

Global Health



Global health is a core focus of RTI International's mission to improve the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our global health programs are characterized by:

- Initial technical design and routine impact monitoring based on multidimensional diagnosis of the root causes and system-level drivers of poor public health outcomes
- Full engagement of host-country counterparts from all operational levels and across sectors in demand-driven and participatory public health problem solving
- Continual learning and adapting based on experience that generates both new knowledge and incorporates innovations from the wider global health community
- Streamlined and coherent assistance that is coordinated across donors and implementers.

Health System Strengthening (HSS)

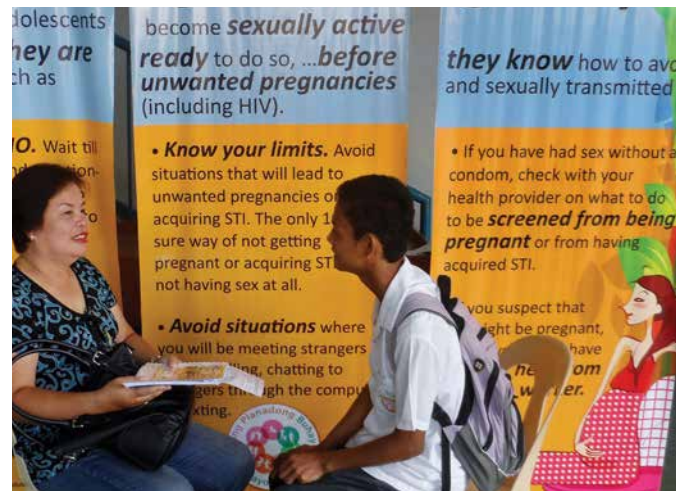
RTI leads HSS programs in the context of country-owned participatory processes, especially through broad-based civic participation in setting health goals and defining whole-of-society roles and responsibilities for improved outcomes. We work with health system leaders and managers at all levels to make health policies and service delivery practices responsive to priority needs that meet performance standards and expectations; invigorate bottom-up health service planning, budgeting, and impact monitoring as a core responsibility of decentralized governance; and build public trust and credibility in health systems by continually advancing measures of equity and quality. Examples of our HSS impact include:

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Health for Life Project



We are helping Nepal's Ministries of Local Development and Health define a collaborative framework to guide a new, whole district approach to plan, budget, and monitor local health services, with a focus on reaching socially excluded and other vulnerable groups. The framework and its implementing guidelines (see www.mohp.gov.np) will enable local officials to bridge ministerial divides and jointly target the interconnected root causes of poor health, poverty, and political disenfranchisement. The new collaborative HSS framework is being rolled out in 14 districts in Midwest Nepal and will include districts most effected by the devastating earthquakes in April and May 2015. In these districts, the project's collaborative HSS model will facilitate coherent disaster recovery at the district and village-level, mobilize community inputs to determine local priorities for health funding, and strengthen local health sector planning and budgeting.

USAID LuzonHealth Project



RTI is working in Luzon—the largest and most populous island in the Philippines—to improve reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and child health outcomes through service delivery improvements and HSS interventions. One of the project's key interventions is to scale up evidence-based, wrap-around service delivery networks aimed at reducing and preventing pregnancies, including in girls aged 15 to 19. The approach requires:

- political buy-in from provincial and municipal chief executives to establish supportive local policies and budget resources;
- targeted/differentiated outreach and referral points throughout the community to bring teens into a friendly, “safe” reproductive health service continuum; and
- education for and involvement of teachers, parents, employers, health providers, and local government decision makers to understand the health and social implications of teen pregnancy.

RTI's inclusive, standards-based and context-driven approach is leading some local governments in Luzon to set up permanent adolescent health councils and working groups to address youth reproductive health and education. See <http://www.luzonhealth.blogspot.com> for more information.

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)

RTI has worked in close partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Ministries of Health in more than 20 endemic countries to help integrate and scale-up their national programs for those NTDs that can be tackled with preventive chemotherapy, including lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil-transmitted helminths, and trachoma.

RTI is a contributing partner in all major international fora where technical aspects of NTD programming are considered. We are core members of consultative expert committees for NTD control focused on the development of program guidelines, monitoring and evaluation strategies for overall NTD program effectiveness, and development of new innovative tools and approaches required for NTD control and elimination. Examples of our impact on NTD control and elimination are detailed below:

USAID ENVISION Project



RTI leads ENVISION, USAID's largest NTD control and elimination project, which engages with local, regional, and international stakeholders to provide technical, operational, and financial assistance and build capacity, to ensure that standard tools (such as the WHO Integrated NTD Database), techniques, and state-of-the-art approaches (such as data quality assessments) are used effectively. By influencing global policies and building local capacities and systems, ENVISION aims to foster efficient and sustained integrated NTD control beyond the life of the project. ENVISION currently provides assistance to 19 NTD endemic countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Nearly half a billion treatments have been provided to people at risk for NTDs with project support.

USAID Morbidity and Management and Disability Prevention for Blinding Trachoma and Lymphatic Filariasis (MMDP) Project

Partnering with Helen Keller International, RTI is working with the Ethiopia Federal Ministry of Health to provide a range of technical and capacity-building activities that address the backlog of trichiasis and hydrocele surgeries. MMDP support is focused in the regions of Tigray, Oromia, and Beneshangul-Gumuz.

Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust Trachoma Initiative

RTI is helping thousands of people in Mozambique with advanced stages of blinding trachoma benefit from trichiasis surgery, which corrects their in-turned lashes and restores vision. As the coordinating agency, we collaborate with local partners, government ophthalmologists, and surgeons to expand surgical outreach to people suffering from this preventable disease. Efforts to eliminate blinding trachoma are further strengthened by improving community health messages on effective hygiene and sanitation practices and working at all levels (e.g., global, national and district) to improve access to safe water sources and sanitation in program areas.

Infectious Diseases

Besides NTDs, our efforts in infectious diseases focus on malaria, HIV, and, more recently, Ebola. We work in close collaboration with Ministries of Health, local counterparts, and other stakeholders in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to strengthen national and subnational systems to plan, implement, and monitor and evaluate operational programming, whether comprehensive (e.g., implementing the full malaria prevention and control interventions package) or specific and tailored (e.g., malaria vector control, providing services to key populations affected by HIV, or triaging Ebola patients). Examples of our work include:

Malaria surveillance



Under USAID's Tanzania Vector Control Scale-Up Project, RTI worked with Zanzibar's Malaria Elimination program to develop and rollout the mobile phone-based Malaria Early Epidemic Detection System (MEEDS) to collect and aggregate health facility data on malaria outpatient visits and test results, on both daily and weekly bases. MEEDS provides active case notifications, ensuring case follow-up, testing household members for malaria, and assessing whether additional intervention coverage is needed (e.g., insecticide treated bednets or spraying households with insecticide).

Combatting malaria and Ebola in Guinea

RTI manages the USAID StopPalu project, where the advent of the Ebola pandemic greatly hampered malaria prevention, case management, and control efforts. During the crisis, the project remained focused on household prevention and case management, helping the national malaria control program increase the supply of rapid malaria diagnostic tests, educating citizens on the causes of Ebola infection, and increasing behavior change and mobilization campaigns.

HIV/AIDS



RTI conducts HIV research and provides comprehensive technical assistance for HIV programs, policy, advocacy, and systems strengthening. We work with, and on behalf of, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health ministries in HIV-endemic countries, local governments, and other donors and clients seeking to prevent the spread of HIV. Highlights of our work include:

Implementing a new model for generating evidence-based HIV policy

RTI manages USAID's Inform Asia program, a regional program to overcome policy-based barriers to equitable and impactful HIV testing and patient retention in care and treatment. Inform Asia is co-managed with the Thai Red Cross-AIDS Research Center, which is preparing to take independent leadership of the program in 2019. Inform Asia is a platform to promote a new culture of health science that:

- tolerates transparent access to and use of data and information;
- accepts key population participation in multidisciplinary research models;
- aligns regional health information systems for joint analysis and action; and
- increases trust while decreasing rivalries among stakeholders competing for scarce health resources.

Measuring stigma and discrimination (S&D) in health care settings

Health providers who stigmatize or discriminate against HIV patients can fuel the spread of infection by creating barriers to testing and care. RTI co-developed, tested, and finalized a standardized tool to measure the many different forms of S&D that can occur in health care settings. The tool is part of a comprehensive package of interventions to reduce S&D in facilities and improve HIV service policies and practices.

More Information

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