

# Country Profile: Ethiopia

## Overview of Resolve to Save Lives

Resolve to Save Lives (RTSL) is a global health organization that partners locally and globally to create and scale solutions to the world's deadliest health threats. We use technical, operational, and policy approaches to identify leading health threats that can be stopped, rapidly co-create and test simple solutions, and scale up proven solutions worldwide. Since 2017, we've worked with governments and partners in more than 60 countries to save millions of lives.

In Ethiopia, RTSL works closely with the Government and partners at national and subnational levels to strengthen epidemic prevention and control and enhance cardiovascular health outcomes by controlling blood pressure and creating a healthier food environment.



## RTSL Ethiopia's goals

### Blood pressure control

- Improve hypertension detection, treatment and control at the primary health care level in Ethiopia by supporting the adoption of evidence-based protocols, improving access to antihypertensive treatment, supporting team-based care and patient-centred services, and strengthening systems for supportive supervision, monitoring, and reviews, in line with the WHO HEARTS technical package.

### Healthier foods

- Support the development and implementation of policies and regulatory frameworks that promote healthy diets, such as trans fat elimination, front-of-package warning labels, marketing restrictions for unhealthy foods, and healthy public food procurement policies.
- Reduce population-level salt intake through the implementation of evidence-based policies and interventions targeting ultra-processed packaged foods.

### Epidemic prevention

- Enhance epidemic preparedness by strengthening areas that support the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005).
- Strengthen national health security by supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS), including providing financial support and technical expertise on IHR multisectoral coordination, tracking mechanisms, legal frameworks, and communications.
- Improve early detection and early response of public health threats by improving data collection, evaluating the timeliness of event responses against the 7-1-7 target, and identifying bottlenecks to propose solutions
- Improve collaborative surveillance by designing data, systems, processes, and teams around real-world outbreak decision needs using design and systems thinking and change management principles.

### For more information please contact

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## Our work

### Blood pressure control

#### Ethiopian Hypertension Control Initiative (EHCI)

- In 2020, RTSL partnered with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), and regional health bureaus to launch the Ethiopian Hypertension Control Initiative (EHCI).
- EHCI, initially piloted in 62 primary health care facilities across six regions, had expanded to 683 facilities across ten regions and enrolled over 160,000 hypertensive patients in standardized care by November 2025. Blood pressure control rates also improved to 50% from 0% in 2020, with a 74% retention rate.
- RTSL also provided a start-up supply of validated blood pressure monitors and antihypertensive medications to 62 primary health care facilities to support adherence to the national hypertension treatment protocol and procurement policies. So far, we have procured and donated 350 Omron BP monitors and 1,000 Microlife semi-automated BP monitors to these facilities.
- In 2021, we supported the development and national adoption of a standardized, drug- and dose-specific hypertension treatment protocol, which was integrated into Ethiopia's Primary Health Care Guideline. The protocol covers hypertension as well as other priority NCDs and is endorsed for use in all primary health care facilities and general hospitals nationwide.
- RTSL partnered with the Ministry of Health and the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service to update the national pharmaceutical product list, ensuring the prioritization of essential, lifesaving antihypertensive medications.
- In 2021, RTSL launched and facilitated the interoperability of the Simple App with Ethiopia's DHIS2 system to support the effective management of hypertension and diabetes in primary health care facilities. The Simple App, first piloted in 62 facilities, now supports hypertension and diabetes management in 683 healthcare facilities.
- The app supports data entry in five local languages (Amharic, Oromiffa, Sidama, Somali, and Tigrigna). We also trained 2,930 health workers, facility leaders, and NCD program managers at regional and subnational levels on the use of the Simple App for hypertension management. Following national approval and leadership endorsement, the Simple App is now being expanded to 500 primary health care facilities as part of a national scale-up targeting 1,000 facilities.
- Between 2020 and 2021, RTSL provided startup antihypertensive medicines to 62 facilities, helping them implement standardized treatment protocols and establish a revolving drug fund. All EHCI-supported facilities now independently procure these medicines using their own revenue, ensuring long-term sustainability.

## Healthier food

- RTSL supports the Government of Ethiopia to reduce major cardiovascular disease risk factors by advancing policies that address unhealthy diets, particularly reducing excessive consumption of salt, sugar, and fat from ultra-processed packaged foods and promoting a healthier food environment.
- Between 2023 and 2025, RTSL provided strategic support to the Ministry of Health, EFDA, and EPHI in developing the Unhealthy Diet Control Proclamation. As part of this effort, RTSL worked with EPHI to generate critical evidence to inform the policy, including designing a Nutrient Profile Model, developing a Front-of-Pack Warning Label (FOPWL), assessing the health and economic impacts of unhealthy diets, and developing partner-aligned policy briefs and related materials.
- RTSL also supported salt reduction interventions in 56 health facilities and over 300 schools from 2023 to 2025, working with communities through education campaigns and mass media initiatives across six regions.
- In 2024, RTSL partnered with EFDA to assess national laboratory capacity for artificial trans fat testing and provide technical support to strengthen enforcement capacity.

## Epidemic prevention

### Strengthening national and subnational health security

- RTSL collaborates with MOH and EPHI to strengthen Ethiopia's IHR core capacities and support the country in meeting its International Health Regulations (IHR) obligations and implementing the IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IHRMEF).
- Our support includes leading Joint External Evaluation (JEE) processes, contributing to the development and operationalization of the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS 2025–28/29) and providing technical assistance for its implementation, and enhancing digital mechanisms for monitoring progress.
- RTSL supported the reprioritization of NAPHS activities through performance review workshops with EPHI, implementing partners, and key stakeholders, established an electronic tracker to monitor implementation and analyze progress, and continues to support the publishing and dissemination of the Multisectoral National Health Security Bulletin to share NAPHS updates and best practices across sectors.
- In partnership with EPHI, we initiated a subnational health security capacity strengthening effort in Ethiopia, making the country the second in Africa to conduct a comprehensive subnational health security assessment. RTSL's support includes capacity assessments, development of Regional Action Plans for Health Security (RAPHS), advocacy, mobilizing key sectors and partners, and providing technical and financial assistance to strengthen subnational health security.

## Health financing

- RTSL strengthens national financing capacity for health security by supporting resource mobilization efforts, project management systems, and aligning external funding with EPHI priorities.
- We supported resource mapping for health security by costing the annual NAPHS operational plan and mapping financial commitments at the national level and at the subnational level - Sidama region.
- RTSL also supported a national Health Security Financing Landscape Analysis by developing and advancing terms of reference for a desk review and stakeholder interviews, to inform future design of Ethiopia's health security financing program.
- Currently, RTSL is supporting a national Health Security Financing Landscape Analysis by developing and advancing terms of reference for desk review and stakeholder interviews. The analysis informs future design of Ethiopia's health security financing program.
- Provided support for the digitalization of resource and activity tracking tools for health security financing by supporting EPHI in monitoring and improving digital project-based and activity-based trackers, with ongoing efforts to harmonize them into a single comprehensive tool.
- Currently supporting the development of a resource mobilization strategy for EPHI to guide diversified, predictable, and sustainable resource mobilization and strengthen partnerships.

## Infection prevention and control

- RTSL supports national and subnational Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) programs through strategic systems strengthening and advocating for sustained domestic funding and human resources.
- In 2023, our advocacy efforts contributed to Ethiopia's first dedicated national IPC budget allocation. This success extended to the subnational level: in 2025, Sidama Region allocated the first regional IPC budget, marking a major milestone in institutionalizing IPC financing.
- Following sustained engagement and advocacy by RTSL, over USD 500,000 from the World Bank's Health Emergency Preparedness, Response and Resilience Project was disbursed to all regional health bureaus and the two city administrations to support IPC program implementation at the subnational level.
- We also supported the development and cascading of new monitoring, audit, and feedback tools across Ethiopia, including the Infection Prevention and Control Facility Level Assessment Tool for Primary Healthcare Units (IPC FLAT-PHCU) and delivered capacity-building, supportive supervision, and mentorship to subnational health bureaus and high-priority healthcare facilities.

- We provided sustained capacity building and mentorship support to 197 healthcare facilities, personal protective equipment and other IPC supplies to 141 healthcare facilities, resulting in a significant decline in avoidable healthcare worker infections and strengthened IPC capacity.
- In 2024, our team supported the development and rollout of a new national healthcare-associated infection surveillance training package to strengthen IPC measures in Ethiopia.

### **Epidemic-Ready Primary Health Care (ERPHC) project**

- In 2024, RTSL launched the Epidemic-Ready Primary Health Care (ERPHC) Project to support primary health care facilities in Ethiopia in preventing, detecting, and responding to outbreaks while maintaining essential health services.
- We implemented a structured, longitudinal mentorship program across 197 health facilities to strengthen healthcare workers' knowledge and practices in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM), delivered in three phases to drive continuous improvements in public health emergency readiness.
- The structured mentorship approach led to major improvements in healthcare facility performance, with mentorship scores showing substantial improvement across all phases of the project.
  - **Phase I facilities:** Mentorship score increased from a baseline of 61% in February 2024 to 94% by October 2025
  - **Phase II facilities:** Mentorship score increased from 61% in January 2025 to 88% in October 2025
  - **Phase III facilities:** Mentorship score increased from 56% in June 2025 to 78% in October 2025.
- Through RTSL's strategic advocacy, local resource mobilization was strengthened as healthcare facilities supported by Regional Health Bureaus mobilized over 5 million ETB in Addis Ababa for isolation rooms. In Sidama, facilities mobilized more than 4.2 million ETB to upgrade IPC as well as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene infrastructure, reflecting strong government ownership and a sustained commitment to ERPHC interventions.
- As of November 2025, simulations conducted at 33 health facilities show an average readiness score of 64%. A statistically significant performance gap was observed, with ERPHC facilities scoring 64%, compared to 35% at non-ERPHC facilities ( $U = 295.5$ ,  $p = 0.0019$ ).

## Collaborative surveillance

- Through our Collaborative Surveillance Project launched in October 2023, we partnered with EPHI and the Ministry of Health to support the development of a collaborative surveillance framework, with contributions from over 10 sectors, including One Health sectors, to enhance Ethiopia’s decision-making across the public health emergency cycle.
- RTSL supported major gains across surveillance, emergency management, and data use, including scaling DHIS2 PHEM and the emergency management system ePHEM, establishing interoperability between ePHEM, DHIS2 surveillance instances, and EIOS systems, and embedding engineering and data use expertise within government teams.
- Strengthened information products for decision-making, including standardizing the Addis Ababa weekly epidemiological bulletin, supporting the production of an outbreak situation report tailored for city leadership, and enhancing early warning and risk communication bulletins to provide timely, actionable insights.
- Strengthened EPHI–MOH collaboration with routine data sharing mechanisms, executive-level outbreak information products, and clearer alignment on digital systems and forecasting.

## Improving early detection and response

- In 2023, RTSL partnered with EPHI to strengthen early detection and response systems by conducting retrospective reviews of 10 public health events against the 7-1-7 target. Bottlenecks for early detection, notification, and response were identified and used to prioritize activities during the annual NAPHS operational planning.
- Between 2023 and 2025, RTSL’s support contributed to both a rapid scale-up in event assessment and significant gains in the timeliness of outbreak management across the public health emergency management system.
- Event volumes increased from 9 events in 2023 to 71 events in 2024, driven largely by a surge in Q3-2024, and the system has already assessed 32 events through Q3-2025.
- Timeliness metrics show clear, measurable improvements compared with the 2023 baseline.
  - Outbreak detection within 7 days increased from 67% to 84% with +17 pp absolute change representing a relative change of 25.40%
  - Notifications within 1 day improved from 78% to 91% with +13 pp absolute change representing 16.70%
  - Initiating an early response within 7 days rose from 22% to 56% with +34 pp absolute change, which represents 154.50% relative change from baseline 2023
  - Finally, the proportion of events meeting all 7-1-7 targets rose from 11% to 50%, a 39% increase and the most significant relative improvement (over 350%).

- These results show a maturing PHEM system that is handling substantially more events while delivering increasingly timely detection, notification, and response, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness of public-health event management.

### **Enhanced Situational Assessment (ESA)**

- Since 2024, RTSL's Enhanced Situational Assessment (ESA) initiative has been revitalized to focus on identifying top priority hazards through STAR and linking dynamic risk factors with the necessary preparedness activities.
- Under the initiative, three priority hazards, including dengue fever, cholera, and malaria, were selected for strengthening early detection and risk-informed decision-making.
- Our work is currently focused on developing a change-based, qualitative risk-scoring model for dengue fever in Ethiopia, and relevant risk factors have been identified through participatory engagement with key stakeholders. The dengue model will be validated against historical outbreak data and used to produce a baseline risk score with the finalized framework.
- Lessons learned from this process will inform the rapid development and rollout of analogous models for cholera and malaria, followed by routine risk monitoring at selected regional and national levels.