About the Initiative

We believe it is possible to end diseases of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Neglected infectious diseases (NIDs) remain one of the most underfunded disease categories in global health despite their far-reaching impact and the availability of affordable treatments. We are engaging new and existing stakeholders—public and private, local and international, donors and implementers to raise the awareness and commitment necessary to finish the job of eliminating these diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2015. Armed with cost-effective solutions, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases/Sabin Vaccine Institute, and the Pan American Health Organization/WHO, together with the endemic countries are leading the LAC NID Initiative, a comprehensive regional agenda to address the treatment gap and implement other health measures for the benefit of all children and adults affected by these terrible diseases.

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Main NIDs that affect millions in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Onchocerciasis (river blindness)
- Lymphatic filariasis
- Trachoma
- Chagas disease
- Leishmaniasis
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis (intestinal parasites)
- Schistosomiasis
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- Inter-American Development Bank
- Pan American Health Organization
- Sabin Vaccine Institute
- The Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases
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**Fighting Neglected Infectious Diseases**

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

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Latin America and the Caribbean is the region closest to achieving the elimination of many NIDs. The region has seen unprecedented success in reducing transmission of NIDs including onchocerciasis and VL. The work, however, has not been without cost as the countries continue to identify and treat NIDs that are prevalent. The benefit of this work is that even though NIDs may be safely simply and cost-effectively treated, most of the medications needed to treat them are donated by pharmaceutical companies. With coordinated efforts, the control and elimination of the most common NIDs will have an enormous impact on the health and potential of families and communities.

HELPING CHILDREN STAY IN SCHOOL
Treatment for intestinal worm infections in children promotes nutrition, improves mental and physical development, therefore reducing absenteeism in primary school and leading to higher wages later in life.

IMPROVING MOTHER AND INFANT HEALTH
Mothers infected with NIDs often suffer from anemia and malnutrition. Treating women for these conditions contributes to safer pregnancies, improved birth outcomes, and healthier babies. A unique opportunity exists to help a generation break the cycle of poverty and prevent the transmission of NIDs to the next generation.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Higher wages, and support economic growth and development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The NID Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean aims at combating these diseases in the region by developing a comprehensive approach. Leveraging IDB’s financial facilities and expanding its project financing and technical assistance, and leadership in health, and the Global Network’s advocacy, policy and fundraising capabilities, we are supporting expanded efforts within the region to address the current gap in children’s and adults’ prevention and treatment efforts.

We are developing cost-effective interventions and projects that combine prevention, treatment, community mobilization and education, and improvements in housing, sanitation and water supply.

BRAZIL: FIGHTING NIDS IN URBAN SETTINGS
Recent and alarming findings on the largest metropolitan zone in Brazil, is one area that suffers from considerable inequity with pockets of extreme deprivation where transmission of lymphatic filariasis (LF), and other NIDs are high. The project aims to integrate national LF interventions into the national control of LF and integrate activities to target communities infected with schistosomiasis and leptospirosis. These interventions will be strengthened through the implementation of the national LF and schistosomiasis prevention and integration with the education sector. 1.04 million inhabitants will benefit directly from this project.

COLUMBIA: COMBATING BLINDING TRACHOMA
A second focus of this initiative is on the elimination of blinding trachoma, which is a major public health problem in many communities, particularly in rural areas. The project supports 3 initiatives in 4 departments to understand the scope of the problem and prepare interventions to prevent blindness and improve health. One of the projects in the capital, Bogota, is part of a national initiative of Colombia to combat the NIDs, supported by the Initiative.

GUATEMALA: PROTECTING HEALTH THROUGH EDUCATION
Guatemala’s project is aligned with IDB’s efforts to prevent STH and onchocerciasis, and eliminating Chagas disease and Onchocerciasis. The project focuses on synergies between health, education and sanitation. The strategy includes: innovative community health education, offering peer education to target audiences and an incentive-driven approach. This approach is one called “Community Driven Projects” where after education campaign, community members decide on an incentive financed by the project which includes school improvements like cement floors or latrines. Over one million people will benefit from these activities.

HONDURAS AND SURINAME: DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED PLANS OF ACTION
Suriname’s plan covers 7 NIDs (such as schistosomiasis and dermal filariasis) and the Ministry of Health is responsible for the overall plan. Suriname has an estimated population of 700,000 people who will benefit from these activities, including 272,000 children and pregnant women.

HAITI: WORKING FOR BETTER WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES
The IDB is implementing three projects that integrate integrated sanitation and treatment with water and sanitation management projects; one in the capital; one in the neighboring department of Artibonite and a third in five intermediate-sized cities. Over 900,000 people will benefit from these activities.

HAITI: WORKING FOR BETTER WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES
In this three-year project in Haiti, the State of Chiapas and supported by the FEMSA foundation focuses on integrated activities to fight NIDs and capacity building within the health system. The project will treat more than 132,000 people at risk for NIDs in target areas, and the entire population of Chiapas — more than 4 million people — will benefit indirectly from reduced risk of infections due to improved water and sanitation services and other control activities.

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Our work in the region

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