

Brief

Now is the time to say goodbye to neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)

Inside Sightsavers' neglected tropical diseases strategy

Our vision is a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where people with disabilities can participate equally in society.

We have developed five thematic strategies to deliver our overarching vision:

1. Neglected tropical diseases
2. Eye health
3. Inclusive education
4. Refractive error
5. Social inclusion

Our six cross-cutting NTD principles

1. Integration
2. Innovation and learning
3. Research and evidence uptake
4. Advocacy
5. Equity
6. Environmental responsibility

The global health community has made momentous progress towards the elimination of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). In the past decade alone, interventions have stopped more than 600 million people from being at risk of these devastating conditions. However, the work is not over: there are still 1.7 billion people – that is one in five of us – at risk of these debilitating diseases that mostly affect people in low-income countries.

This ambitious strategy takes Sightsavers, along with the international NTD community, to the elimination objectives outlined in key global policy frameworks, including the World Health Organization (WHO) NTD road map 2021–2030, as well as its sustainability framework and sustainable development

goals. Our approach is fully aligned with what endemic countries have identified as a priority within their NTD master plans.

Sightsavers continues to focus its efforts on eliminating five NTDs: trachoma, river blindness (onchocerciasis), lymphatic filariasis (LF), schistosomiasis and intestinal worms (soil-transmitted helminths – STH). While only two of these diseases affect the eyes specifically, all five are preventive-chemotherapy NTDs. Hence, interventions for the diseases use largely the same platforms, including those used for mass drug administration (MDA). Therefore, we increase our impact and provide value for money by working on these five NTDs together.

Our overarching goals

We have two overarching goals and three objectives

NTD goals

Contribution to health systems strengthening

Progress towards universal health coverage

NTD objectives

Address health system gaps and weaknesses to enable equitable patient care and effective surveillance

Facilitate opportunities for evidence-based decision-making by supporting data standardisation and data ownership

Support universal health coverage through ensuring equitable access to NTD and inclusion services

NTD cross-cutting principles

Integration, innovation and learning, research and evidence uptake, advocacy, equity and environmental responsibility

Goal 1: We support governments to achieve stronger health systems by:

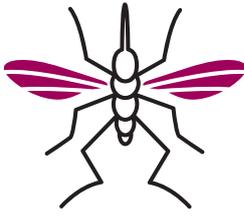
- Using our established network of national experts, all with extensive experience of working with and within ministries of health, to promote sustainable change
- Assisting countries in strengthening their health systems from the inside by, for instance, supporting them to train staff and improve infrastructure
- Improving and standardising data management systems, enabling governments to make evidence-based decisions

Goal 2: We support governments to achieve universal health coverage by:

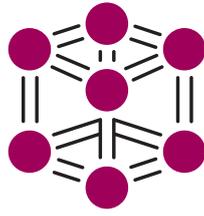
- Assisting ministries of health to ensure access to NTD diagnosis, treatment and management for all members of society
- Using considerable experience in sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships, including working with the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives), wider eye health and social inclusion sectors

Cover image: Peace, 11, sings a song that helps her remember how to wash her hands and face, a part of the Sightsavers water, sanitation and hygiene project in Meru, Kenya. ©Sightsavers/Andrew Renneisen

Our approach



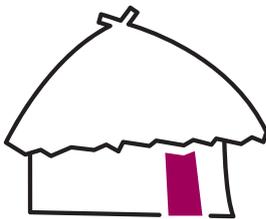
Working towards elimination We are on the 'last mile' to eliminating NTDs and we will continue our contribution until the job is done.



Our unique working model We provide inputs to trigger outputs, outcomes and impact for communities, sub-national governments and national governments. This approach, centred around in-country partnerships and community work, supports sustainable, country-owned elimination of NTDs.



Cross-cutting approach Our six key principles outlined above will enable us to achieve our objectives and ensure that disease elimination is sustained long after our work has concluded in endemic countries.



Operating in challenging environments People living in conflict or geographically hard-to-reach areas are often left behind. Our teams understand the challenges that come with operating in these environments, and we modify our strategies for these contexts.



Collaboration Our partnerships enable us to create sustainable change and long-lasting impact on the health conditions of the people we serve. To date, we have proven agile at maintaining relationships despite politics, existing and emerging challenges and conflicting priorities.



Measurement, learning and accountability Sightsavers is committed to robust and effective monitoring, evaluation and learning in all work we undertake, grounded in WHO best practices, national data ownership and a culture of learning.

Our portfolio

Sightsavers works with partners and governments in 24 African countries. Our NTD programmes and projects include:

Accelerate

The Accelerate trachoma elimination programme aims to support at least eight countries to eliminate trachoma as a public health risk, and speed up progress in several others, by 2023.

ARISE

This programme supports the governments of Chad, Liberia and Nigeria in the fight against trachoma, river blindness and LF.

GiveWell

The GiveWell grant enables Sightsavers to expand its work to deliver deworming treatments to millions of children in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

L'Occitane

This programme supports ministries of health in Burkina Faso and Mali in their fight against onchocerciasis.

People's Postcode Lottery (PPL)

PPL supports a survey for river blindness in Ghana.

Act to End NTDs (West)

This programme supports MDA for river blindness in Cameroon.

Projects

Sightsavers carries out a variety of work – from surveys to MDAs and NTD management – in the fight against trachoma, river blindness and LF in 16 African countries.



Our strategies are developed through robust consultation with a range of partners, including ministries, organisations of people with disabilities and international development agencies.

