



Health Systems Strengthening

Health systems strengthening has been at the heart of RTI International's mission for 60 years. A dynamic blend of innovation, research, and project implementation enables us to foster supportive policies and systems that improve access to, and demand for, quality health services.

Our approach is guided by three interconnected pillars

- Multi-dimensional, systems-focused problem identification,
- Rapid, iterative implementation with constant stakeholder feedback, and
- Quantifiable measurement of health systems gains to ensure intended impact and country ownership.

Our capabilities

- Strengthening local policies and systems to improve health outcomes,
- Applying governance approaches to the health sector,
- Assessing the health financing landscape to improve the equity, efficiency, and quality of health service delivery, and
- Pioneering innovative technologies and tools to maximize impact.

More Information

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Photo: Patrick Adams

Key Impacts

Nepal: Health for Life (H4L)

In communities deemed high-priority by H4L, 92% of health facilities have expanded services and 96% have upgraded quality of services.

Philippines: LuzonHealth

From 2013 to 2016, deliveries attended by a skilled birth attendant increased from 58% to 75%. Individuals receiving family planning services increased from 1.5 million in 2013 to 2.1 million in 2017.

Global: ENVISION

More than 1.1 billion NTD treatments have been provided in countries supported through USAID's ENVISION project, with more than 129 million people treated for NTDs in FY17 alone. Through the work of many committed stakeholders, more than 208 million people are no longer at risk for lymphatic filariasis and more than 73 million are no longer at risk for trachoma in ENVISION-supported countries.

Strengthening Local Policies, Services, and Systems to Improve Health Outcomes

RTI works with national and local health leaders and managers to ensure health system interventions respond to the root causes of system challenges, incorporate bottom-up health service planning and budgeting, and improve government and citizen relations through social accountability. We emphasize collaboration with local health leaders to understand and help improve existing systems rather than adding complexity.

The Nepal **Health for Life** project improved delivery of high-quality family planning and maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services. In addition to supporting the testing and roll-out of national policies, our team supported local-level health officials and committees to create, finance, and implement evidence-based plans that improve health service quality.

In Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines, the **LuzonHealth** project aims to improve family health by expanding access to high-quality, integrated family planning, MNCH, and nutrition services. RTI provides technical assistance to the Philippines Department of Health to support increased supply of and demand for services; enhance supportive policies and guidelines; and strengthen the health workforce through capacity building.

RTI leads **ENVISION**, a global project working to strengthen ministries of health and national neglected tropical diseases (NTD) programs in 19 countries—in part by increasing the reach of mass treatment campaigns to all people at risk and by strengthening key national systems, such as those for data reporting and management. We are working toward solutions that mainstream NTDs into government planning and financing to ensure core NTD interventions become self-reliant.

RTI leads the **HeartRescue Global** project for improving access and quality of care for people with acute cardiovascular disease (CVD). Working with local partners in Bangalore, India; Vitoria da Conquista, Brazil; and Suzhou, China, we train community residents, primary care providers, emergency medical services, and hospitals on early recognition of the signs and symptoms of acute CVD; help to expand access to effective treatments; and disseminate quality improvement methods. We are developing patient registry data collection systems to track performance and improvement across all sites of care.



Photo: Nelson Gonzales

Applying Governance Approaches into the Health Sector

We promote collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector to ensure government responsiveness and to maximize the use of resources.

RTI supported health governance interventions in eight countries under the **Health Policy Project** and the **Health Policy Plus** project. Activities include aligning roles and responsibilities of county and national governments in Kenya; supporting government and civil society to work together against the discrimination of people living with HIV and other key populations in Ghana; strengthening the capacity of local networks of women leaders to address accountability weaknesses in family planning programs; improving accountability for Family Planning 2020 commitments through an innovative, country-driven tracking mechanism in East Africa; supporting health sector decentralization in Guatemala; and reducing stigmatizing behaviors in health facilities that treat HIV and AIDS patients in Ghana, Jamaica, and Tanzania.

Through the **Nigeria Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy, and Development (LEAD)** project, RTI builds partnerships between state and local governments, civil society, and the private sector to improve state and local governance capacity to respond to national health goals. LEAD enhances health budgets and improves human resources for health planning as part of its efforts to improve health outcomes.

The **Kinerja Local Governance Service Improvement** project in Indonesia supports the national government to expand access to quality health services with an emphasis on MNCH. Interventions empower communities and strengthen complaint mechanisms, particularly by encouraging the district-level use of data to advocate for political, budgetary, and community support for health.

In Senegal, we strengthen the participation of communities in health service management and the ability of local municipalities to provide services through the **Governance for Local Development (GOLD)** program. In partnership with the Government of Senegal, including the Ministry of Health and the National Program against Malaria, we build a culture of collaboration and openness among all stakeholders focused on building the capacity of local governments to respond to citizen demands, mobilizing and improving the use of public resources to improve basic health services, and increasing community capacity to advocate for better health services and to participate in managing local health systems services.

Key Impacts

Nigeria: LEAD

Through a participatory budgeting process, the project helped Bauchi and Sokoto become the only two states in Nigeria to allocate 15% of their state budget to health.

Indonesia: Kinerja

216 new district-level regulations were passed to improve governance and services in the health, education, and business sectors.

Senegal: GOLD

Support to local government to improve resource mobilization and participatory budgeting and planning has resulted in significant increases in funding for health services. For example, using its own resources, the municipality of Koumpentoum equipped a new surgery block and a held a vaccination campaign.



Key Impacts

Tanzania Vector Control Scale-Up Project

The RTI-developed **Coconut Surveillance** tool helped ensure Zanzibar's remarkable achievement of reducing malaria prevalence from more than 35% in 2000 to less than 1% currently.

The **Resource Estimation Tool for Advocacy (RETA) Tool** has been used to advocate for increased funding for under-budgeted HIV prevention activities in the Greater Mekong Region and China.

The **Maternal and Neonatal Directed Assessment of Technology (MANDATE)** tool is an interactive, computer-based, quantitative model that helps investors, donors, and researchers estimate the impact of technology development on maternal, fetal, and neonatal mortality.

Assessing the Health Financing Landscape to Improve Health Service Delivery

RTI assesses the health financing landscape to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities to improve the equity, efficiency, and quality of health service delivery and to address financial barriers to health services. We work closely with governmental and other partners to assess the unique factors in a country's health financing landscape, including analyzing financial barriers to delivering noncommunicable disease (NCD) health services.

Under the **Scaling Up for Most-At-Risk Populations: Organizational Performance Project** (known as SUM2), we strengthened the capacity of local governments and civil society organizations in eight provinces to plan, budget, manage, and monitor the HIV response to ensure that at least 80% of key populations were covered by HIV prevention, care, and support services by 2015. RTI's modeling of resource needs at both the national and local level supported civil society engagement to improve access to higher quality HIV services for key populations.

In Indonesia, the **Kinerja Project** worked with partner districts to calculate the financial gaps between annual central government funding and the operational expenditures required to meet nationally mandated minimum service standards for health service delivery.

Pioneering Innovative Technologies and Tools to Maximize Impact

RTI expands the use of cutting-edge information and communication technology (ICT) applications to meet health needs. Our ICT experts ensure technologies—such as mobile phones and open source software—serve transformational purposes on cost-effective and sustainable in-country platforms.

In Ethiopia we support the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH)'s NTD program to **integrate with the national health management information system**, helping them build the technology infrastructure required to allow sub-national data entry and access to data to drive programmatic decisions.

Since 2012, Zanzibar has used an **RTI-developed open source software, Coconut Surveillance, to conduct malaria surveillance** and reactive case management in low prevalence settings, effectively tracking and responding to more than 8,000 malaria cases. RTI is adapting this tool to fight other infectious diseases, including Ebola and Zika.

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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