

Neglected Tropical Diseases

Controlling and eliminating NTDs among the world's most vulnerable populations

More than 1 billion people suffer from one or more neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). A group of parasitic and bacterial diseases, NTDs cause severe disability among the world's poorest—and most neglected—people.

For more than a decade, RTI International has supported governments to deliver highly successful, integrated, cost-effective, and sustainable programs to control and eliminate NTDs. We have led the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID's) global flagship NTD programs and have partnered with a variety of multilateral and private donors, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Evidence Action, the END Fund, the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, and the U.K. Department for International Development. Through these efforts, we have reached 78 countries with training, technical support, and resources to improve the impact and effectiveness of NTD programs.

RTI's programs have played a critical role in reducing the burden of NTDs so they are no longer a public health problem. Cambodia, Togo, and Vietnam have now been validated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having eliminated lymphatic filariasis (LF), and Cambodia, Ghana, Laos, and Nepal are validated as having eliminated trachoma. As countries move closer to meeting their NTD goals, we are dedicated to building strong national health systems to ensure that progress is sustainable.

Our Approach

- We **OPERATE AT SCALE**, delivering proven, high-coverage mass drug administration and tracking and accelerating progress toward eliminating NTDs.
- We **INNOVATE** by designing tools and resources that help improve NTD program implementation and respond to countries' needs.
- We **STRENGTHEN** health systems, providing strategic planning, supply chain, and health financing support, as well as training and tools on best practices.
- We **INFLUENCE** global policy and research agendas by identifying knowledge gaps and elevating lessons learned to global forums.



Photo: RTI International/Damien Schumann

Did you know?

\$18.8 billion
worth of medicines
have been donated
to fight NTDs in
RTI-supported countries.

More than
230 million people
are no longer at risk for
lymphatic filariasis
in countries supported
by RTI.

More than
86 million people
are no longer at risk
for trachoma
in countries supported
by RTI.

*numbers as of April 2019

Accelerating NTD Elimination Around the World

RTI has delivered significant achievements and innovations in accelerating NTD progress by developing the systems and processes to implement, monitor, learn from, and strengthen several key areas of our programs.

Getting donated medicines to people who need them. RTI has been a critical partner in helping more than 20 countries establish the right areas in need of treatment and has supported the on-time distribution of donated medicines, trained community health volunteers and trainers, and monitored treatment coverage rates.

Determining when interventions can stop. RTI has supported surveys in more than 2,300 districts to document the impact of interventions and accurately track progress in beating NTDs. We work with global policy makers to disseminate guidance on survey requirements and supervise the use of diagnostics and sampling strategies, implementation of survey protocols, and documentation of results.

Alleviating suffering caused by NTDs. We support ministries of health to provide care and services for debilitating conditions caused by LF and trachoma. To date, more than 68,000 people have received sight-saving surgery through our support. We have supported national plans for managing disability by helping to identify cases of lymphedema and hydrocele.

Pioneering innovative technologies and tools. Our experts ensure that technologies—such as smartphones and open-source software—serve transformational purposes, including improving data reporting and ensuring that data are used for decision-making. RTI is proud to be a lead organization for Tropical Data, a WHO-endorsed system tracking progress toward elimination of trachoma.

Improving data quality and use. Our monitoring, evaluation, research, learning, and adapting approach enables continuous, integrated learning, adapting, and evidence-based decision-making. RTI has supported clients to develop their own NTD monitoring and evaluation system and data collection tools.



Strengthening Capacity and Building Sustainable Programs

RTI partners with WHO, ministries of health, and the global NTD community to **prove that elimination of NTDs is a feasible and realistic target for national governments** by developing cost-effective technical strategies and supporting the incorporation of NTD priorities into routine government planning, financing, delivery, and monitoring.

Influencing the global agenda. RTI acts as a catalyst in the global policy arena by elevating lessons learned and detailing the challenges national programs face, serving to highlight the gaps in global guidelines, tools, and funding. Our team has had a significant role in developing global and country guidelines and policy documents over the past decade. Our experts are core members of NTD consultative committees, advising on key issues relevant to the global NTD agenda.

Delivering cost-effective interventions. We ensure cost-effective implementation developed with a thorough understanding of what it takes to scale up activities quickly and deliver quality NTD programs. We conduct continuous costing analyses of programmatic activities and use grants as a main operational approach to promote efficiencies and increase long-term sustainability.

Conducting innovative operational research. RTI's knowledge of the context, science, and stakeholders in NTD programming enables key scientific partnerships to address critical operational research challenges. We link national programs with research bodies to answer priority programmatic challenges and build the evidence base for effective NTD programming to reach the most vulnerable populations.

Did you know?

NTD programs lay the foundations for **strong, resilient health systems** by reaching people with quality health services, particularly in remote and impoverished communities.

The use of grants has proven key in the elimination of diseases and in promoting efficiencies and fostering country government responsibility for programming at national and subnational levels. Under ENVISION, we issued more than 1,700 grants to governments and local non-governmental organizations.

Did you know?

Accelerating progress against NTDs is critical to improving the **health and livelihoods of women and girls**, who are disproportionately affected by these diseases.

Our research shows that we are reaching men and women and boys and girls equitably with NTD treatments. **Gender and social inclusion are at the heart of our programming**, and we continue to adapt to ensure that the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations receive treatment.

More Information

Richard Reithinger
Vice President
Global Health Division
RTI International
+1 202 974 7810
reithinger@rti.org

Lisa Rotondo
Director, Act to End Neglected
Tropical Diseases | East
+1 202 974 7890
lrotondo@rti.org

www.rti.org/globalhealth
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Photo: RTI International/ Nguyen Minh Duc

Select RTI NTD Projects

Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | East (USAID, 2018–2023): Act to End NTDs | East supports national governments to reach their NTD control and elimination goals through proven, cost-effective public health interventions. The program supports countries to eliminate LF, trachoma, and onchocerciasis; identifies platforms for control and surveillance activities; and provides critical support to governments and other stakeholders to build sustainable, country-led NTD programming within robust and resilient health systems. Act to End NTDs | East currently supports the governments of 13 countries: Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Laos, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam.

ENVISION (USAID, 2011–2019): Through ENVISION, USAID's global flagship NTD project, RTI empowered governments of 19 endemic countries to strengthen national NTD programs. RTI helped countries improve the evidence base for determining and assessing action, increase the reach of treatment, and strengthen national capacity for implementing integrated NTD programs. Through ENVISION, RTI provided technical assistance and comprehensive trainings, developed innovative tools and resources for global use, and influenced NTD policy worldwide.

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust Trachoma Initiative (2014–2019): Through the Trust, RTI has supported Mozambique's efforts to restore the sight of thousands of people with trichiasis by expanding access to simple sight-saving surgeries for trachoma. This includes training 2,000 case finders to locate people in need of surgery, training more than 20 surgeons, and managing more than 5,000 cases of trichiasis. The project supported the government to integrate surgical activities into the broader health system and promoted community health messages on hygiene and sanitation.

Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP) Project (USAID, 2014–2019): Through the MMDP project, RTI supported the provision of high-quality treatment and care for Ethiopian patients suffering from debilitating conditions caused by trachoma and LF. As a result, more than 68,000 people received trichiasis surgery and more than 400 hydrocele surgeries were completed.

RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Clients rely on us to answer questions that demand an objective and multidisciplinary approach—one that integrates expertise across the social and laboratory sciences, engineering, and international development. We believe in the promise of science, and we are inspired every day to deliver on that promise for the good of people, communities, and businesses around the world. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

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