

SLL Assist – Ethiopia Impact Timeline

2024

Phase 1: Identifying the Care Gap & Local Anchoring

Rural Health Link identified a critical barrier in Ethiopia's maternal and newborn care ecosystem: frontline providers lacked rapid, reliable access to life-saving WHO and HMBS procedures during routine care and emergencies. This gap directly contributed to variability in care quality, particularly in low-resource settings. To ensure local ownership and relevance, RHL formalized an MoU with Mekelle University, establishing a strong academic and clinical anchor for co-design and validation.

2024

Phase 2: Designing for Clinical Impact & Safety

Based on early consultations with clinicians and trainers, RHL made a deliberate decision to position SLL Assist as a guideline-anchored clinical reference, not a diagnostic system. This ensured the tool would strengthen adherence to standard protocols rather than introduce risk. The solution was designed to reduce cognitive load, support real-time decision-making, and reinforce training outcomes—key drivers of improved neonatal survival.

2025

Phase 3: Validation through Grant-Enabled Development

With SLL Assist as the enabling technology, Mekelle University successfully secured a Laerdal Foundation grant, with funding allocated to RHL for technology development. This milestone validated the solution's potential to improve newborn outcomes and enabled the transition from concept to deployable system.

2025

Phase 4: Iterative Development for Field Readiness

RHL developed and refined SLL Assist with a strong focus on frontline usability and measurable impact. App iterations prioritized stepwise clarity, offline functionality, local language readiness, and safety guardrails to ensure consistent protocol application. Field feedback guided decisions to simplify workflows and align the app with Ethiopian training and supervision models.

2025

Phase 5: Strengthening Readiness for Scale

SLL Assist matured into a stable, field-ready tool supporting training, supervision, and point-of-care reference. Clinical partners reviewed content alignment with national newborn-care priorities, ensuring readiness for broader programmatic use.

2026

Current Status:

Scaling Impact through Strategic Partnerships

SLL Assist is now positioned for wider adoption in Ethiopia. RHL is actively engaging with NEST360 to explore integration of the solution into broader newborn-care initiatives and device-enabled care ecosystems. This partnership pathway represents a critical step toward national-level scale, with the potential to strengthen quality of care across multiple facilities and significantly expand impact on neonatal survival.