Global Nutrition

RTI International conducts multidisciplinary research and evaluation to drive sustainable solutions that reduce the dual burden of undernutrition and obesity around the world. We focus on ensuring access to diverse, high-quality diets and promoting good nutrition at the individual, household, and community levels.

At RTI, we combine our international and domestic programmatic expertise with extensive quantitative and qualitative research experience to inform nutrition policies. Our globally recognized staff includes health economists, educators, social scientists, behavioral psychologists, diet and nutrition specialists, and health communication experts. Our staff perform project monitoring and impact evaluations, develop data collection tools, carry out survey research to drive data for decision-making, conduct economic modeling to assess the impact and cost-effectiveness of interventions, and provide technical assistance.

Project Highlights

Community-based Nutrition and Obesity Prevention

Indonesia Community-based Health and Nutrition to Reduce Stunting Project—RTI is supporting the Government of Indonesia's efforts to reduce stunting among rural children by developing computer-assisted personal interviewing protocols to increase data quality assurance in the collection of anthropometric and nutrition data.

Communities Putting Prevention to Work—RTI evaluated this program, which funded 44 US communities with a total of $373 million and addressed obesity and tobacco use by helping increase physical activity in schools, improve safe options for active transportation in the community, and provide access to nutritious foods.

Nutrition Policy Evaluation

Study of Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Education Processes—RTI is conducting a study of the nutrition education components of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC. This includes a nationally representative survey of local agencies and WIC sites to describe modes of delivery and intensity of WIC nutrition education and to assess the impact of the program on dietary behaviors of participating women and children.

Models of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education and Evaluation—RTI conducted impact evaluations of seven demonstration SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) education programs to assess changes in recipients' dietary behaviors. Our evaluations used robust research designs, similar primary outcome measures across studies, and rigorous statistical analyses.

Nutrient-Rich Foods Demonstration Project—Using 24-hour dietary recalls and food frequency questionnaires, RTI conducted a randomized controlled trial with grocery shoppers to test whether a nutrient rich-foods approach helps individuals improve their diet quality and meet the US dietary guideline recommendations.

Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

The Tayari Programme—The goal of the Tayari program is to increase school readiness—including sufficient cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being—of pre-primary children in Kenya. With a goal of reaching 75,000 children in 1,500 early childhood centers in selected Kenyan counties, Tayari's activities include development of learning materials for pupils and teachers, teacher training and instructional support, and integrated technology solutions for tracking child development outcomes. Additionally, one component aims to reduce illness-related school absenteeism by promoting improved hygiene practices, water treatment, and health record-keeping in schools.

LuzonHealth—In the Philippines, RTI is integrating and scaling-up best practices and innovations to increase utilization of maternal and child health and nutrition services at the local level. The project uses a combination of strategies to improve supply of and strengthen demand for health services, as well as progress health policies through evidence-based interventions.

SantéNet2 Program—RTI supported the Madagascar Ministry of Health and Family Planning's strategy to decentralize the national health system. The program developed curricula and built the capacity of community health workers to communicate messages related to nutrition, water, hygiene, and sanitation to mothers and other household members.

Assessing the Impact and Determinants of Inappropriate Infant Feeding Type—RTI analyzed data from 20 developing countries to identify demographic determinants of infant and young child feeding practices and the impact of those practices on a child.

Data Analysis and Modeling

RTI researchers are skilled in using a variety of statistical analysis methods, such as

- Longitudinal regression modeling
- Difference-in-differences analysis
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Economic modeling
- Nutritional epidemiology
- Scanner data analysis

Data Collection

RTI researchers are improving tools for the collection of diet and nutrition data in low-resource settings. Our capabilities include:

- Household and mobile-based surveys
- Dietary recall and food frequency
- Expert elicitation
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews
- Observation studies
- On-site data collection
- RTI iShoppe®—A virtual reality based tool for understanding consumer purchasing decisions.

Other Capabilities

RTI researchers provide additional research support and technical assistance, such as

- Training content and curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation
- Community-based participatory research
- Intervention development
- Systematic literature reviews

More Information

Amy Davies, Director
Food Security and Agriculture
adavies@rti.org
+1.202.974.7830

Valerie Flax, PhD
Food, Nutrition, and Obesity Policy Research
vflax@rti.org
+1.919.990.8481

RTI International
www.rti.org/idg
Follow @RTI_INTL_DEV