

Where in the world is RTI



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BIMONTHLY MARCH/APRIL 2011

Starting Up

Catalyzing Economic Opportunity and Enterprise Development in El Salvador

El Salvador is an emerging economy in Central America with one of the most open trade and investment environments in the region. Globally, it ranked 86th out of 183 economies listed in the World Bank's *Doing Business 2011* report. However, the economic growth has been uneven, with high under- and unemployment as well as significant poverty in the north.

In an effort to unleash more even, broad-based economic opportunity and to generate jobs, RTI is leading the Municipal Competitiveness Project (MCP), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). RTI and local implementing partners Escuela Superior de Economía y Negocios (ESEN) and three nongovernmental organizations that support local development—FUNDE, SACDEL, and FUNDES—are working closely with municipal and national governments, the private sector, and national associations.

“There is a need for efforts to support local governments in finding a successful economic development perspective. The MCP is this type of project and it shares the objectives of the Government of the Republic of El Salvador,” remarked Mr. Guillermo Galván, Sub-secretary for Territorial Development and Decentralization, at the December 2010 launch ceremony.



In San Salvador, Tom McAndrews (at left; USAID), Guillermo Galván (Sub-secretariat for Territorial Development and Decentralization), Milagro Navas (mayor of Antigua and president of the municipal association COMURES), and Waldo Jiménez (National Association of Private Companies, ANEP) meet at the national launch of the MCP. [Photo: Project staff]

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Strengthening Local Leadership Along Ecuador's Border

The municipalities along Ecuador's northern border with Colombia face a volatile environment in which to govern. Guerrilla activity, drug trafficking, and border incursions undermine the legitimacy of local institutions. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will contribute to efforts to stabilize this area through its new Municipal Strengthening Project. Of the 30 municipal governments to receive assistance under the project, called PROMUNI, 20 are northern border towns.

USAID worked with RTI, PROMUNI's lead implementer, to select the municipalities. The process favored municipalities with fewer than 100,000 people and high levels of poverty whose strengthening would increase peace and security in synergy with other USAID programs and the Ecuadorean government's priorities.

PROMUNI is notable for more than its emphasis on building capacity in towns prone to violence. “This is the first

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Tracking Killers: The Burden of Disease from Hepatitis A and E

Epidemiologists and public health researchers from multiple institutions are collaborating to gather and analyze the best available data on deaths and sick days caused by over 100 diseases and injuries around the world. The culmination of their work is the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study.

RTI Senior Health Economist David Rein is leading the modeling of disease burdens for hepatitis A and E viruses in the 2010 GBD study.

“This is the first time hepatitis A and E are being included,” said Rein. Both viruses are transmitted by the fecal-oral route—often through contaminated drinking water or food—and attack the liver, causing inflammation and possibly jaundice or liver failure.

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Keeping it Local: Reforming Governance in Iraq

Faced with a new law, called “Law 21,” offering them authority to make decisions, Iraqi provincial legislators and governors elected in January 2009 were uncertain about how to implement the law. Instead of receiving direction from the federal government, local officials would be responsible for creating laws and representing citizens’ interests, a task they were ill-equipped to achieve at the time Law 21 was passed in 2008.

With the goal of supporting local governments to execute Law 21, RTI began implementing the third phase of the Local Governance Program (LGP III), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). RTI had been assisting local officials in Iraq since 2003 and is now continuing support to the 14 provinces included in Law 21.

The project has already made significant contributions to strengthening local officials’ ability to fulfill their roles. According to Shaun McNally, deputy project leader, “In the project’s first two years, provincial councils have begun to develop into organized, efficient bodies capable of writing and implementing effective legislation, prioritizing projects, creating and executing feasible budgets, and monitoring activities while incorporating public participation and input at all stages.”

Three Steps to Quality Legislation

Included in provincial councils’ expanded role is the responsibility of creating laws, yet many officials lacked experience in drafting thoroughly researched legislation. LGP III provides guidance in these areas to enable councils to take the lead in their legislative process.

Prior to LGP III assistance, the provincial council in Wasit, for example, was drafting legislation that failed to align with the Constitution or hold up to judicial scrutiny. Provincial council members were not trained in how to write legislation, and many laws were very basic, consisting of just one line. In 2010, LGP III advisors introduced a three-step methodology in which a committee develops a research report including the opinions of subject-matter experts, then incorporates the opinions of civil society groups. Finally, a public meeting is held to gather citizen input on a bill.

After project advisors led the Wasit council through this process with two successful pieces of legislation in 2010, the



Iraqi families participate in a survey to help governments determine the greatest needs of their citizens. [Photo: LGP III project staff]

council is now adopting the process on its own. To get started with a new piece of legislation on giving youth opportunities to expand their talents and skills, the chair of the Wasit Provincial Council Citizens Affairs Committee formed an ad hoc team consisting of subject-matter experts to attend a workshop and participate in a survey to gather research. The group of university professors, government representatives, and scientists provides support and expertise throughout the three-phase process

to ensure that a well-researched, well-written, and legitimate law is drafted and put to vote in the council.

According to the chairwoman of the committee, “Now, we consider the methodological legislative process as a change forward in...legislative policy. [This methodology] enhances public participation in the decision-making process, allowing the citizens to convey their problems and needs and also to propose solutions.”

Checking in with Citizens

To ensure that their legislation responds to citizens’ needs, provincial councils oversee and monitor the implementation of the laws and delivery of services—a crucial step to ensuring that basic services such as water and electricity are reaching citizens.

After voicing their concerns for improved service delivery, citizens in Baghdad agreed to participate in a pilot survey to improve basic services such as water for neighborhoods. In June 2010, staff of the Baghdad provincial government conducted the survey with assistance from LGP III advisors, revealing that some rural communities had no potable water during the hot summer when temperatures reach nearly 50 degrees Celsius. In response to citizens’ urgent need for water supply, the governor ordered delivery of water, which arrived within one day after the survey. Many survey participants said it was the first time they had been consulted by local government personnel regarding their needs.

The survey showed the government the gaps between its services and citizens’ priorities, and it has continued to follow up to address the identified needs. To sustain this kind of monitoring, the project trained the provincial staff to replicate the survey and formulate its continued use as a tool

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Governance in Iraq (continued)

for monitoring other governmental services. Many provinces have begun to poll their citizens about services like solid waste, such as in Karbala where advisors assisted local officials in conducting door-to-door surveys of 250 households.

Mentoring Responsive Local Leaders

To ensure governments' ability to sustain their improvements, LGP III is also guiding local officials in developing the skills to lead their organizations.

LGP III advisors conduct management principles training for senior government officials covering topics such as change management, effective decision-making, and collaborative leadership. In the past year alone, over 1,000 officials participated in the management principles training, offered as hands-on experience where participants work side by side with advisors discussing and analyzing real-life situations.

Increasing public participation is a cross-cutting theme of the project, but provincial leaders had no experience in incorporating citizen input. The project trains officials and assists them in holding public forums and in establishing other mechanisms to provide opportunities for feedback.



Representatives from civil society organizations in Salah ad Din give feedback on draft legislation. [Photo: Amer Muhammed Alwan]

Officials in Basrah, Diyala, and Salah ad Din provinces, for example, have developed telephone hotlines and held public meetings to facilitate participation. Many provinces have also increased transparency in an effort to gain citizen interest and trust. In Dhi Qar, the government posted electronic banners around the province listing new projects and expenditures. It also posted the Dhi Qar Provincial Development Strategy on a website and held a public meeting to gather feedback on the strategy from citizens.

According to Stephen Dunn, director of RTI's Center for Stabilization, Governance, and Growth, "Developing channels for public feedback increases the amount and relevance of information that is available to government and helps build citizen trust in government. This approach to enhancing governance and service delivery is a continuing cornerstone of our work in Iraq and throughout the world."

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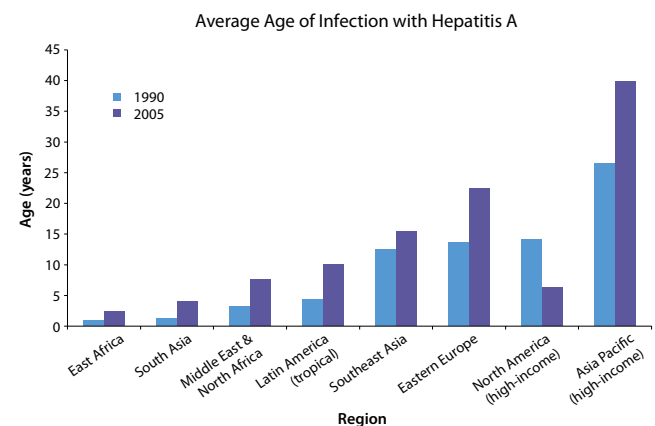
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Hepatitis A and E (continued)

Rein, along with Rakesh Aggerwal in India and World Health Organization (WHO) collaborators Steven Wiersma and Gretchen Stevens, reviewed the existing literature on hepatitis E and performed a meta-analysis of seroprevalence data to find a probability for various outcomes by country and age group, including infection, symptomatic disease (i.e., feeling sick from the infection), death, or stillbirth in the case of pregnant mothers infected with the virus. The team then modeled the prevalence by global region using the DisMod III tool developed by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

"The burden of disease of hepatitis E is pretty substantial in less developed countries," said Rein. "It has a 2% death rate among adults, which jumps up to 20% in pregnant women."

In the case of hepatitis A, Rein built a model from a literature review conducted by Kathryn Jacobsen at George Mason University for WHO.



Through modeling the burden of disease for hepatitis A, RTI found that fewer children were infected in 2005 than in 1990, raising the average age of infection around the world. However, the introduction of vaccination programs in the United States starting in 1999 disrupted the natural epidemiology of the virus and led to a lower age of infection and far fewer infections overall in North America.

"We found fewer children are infected with the virus, and the overall incidence is declining," said Rein. One cause is better water and sanitation infrastructure.

"On the surface that's good news, but there is a catch," Rein said. Children infected with hepatitis A generally have no symptoms, whereas youth and adults are more likely to experience severe illness.

"So, paradoxically, in areas where incidence has declined due to improvements in water and sanitation, the burden shifts, resulting in outbreaks among youth and adults," Rein said. "This suggests that countries experiencing the shift should consider vaccination strategies against hepatitis A."

Rein and his collaborators will be publishing results from the hepatitis A and E modeling later this year.

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Local Leadership in Ecuador (continued)



Officials and municipal leaders from municipalities in the northern region listen attentively during a presentation in Mira Cantón about financial diagnostics and municipal strengthening strategies as part of the PROMUNI project. [Photo: Stephen Pereira]

time that a USAID local governance project in Ecuador will coordinate so closely with national-level institutions and assist in the implementation of policy and processes related to local governance,” said Stephen Pereira, RTI’s Technical Manager. PROMUNI will work with the central government’s Technical Secretariat for Plan Ecuador and with the Association of Ecuadorean Municipalities.

Locally, project staff will work with municipal counterparts to enhance their leadership and planning skills; increase own-source local revenues; determine service costs; and improve at least one public service in each municipality, such as water distribution. Additionally, the project will increase municipal revenues by at least 20% by reducing arrears, updating cadastres, targeting specific fees, improving collection methods, and other strategies.

PROMUNI will also institutionalize participatory strategic planning practices, which engage citizens in determining local priorities and budgeting for municipal goods and services. “Increasing citizen participation in decision-making and oversight is critical for holding governments more accountable,” said Pereira. As part of this effort, the project will strive to

substantially increase the number of women and indigenous persons holding decision-making positions.

Additionally, PROMUNI will work to expand citizens’ access to public information. The project will support municipalities to take actions such as publishing an annual accountability report, creating citizen oversight committees, and organizing procedures for public procurement. The goal is to use these mechanisms to reduce political corruption and improve effectiveness, thereby increasing citizen confidence and strengthening the overall democratic system.

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Economic Opportunity in El Salvador (continued)

In 2009, with support from USAID, RTI and ESEN designed and piloted the Municipal Competitiveness Index, which measured and ranked the business environments in 100 widespread Salvadoran jurisdictions. Under the MCP, RTI and its partners will help 50 municipalities to improve their policies and practices to better serve private sector needs.

“Historically, the public and private sectors have not collaborated, which has been a challenge for business,” said Chief of Party José Luis Trigueros. “MCP will help bridge alliances between municipalities and the private sector through improved dialogue and collaborative action.”

Competitiveness Improvement Teams, composed of public and private sector members, will formulate new and innovative initiatives to reduce constraints to enterprise development, streamline business registration processes, improve municipal services, and catalyze entrepreneurship and investment. ESEN will implement the Index again in 2011 and 2013 to highlight reforms and spark further public-private dialogue and analysis of the competitive factors that drive economic development.

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Selected Publications

Brinkerhoff, Derick, and Jennifer Brinkerhoff. (2011). “Public–Private Partnerships: Perspectives on Purposes, Publicness, and Good Governance.” *Public Administration and Development*, 31(1): 2–14. Online abstract: <http://www.rti.org/publications/abstract.cfm?pub=16751>

Wetterberg, Anna. (2011). “Public–Private Partnership in Labor Standards Governance: Better Factories Cambodia.” *Public Administration and Development*, 31(1): 64–73. Online abstract: <http://www.rti.org/publications/abstract.cfm?pub=16750>

Drozdvitch, Vladimir, Sara Schonfeld, Kuat Akimzhanov, Daulet Aldyngurov, Charles E. Land, Nickolas Luckyanov, Kiyohiko Mabuchi, Nancy Potischman, **Michael Schwerin**, et al. (2011). “Behavior and Food Consumption Pattern of the Population Exposed in 1949–1962 to Fallout from Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site in Kazakhstan.” *Radiation Environmental Biophysics*, 50(1): 91–103. RTI project staff **John Heinrich**, **Norma Kim**, **Dawn Ohse**, and **Kim Aspinwall** played key roles in the technical work. Online abstract: <http://www.rti.org/publications/abstract.cfm?pub=16067>

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