having a three-tiered cigarette tax system is not economically efficient and exacerbates poverty.

RTI is also providing inputs for the regional research agenda on tobacco control. This research has made progress to raise awareness of tobacco-related health issues in the region. According to Dr. Ross, "Evidence of this progress is that the majority of governments in this part of the world have signed and ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," which is the first global health treaty that binds the signatories to implement a set of policies to reduce tobacco consumption. Many countries also have adopted strict laws banning cigarette advertising and promotions, and are considering pictorial warnings on cigarette packs.

The project is an extension of work that Dr. Ross started at the University of Illinois. She is also working on a similar project funded by the Open Society Institute in the former Soviet Republics and Central and Eastern Europe.

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### TB Drug Development (continued)

TB Alliance, agreeing that the TB Alliance would not pay royalties on sales of the drug in developing countries. Chiron would, however, have an option to market the drug in the United States and Europe should the drug be approved in those countries. This groundbreaking deal will enable the TB Alliance to distribute the drug to developing countries at the lowest cost possible.

Serving as the project manager for PA-824 for the TB Alliance, RTI's team is shepherding the drug through the regulatory approval process. The TB Alliance, through Rouse's team, has thus far contracted and collaborated with 26 organizations in nine countries to reach the present stage of development. After 2½ years of research and development and preclinical studies, Rouse's team submitted, on behalf of the TB Alliance, an investigational new drug application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March 2005 and the TB Alliance was approved to start clinical trials in June—the first time an anti-TB drug developed by a nonprofit has entered clinical trials. Following successful single-dose studies in humans, PA-824 entered multidose studies in the Phase I trials in November 2005.

“The start of Phase I clinical trials offers a bright spot on the long road to providing shorter and more effective TB treatments,” Rouse said. If trials continue to show that the drug works and is safe, it could be approved as a new drug by 2011. Although that is a long way off, it's remarkable because the



Working with the TB Alliance, RTI is managing the development of a promising new anti-TB drug, PA-824, which entered human trials in June 2005. The disease is increasingly resistant to the current TB treatment regimen, which was developed more than 40 years ago. [PHOTO: MDS Pharma Services]

TB Alliance has been able to shepherd the drug through the long process as rapidly as standard pharmaceutical company timelines. “The public-private partnership is an important option for creating new drugs to treat diseases of developing countries,” Rouse said. “The TB Alliance's work has shown that it's an effective option for developing promising new drugs and ensuring affordable access in countries with limited resources.”

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*Where in the World Is RTI* is a bimonthly publication of RTI's International Development Group (IDG). This publication is intended to inform clients and partner organizations about RTI's global activities and research areas. RTI is dedicated to improving the human condition in developing and emerging countries. RTI has worked for over 40 years in 139 countries around the world. We offer a broad range of policy support, applied research and analysis, and other technical expertise in strategic planning, institutional development, and training. Our expertise is multisectoral and spans the fields of education, health, environment and natural resources, governance, finance, and information and communication technology.

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## Selected Publications

Brinkerhoff, Derick. (2005). “Rebuilding Governance in Failed States and Post-Conflict Societies: Core Concepts and Cross-Cutting Themes.” *Public Administration and Development* 25(1): 3-14.

Brinkerhoff, Derick. (2005). “Accountability and Good Governance: Concepts and Issues.” In Ahmed Shafiqul Huque and Habib Zafarullah (Eds.), *International Development Governance*. New York: CRC Press.

Crouch, Luis. (2005). “El Sector Educación: Estándares, Rendición de Cuentas y Apoyo.” In Daniel Cotlear (Ed.), *Un nuevo contrato social para el Perú: ¿Cómo lograr un país más educado, saludable y solidario?* [A new social contract for Peru: How to attain a more educated, healthy, and unified country?] Lima, Peru: World Bank. Full publication: <http://www.bancomundial.org.pe/index.asp?id=no06>