

## TIFA Accelerator Series – Ethiopia

# Restoration & continuity of essential TB services in conflict-affected areas

Internal conflict in Ethiopia poses a significant challenge to the continuity of essential health services, including tuberculosis (TB) prevention, diagnostics, and treatment. In several regions, health facilities have been damaged, resulting in the loss or destruction of medical equipment, and the displacement of millions of people from their homes.

“It is challenging to describe the overall impact after two years of conflict. Some health facilities have experienced total destruction, while others were partially destroyed. There have been major disruptions to health services,” said Getachew Desalegn, the technical director of **REACH Ethiopia**.



Meseret Aseffa, executive director of REACH Ethiopia, hands over medical equipment worth 25 million birr through a USAID-funded TIFA award to Afar and Amhara RHBs. Photo by: Reach Ethiopia.

## Ending TB in Ethiopia

Ethiopia had made significant gains in its effort to end TB—until multiple internal conflicts disrupted essential TB and other health services. In 2022, USAID Ethiopia identified REACH Ethiopia to receive TB Implementation Framework Agreement (TIFA) funding to procure and distribute equipment and supplies through the local market.

REACH Ethiopia procured and distributed critical equipment to 90 facilities—10 multiple drug resistant (MDR)-TB initiating centers; 51 treatment follow-up centers; and 29 GeneXpert sites—in Amhara and Afar Regions (*Figure 1*).

As part of the **Global Accelerator to End TB**, the **United States Agency for International Development** (USAID)-funded Tuberculosis Implementation Framework Agreement (TIFA) project, led by **JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.** with partner **Open Development**, focuses on enhancing collaborative, locally-led efforts to build countries’ capacity to plan, finance, monitor, and sustain their own high-quality TB programs. TIFA works with country partners to develop fixed amount awards—known as TB commitment grants (TCGs)—contracts, or other awards to support priority activities.

Under TCGs, accountability and funding amounts are based on results: negotiated **milestones** are tied to payments. Together, NTPs and USAID identify country priorities, TIFA then works closely with them to develop the grant. TB commitment grants are implemented by NTPs or local entities. Completed milestones are submitted to and verified by USAID and TIFA. The **TIFA Accelerator Series** highlights grant achievements.

“We jumped in to support this delivery and restoration of services in these highly conflict-affected areas. People are in dire need. Their health is jeopardized because of interrupted service, TB as well as health services overall. We worked to execute this planning, procurement, and distribution in a very short time period, because this was restoration of services to save lives,” noted Dr. Desalegn.

## Procuring and Distributing Critical Equipment and Supplies

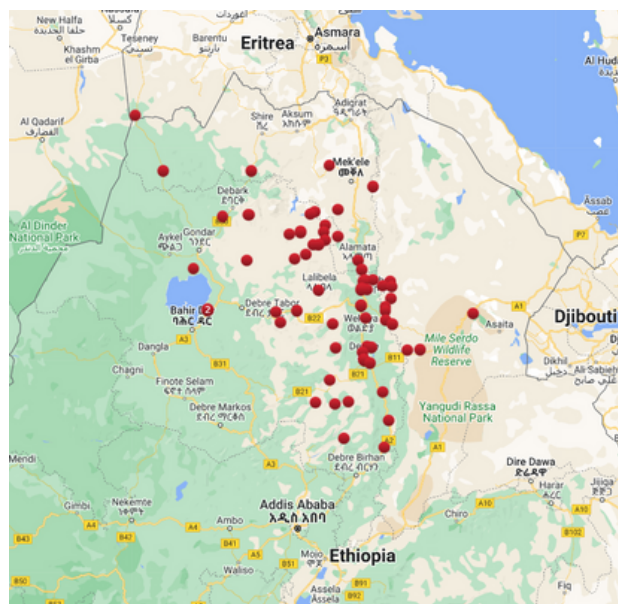
The damage to health facilities included the loss of office furniture, medical equipment, and computers. The loss of vehicles and limited road access further hampered TB program monitoring and mentorship activities. MDR-TB service provision was significantly hindered in treatment facilities due to the loss of echo-cardiogram machines and microscopy services.

Given the extensive damage, “prioritizing was critical, it was a very collaborative working environment for us,” said Meseret Yenehun, executive director of REACH Ethiopia.

REACH collaborated with the National TB and Leprosy Program (NTLP), regional health bureaus (RHBs), other USAID partners, and vendors to procure, transport, and distribute the required supplies to health facilities in conflict-affected regions: Amhara and Afar.

“The RHBs gathered information such as which health facilities were mainly affected, in which zones and woredas, then they transmitted the information to the NTLP, as well as to USAID Ethiopia and other USAID-supported projects that are active in the regions,” explained Dr. Desalegn.

“Finding and securing [this equipment] was challenging. The planning process was important; identifying materials, advertising, and our open bid procedures. We had to ensure that information was shared with different suppliers. We managed procurement and distribution simultaneously, as this was time-sensitive. We were also faced with the challenge of the remoteness of these health facilities during the distribution process; some are 300–400 km from the regional capital,” said Biruk Belayneh, REACH Ethiopia human resources and administration manager.



**Figure 1:** Distribution of equipment and furniture for conflict-affected health facilities in Afar and Amhara Regions.

## Restoring Essential TB Services

The funding provided by USAID through the TIFA Project has played a crucial role in supporting local government efforts to restore essential health services in conflict-affected areas of the Amhara and Afar regions, to restore TB services for affected communities.

"So many people have been affected by this conflict, and it is truly a heartbreaking situation. TB services and treatment were disrupted due to the damage inflicted on health facilities. We understand the gravity of this situation, and when the opportunity arose, we were thrilled to provide support to ensure that people receive the necessary health services," explained Mr. Yenehun.

In January 2023, REACH conducted an equipment handover ceremony in Addis Ababa, where supplies worth 25 million birr (approximately \$500,000 USD) were distributed.

"The regional teams have shown immense appreciation for the support received. The RHBs will conduct assessments and provide supportive supervision to gather information. However, through our communication channels, we have learned that the majority of health facilities supported through this TIFA funding have already resumed providing basic TB services," stated Dr. Desalegn. "The TIFA funding has played a pivotal role in restoring TB services at these facilities," added Mr. Yenehun.

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Getachew Desalegn, REACH Ethiopia



Afrotopia Destination Management Pvt. Ltd. distributes equipment at Ataye Hospital in Amhara. Photo by: Reach Ethiopia.

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