

# Where in the world is RTI



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Starting Up

### Certifiably Clean: RTI Helps the Emirates Enforce Environmental Regulations

A relatively new state in the Persian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has used vast oil wealth to revamp its infrastructure and to attract foreign investment and tourists from around the world. Now the country is trying to protect the natural resources and quality of life that have put it on the map.

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven Emirates and the seat of the federal government. With more than a hundred significant development projects in the Emirate already under way and others (such as the world's largest aluminum smelter) in the pipeline, the Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi (EAD) is scaling up its environmental protection program.

“The Emirate leadership is obviously very concerned with the pace of development and its potential impact on the environment,” said RTI senior environmental research engineer Bob Zerbonia.

So much so that EAD is outsourcing large portions of its program to build institutional capacity, including a new 10-year

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Abu Dhabi is undertaking numerous infrastructure projects with large environmental impacts, like this one to create two islands for residential towers, a financial district, and a medical facility. [Photo: Camille Heaton]

### Removing Health Care Barriers and Empowering Communities in Madagascar

Health services are scarce in many parts of Madagascar. The Analamanga region surrounding the capital, Antananarivo, contains almost 50% of the country's skilled health workforce but only 15% of the population. The rest of the health professionals are dispersed across Madagascar's other 21 regions.



Women and children in Madagascar face high mortality rates due to malnutrition. [Photo: Catholic Relief Services]

Nevertheless, the country's new poverty-reduction strategy, the Madagascar Action Plan, sets out some ambitious goals for improving health outcomes by 2012, including cutting the infant mortality ratio in half, the maternal mortality ratio by 40%, and the reported number of malaria cases by 75%.

To assist the government of Madagascar in meeting these goals and expanding the benefits of health services, RTI is leading implementation of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Santénet2 project (2008–2013).

“Our goal is to help the Malagasy tackle these barriers by putting communities in control and making the health systems accountable to them,” said Chief of Party Dr. Volkan Cakir.

The project will strengthen community-level health service provision and address bottlenecks in the Ministry of Health and Family Planning's (MoHFP's) strategy to decentralize the national health system.

Specifically, RTI will seek to help the MoHFP and communities fill the service gap by enhancing and scaling up training of community health workers, expanding public

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# Growing School Communities in Indonesia

A decade ago, Indonesia's centralized education system offered communities few openings to participate in the operation of their schools. The central government managed schools from the top down, shielding budgeting and planning decisions from parents and local officials.

However, in 2001, Indonesia began the process of decentralization, allowing local governments, divided into districts, to assume greater responsibility for the education sector. Districts set out to develop ownership over their own education systems, although the previously centralized system had left them with minimal management or community participation experience on which to build.

In April 2005, RTI International began implementing the More Effective Decentralized Education Management and Governance (DBE1) program, a five-year project in Indonesia funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). DBE1 constitutes one of three integrated components that form USAID's Decentralized Basic Education program in Indonesia. As prime contractor, RTI provides support to local governments in seven provinces—East Java, Central Java, West Java/Banten (combined), South Sulawesi, North Sumatera, and Aceh—as they tackle new responsibilities within the decentralized education system.

DBE1 works in 50 districts to develop models for education management and governance that can be replicated in the remaining 400 districts over time. The project creates and implements effective education finance systems, strengthens private sector support for education, and assists local governments to improve management systems, with an emphasis on fostering local participation in the education process.



Children engage in a class activity in Central Java. [Photo: DBE1 Central Java]



Community members participate in a school committee training session in Aceh. [Photo: DBE1 Aceh]

## Promoting Transparency and Community Participation

Before decentralization, community participation in most schools was limited. Some schools created ad hoc bodies to collect fees, but those committees were unrelated to governance.

“Communities viewed schools as being owned by the government,” said Dan Moulton, DBE1 Chief of Party.

“When we tried to communicate with community members before DBE1, they always thought we were trying to collect money,” said Mrs. Jerniati, a school principal.

To promote community involvement following decentralization, the government required many schools to develop school committees and grant them some authority. But principals often chose participants without informing other community members of the existence of the committees.

“Taking specific and directive actions to involve the community increases community support for education in terms of both providing additional financial resources and implementing school planning,” Moulton said.

RTI has taken several steps to foster community participation and improve management in schools. For example, the project has trained 13,297 school committee members and 3,548 principals to become active, effective contributors to school planning, management, and oversight.

“Through the trainings, committee members learn that they now have responsibilities, as well as rights, in terms of school management,” Moulton said.

At nearly 1,100 schools, the principals, school committees, and parents have collaborated to create School Development Plans, which help guide school priorities, activities, and

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### *Growing School Communities in Indonesia (continued)*

budgeting. More than 3,000 additional schools are implementing this DBE1 methodology using local funding.

To increase transparency, DBE1 encourages schools to start posting their budgets in public places and also monitors whether the budgets remain posted. Improving public understanding of schools' budgets and goals not only limits the possibilities for corruption within local school systems, but also instills a sense of community ownership, which contributes to better operated, higher quality schools.

"With the budget displayed in the open, the community now knows the school's objectives and activities to achieve those goals," Principal Jerniati said. "Everybody now regularly works together to create a more comfortable environment for the students."

In some schools, public participation has pushed communities to provide more services for their children. "With DBE1 guidance, schools and parents learn and grow together," said Mrs. Cici, a school committee member. "Now, together with the local health center, we manage a program to provide supplementary food and nutrition to students from low-income families."

At another school, the creation and promotion of a School Development Plan spurred parents to find a solution to another common problem in the community. "We agreed that parents who could afford it would pay more to help students from low-income families," said Mr. Abdul Wahid, a school committee member. "This arrangement enables all students to receive similar opportunities to learn and to grow."

### **Accurate Budgeting for Better Management**

In addition to building community participation, RTI also assists district-level strategic planning and budgeting. DBE1 strengthens district planning practices by moving away from highly aggregated sums to appropriate, targeted data for planning. With technical assistance from RTI, 29 districts can now strategically tailor their limited budgets to the most essential and effective areas, Moulton said.



*A student participating in a school lesson in East Java. [Photo: DBE1 East Java]*

Recently, many newly elected officials have adopted the political platform that education should be free, since expensive school fees can be prohibitive for low-income families. However, the method of financial analysis RTI has introduced has revealed in many districts that government subsidies alone would not cover basic operational costs of schools. Now more districts are requesting help with financial analysis from the project to determine whether they could realistically offer free education.

DBE1 is facilitating discussions between education stakeholders, who will bring the issue to district legislators and executives. The project is also working to suggest alternatives to free education, such as using a sliding scale that offers inexpensive—rather than free—education.

### **Achieving Sustainability**

In addition, RTI works to ensure project sustainability by training 334 government officials, especially school inspectors from district education offices, to improve and apply their planning and budgeting skills.



*Students in the Boyolali District of Central Java work in their classroom, now decorated with their art, made through the DBE1-supported Active, Creative, Joyful, and Effective Learning method. [Photo: DBE1 Central Java]*

"The inspectors are now highly qualified in these areas," Moulton said. "These government employees will continue to work long after the project is completed."

DBE1 is also working to identify and build the capacities of other local institutions, such as universities, to assist local governments in school-related financial analysis, database use, and planning—expertise that is not readily available in most areas of the country.

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### Certifiably Clean (continued)

contract with RTI to strengthen its Environmental Permitting and Enforcement Department.

Under this contract, RTI will identify the potential multimedia environmental impacts of rapid development, including its effect on the quality of air and water, usability of land, and generation of hazardous waste. RTI will help mitigate those impacts by improving current systems to ensure that industries, individual facilities, and consultants operate within EAD standards. Such systems will include accreditation of environmental consultants, assessment criteria for the various types of environmental studies required for new developments, and a compliance certification system for facility audits.

“Overarching these activities will be a focus on enhancing the technical and managerial skills of Emirati staff from EAD,” said Zerbonia, who is RTI’s on-site project manager in Abu Dhabi. EAD staff will receive on-the-job training and mentoring from international experts, and Emirati project staff will be hired directly by RTI. RTI’s goal is to add more Emiratis each year.

“By the end of the contract, we expect 80% of the project personnel to be local, so that EAD will have fully functioning environmental assessment, permitting, and inspection programs operated and run by Emiratis,” said Zerbonia.

So, while Abu Dhabi’s proposed “zero-carbon” Masdar city grabs international headlines, RTI and Emirati environmental researchers will help keep the rest of this growing Emirate in line with best environmental practices.

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### Removing Health Care Barriers (continued)

demand for services through information and education campaigns, and linking the community health centers to a reliable supply chain of health commodities. In the first year, the project will target 200 communes, ultimately reaching out to 900 across Madagascar.

Santénet2 will also shore up weaknesses in the national health system through activities aimed at strengthening the quality assurance system for local health facilities; updating the curricula and teaching methods at medical schools; integrating and improving monitoring of the drug supply programs for malaria, childhood illnesses, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); and promoting data-driven resource allocations using a national health management information system (HMIS).

Gender issues also play a role in Madagascar’s poor health. Cultural practices that favor men in household decisions about food consumption contribute to women’s undernourishment and, consequently, lower birth weights and higher infant mortality.

Santénet2 will promote gender equity at every step in the project. Local partner Dinika sy Rindra ho an’ny Vehivavy (DRV) will conduct gender sensitivity and programming training for project staff, as well as conduct assessments of project activities’ impact on gender equity and recommend remedial measures.

“Through raising awareness and leading by example, Santénet2 seeks to involve Malagasy women in family and community health planning so that fewer women and children die from preventable causes,” said Cakir.

Additional partners include IntraHealth, PSI, CARE, and Catholic Relief Services.

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### Selected Publications

**Hill, Richard**, Gwendolyn Taylor, and Jonathan Temin. (September 2008). *Would You Fight Again? Understanding Liberian Ex-Combatant Re-Integration*. Special Report 211. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Abstract: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr211.html>  
Full report: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr211.pdf>

**Krishnan, Suneeta, Megan S. Dunbar, Alexandra M. Minnis, Carol A. Medlin, Caitlin E. Gerdtts, and Nancy S. Padian.** (2008). “Poverty, Gender Inequities and Women’s Risk of HIV/AIDS.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136: 101–110.

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**Litavec, Stephen D., Norman Goco, Pablo Torres, and Kevin Wilson.** (January 2008). “Building Research Capacity in Developing Countries.” *The SoCRA SOURCE Journal*, a publication of the Society of Clinical Research Associates, 54: 68.