



Fighting Infectious Diseases

Global progress against infectious diseases such as malaria and HIV has been significant, culminating in goals to end these mass killers in our lifetime. The need to maintain momentum, while also responding to the emergence of recent Ebola and Zika outbreaks, has demonstrated the importance of building sustainable health systems that will both prevent and control infectious diseases.

For more than 2 decades, RTI International has been a global leader in the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Our innovators and implementers carry out complex, multi-sector projects that strengthen national and local systems to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate infectious disease programs. We prioritize close collaboration and partnership with Ministries of Health, local counterparts, and community-based organizations, and we are committed to building local capacity to ensure ownership and sustainability.

More Information

Richard Reithinger, Vice President
Global Health Division
International Development Group
+1 202 974 7810
reithinger@rti.org
RTI International
www.rti.org/globalhealth
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Photo: Patrick Adams

Key Impacts

Guinea: StopPalu

To mitigate Ebola's impact on malaria, StopPalu worked with the National Malaria Control Program to train 1,041 facility-based health workers and 890 community health workers (CHW) in revised community case management guidelines. This rapid response, combined with continued support to CHWs, ensured that CHW home visits in StopPalu districts bounced back quickly after the Ebola epidemic ended.

Tanzania Vector Control Scale-Up Project

Coconut played a key role in implementing top-notch malaria surveillance in Zanzibar, ensuring the island's remarkable achievement of reducing malaria prevalence from more than 30% in 2005 to less than 1% has been sustained.

Strengthening Malaria Control Programs Around the Globe

RTI has partnered with U.S. and multilateral donors, governments, and the private-sector to scale up the global fight against malaria. Working with 20 national malaria control programs (NMCPs) in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, RTI has strengthened approaches to prevention, vector control, case management, and surveillance while supporting sustainable platforms for country-led programs. RTI is a lead partner in international forums where technical aspects of malaria programming are considered, and our staff are members of consultative expert and advocacy committees.

Highlights from Recent Work

In Guinea, the **StopPalu** and **StopPalu+** projects (USAID, 2013–2022) support the NMCP to strengthen malaria prevention, case management, and control. In 2016, distribution of more than 3.3 million bed nets in half of the country reached nearly 90% of targeted households. StopPalu+ supports over 2,400 community health workers on case management—a community-centered effort that the government has been using as a model to strengthen the country's health system after the Ebola outbreak in 2014–2015.

For 10 years, RTI has supported malaria vector control efforts in Tanzania, a country that has emerged as a success story in malaria control. Through the **Tanzania Vector Control Scale-Up** project (USAID, 2006–2016), RTI support for integrated control, surveillance, and response activities protected up to 8.5 million people from malaria each year. In Zanzibar, surveillance officers have been using an RTI-developed software platform called **Coconut Surveillance** to track and respond to more than 10,000 malaria cases reported in the public and private sector, ensuring cases are managed promptly and effectively.

Supporting the Achievement of Global HIV Targets

RTI prioritizes capacity-building and community engagement, and we also focus on building systems that will ensure we reach 90-90-90 targets on HIV testing, treatment, and viral load suppression. Our technical assistance supports strengthened demand for, and expanded access to, HIV services; tackles structural barriers that undermine sustainable services; and improves data utilization to ensure policies and programs are evidence based.



Photo: Patrick Adams

Highlights from Recent Work

RTI co-developed a standardized tool to measure the types of stigma and discrimination (S&D) that occur in health care settings. This tool has been deployed in five countries through the **Health Policy Project** and **Health Policy Plus** project (USAID/Palladium Group, 2011–2020). In addition, the tool has been adapted by the Thailand Ministry of Health for national surveillance of S&D, as well as to support design and evaluation of S&D-reduction interventions in health facilities, which is being piloted with support from the **Inform Asia** project (USAID, 2015–2019).

On the **Expanding Access to Quality HIV Prevention, Care and Support Services in the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces Project** (U.S. Department of Defense, 2008–2018), RTI is working in partnership with the Ugandan military to scale up key HIV interventions among troops, their families, and surrounding communities.

Under the **Georgia HIV Prevention Project** (USAID, 2010–2014), we strengthened the national HIV response by delivering an expanded package of HIV prevention services to key populations, thus engaging Georgian communities to support key populations and advocate for sustainable HIV policies, strategies, and programs. Thirty percent of project funds were sub-granted to local NGOs, building their capacity to work with key populations.

Deploying a Rapid and Flexible Response to Emerging Threats

Our expertise, global experience, and strong history working with governments enable us to respond quickly to outbreaks and emerging diseases.

With a growing portfolio of Zika research, RTI is expanding critical knowledge on the virus—from analyzing the use of drones for vector control to evaluating the financing needs of prevention and control efforts in different contexts.

In Guinea, a country heavily affected by an Ebola outbreak in 2014–2015, the **Epi-détecte** project (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015–2019) is supporting Guinea’s plan to strengthen surveillance and health information systems, improve triage and screening protocols in health facilities, and also strengthen the capacity of the public health workforce to detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

Key Impacts

Uganda: Expanding Access to Quality HIV Prevention, Care and Support Services in the Ugandan Military

As a result of the project, over 291,000 troops have been tested for HIV, and more than 20,000 HIV-positive persons are enrolled in treatment programs.

Georgia: HIV Prevention Project

The project supported the development of an Anti-drug National Strategy and Action Plan, championed the development of the first policy for HIV testing and counseling in penitentiaries, and institutionalized training curricula on HIV prevention, stigma, and ethics for media and leading medical schools.

Guinea: Epi-détecte

Triage structures—which will be staffed by RTI-trained health workers—are being constructed outside 42 health facilities. The prefabricated shelters will support health centers to admit suspected cases of Ebola or other communicable diseases, without endangering other patients.

Crosscutting Areas of Expertise

Provision of Services and Interventions

We manage high-impact, integrated health service delivery projects at global, regional, and bilateral levels.

Mapping disease burdens. RTI has assessed the distribution and burden of malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in more than 20 countries.

Managing procurement for large-scale programs. RTI's experienced team of global supply chain, logistics, and procurement experts purchase and deliver health commodities, including diagnostics, drugs, and bed nets. As of April 2018, \$15.9 billion worth of medicines have been donated to fight NTDs in RTI-supported countries.

Conducting case management. Whether in health facilities, communities, or as part of large-scale disease surveys, RTI strengthens services and systems that improve access and adherence to, as well as coverage of, high-quality diagnostic and treatment services. This includes reducing stigma and discrimination toward HIV-infected individuals accessing health services, supporting community health workers to provide rapid diagnostic tests and treatment for malaria, and developing social behavior change messaging to ensure patients adhere to treatment.

Leading vector control. RTI-managed vector control programs have protected more than 75 million people from malaria in more than 20 countries. RTI has extensive experience managing large-scale indoor residual spraying (IRS) of households with insecticide, insecticide-treated bed net distribution, environmental compliance, entomological surveillance, and insecticide resistance monitoring.

Health Systems Strengthening and Policy Reform

RTI works to strengthen all aspects of health systems to respond effectively to infectious diseases—from supporting national strategies and goals for health sector reform, to building local and national government capacity.

Strengthening local policies and systems. To improve health outcomes, RTI builds government and civil society capacity to plan, manage, and deliver high-quality services. To improve delivery of family planning and maternal, newborn, and child

health services in Nepal, the Health for Life project (USAID, 2012–2018) supports the testing and roll-out of national policies, and assists local-level health committees and officials to create and implement health plans.

Integrating governance approaches into the health sector. RTI's health governance interventions prioritize country-owned participatory processes, strengthen civil society knowledge and participation, and enhance government accountability.

Developing and deploying flexible and adaptable health planning and financing tools. RTI tools, such as the Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing (*TIPAC*), enable governments to cost out health programs, plan funding streams, and identify programmatic gaps.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning, and Adoption (MERLA)

Learnings from monitoring, evaluation, and operations research are used to refine and improve program implementation. Highlights include the following:

Conducting data quality assessments. RTI-developed protocols and tools evaluate the quality of reported data and data management systems at multiple health system levels.

Assessing impact and disease surveillance. Working with host country governments and stakeholders, we demonstrate impact and document progress toward country and global goals.

Conducting operational research. Multidisciplinary teams generate evidence on the programmatic effectiveness and impact of tools, interventions, and approaches.

Expanding the use of information and communications technologies. Our experts ensure technologies—such as mobile phones/smartphones and open-source software—serve transformational purposes, including improving data collection and reporting, and ensuring data are used for evidence-based decision-making.

Turning data into actionable insights. Using predictive analytics, modeling, and data visualization, our data scientists use historic and real-time data to predict future events, inform decisions, and classify new observations to guide actions and interventions.

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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