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58 Million NTD Treatments Surpassed in 2015

The Carter Center River Blindness Elimination Program held its 20th annual program review March 2–4, 2016, at its Atlanta headquarters.

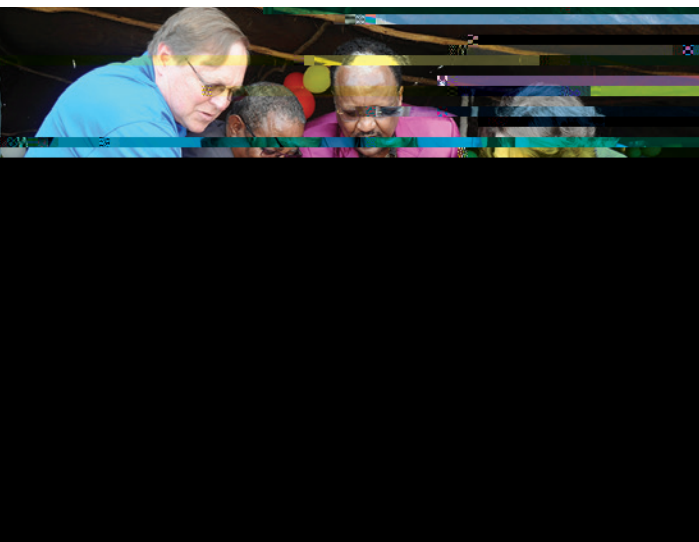
Since 1996, the Carter Center's river blindness program has worked with ministries of health to provide treatment, health education, and training in 10 countries. In 2015, The Carter Center assisted in a total of 27,966,346 ivermectin treatments (Mectizan donated by Merck) for river blindness, a 30

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Trachoma Week Reaches 9.4 Million in West Amhara

Ambassador (Ret.) Mary Ann

Peters, Carter Center CEO, helped kick off the 15th Trachoma Week in the West Amhara region of Ethiopia in late January.



In Ethiopia, Chairperson of LCIF Board of Trustees Joe Preston, Amhara Regional State President H. E. Mr. Gedu Andargachew, Lions Clubs International Foundation Board Member Hon. World Laureate Dr. Tebebe Berhan, and Carter Center CEO Ambassador (ret.) Mary Ann Peters cut traditional bread together during the launch of Trachoma Week.

Joining Ambassador Peters were partners from Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF); local Lions Clubs members; representatives from the International Trachoma Initiative, Abbott, the William H. Donner Foundation, and Pfizer; and dignitaries from the federal Ministry of Health and the Amhara National Regional State.

During the weeklong event, 9.4 million people in 1,828 villages in West Amhara received a sight-saving drug, about 92 percent of the targeted population. Over 30,000 people supported this immense effort, including 8,000 government health officials working at the zone, district, and community levels and 25,000 health volunteers. Trachoma Week occurs twice per year in the Amhara region, once in West

Amhara and once in East Amhara, providing the entire at-risk population the opportunity to receive antibiotics.

In addition to receiving Pfizer-donated Zithromax during Trachoma Week, community members learned about the SAFE strategy for trachoma control.

Ambassador Peters and the partners who attended the event's celebratory launch saw all components of the SAFE strategy in action.

"It was inspiring to meet people in village after village boasting about their latrines and to see schoolchildren demonstrating how they wash their faces, both elements of the SAFE strategy," said Ambassador Peters.

"And the secret sauce that enables the Carter Center-assisted program to reach so many millions of people in just one week is our multiple partnerships with the Ethiopian government, the Lions of Ethiopia, and the tens of thousands of volunteers who work to make each mass drug administration more successful than the last."

The Carter Center

Trachoma Review

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region of Ethiopia. Dr. Scott Nash, epidemiologist for the Center's Trachoma Control Program, presented preliminary data on Chlamydia trachomatis infection from ocular swabs in Amhara. The ocular swabs were collected during trachoma impact surveys from 2011 through 2015. The nearly 15,000 samples were processed using the Abbott-donated 2000 system. While only preliminary data were presented during the program review, these data will play a large role as the Amhara trachoma program works toward the 2020 elimination goal.

A panel discussion on health education, moderated by Angelia Sanders of The Carter Center, highlighted the increased focus in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda on the facial cleanliness and environmental improvement components of the SAFE strategy. Staff from The Carter Center in Atlanta and Ethiopia presented findings from a study on behavior change and communication in education currently underway in Amhara and discussed how these findings are guiding revisions to the primary school curriculum. For more details, see page 3.

Carter Center partners gave several presentations at the meeting. Dionna Fry of the Francis I. Proctor

Foundation at the University of California, San Francisco, discussed conclusions from a study comparing annual and biannual treatment with azithromycin over 36 months. Dr. Anthony Solomon of the World Health Organization (WHO) presented the proposed process for validating the elimination of blinding trachoma as a public health problem. Yael Velleman of WaterAid, on behalf of WHO, discussed water, sanitation and hygiene as they relate to trachoma elimination.

Attendees agreed on general and country-specific recommendations that will guide the trachoma program over the next year with consideration for the elimination goals of each country.

organizations, and various trachoma organizations, undertook four main activities: (1) integration of face washing and trachoma messages into existing activities in Busoga and Karamoja regions, (2) revision and dissemination of school sanitation guidelines, (3) revision and dissemina

In Ethiopia, U.S. Peace Corps volunteers have joined The Carter Center and RTI International in the fight against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

A new agreement among the Center, the U.S. Peace Corps Ethiopia, and RTI International through the USAID/ENVISION project will support Peace Corps volunteers doing NTD work. Ultimately, this initiative will help strengthen the federal Ministry of Health's community-led interventions for all NTDs.

Staff from The Carter Center and RTI International welcomed a new group of 32 Peace Corps Ethiopia

New Trachoma Documentary Screened at Pfizer Headquarters

The Carter Center's Trachoma Control Program and its key partners and supporters are featured in a documentary that has aired nationally on American Public Television, covering 75 percent of its U.S. market since October 2015.

"Trachoma: Defeating a Blinding Curse" follows Carter Center staff, global health partners, and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter as they engage in a comprehensive strategy to eliminate blinding trachoma in Ethiopia. It has aired in 39 states and also has been shown at special viewings at The Carter Center and in New York City. This third film in the Global Health Frontiers series takes viewers to the front lines of a battle against the world's leading cause of preventable blindness. In March, the

film was screened at Pfizer headquarters in New York.

For seven years, a film crew followed Carter Center staff and teams of health care professionals in Ethiopia as they worked together to eliminate blinding trachoma in Amhara, the most highly endemic region known in the world. The film shows Carter Center staff working with local leaders to implement the SAFE strategy, the multipronged approach that comprises surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, and environmental improvement.

In New York, the Center joined Pfizer Inc, the Lions Clubs International Foundation, and the International Trachoma Initiative to host a special documentary screening, reception, and panel discussion. In a discussion moderated by Caroline

Roan, vice president of corporate responsibility for Pfizer, several people shared personal reflections about the film and trachoma in Ethiopia and answered audience questions: Kelly Callahan, director of the Carter Center's Trachoma Control Program; Gary Strieker, film director; Joe Preston, chair of the Lions Clubs International Foundation; and Dr. Paul Emerson, director of the International Trachoma Initiative.

"This documentary demonstrates how partners and a community can work together with proven and cost-effective strategies to prevent and control blinding trachoma," said Callahan. "Watching this film with our partners, without whom the work would not be possible, was a personally powerful and rewarding experience."

Treatments

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and Nigeria (19,573,246 treatments, 97 percent of the target), and schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminths in Nigeria (3,292,601 and 7,683,255 treatments, for 74 percent and 91 percent of the targets, respectively). In all, the River Blindness Elimination Program assisted in 58,515,448 treatments for RB, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, and soil-transmitted helminths, in addition to providing health education, in 2015.

This accomplishment would not be possible without a grassroots network of community-directed drug distributors. A combined 354,836 community volunteers were trained in 2015 in the assisted programs, all of whom were managed by district-level ministry of health personnel with the assistance of The Carter Center.

Country reports and key findings follow.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia continued its strong performance in its third year of conducting primarily twice-per-year treatments for river blindness, aggressively pursuing the national policy of onchocerciasis elimination by 2020. In 2015, Ethiopia delivered the most Mectizan treatments of Center-assisted programs; a total of 15,134,758 treatments were provided with 14 million of these in the twice-per-year strategy. Over 194,000 community drug distributors were trained, approximately 56,000 more than in 2014. The Carter Center's work in Ethiopia is based on a longstanding partnership with the federal Ministry of Health and the Lions Clubs Carter Center SightFirst Initiative.

Nigeria

Thanks to generous NTD funding from

co-implementation of malaria and LF interventions in Nigeria.

The Carter Center assisted in the distribution of 3,292,601 praziquantel

In Nigeria, Drug Distributor Bolsters Well-Being of Community

Joel Kasuwa was born and raised in Tavan Kudum village in Plateau state, Nigeria, where many people struggle to avoid neglected tropical diseases. Today he is recognized as a leader for his work as a community drug distributor.

For over 10 years, Kasuwa has worked alongside tens of thousands of community drug distributors, who are trained to go house to house offering health education and medicines to neighbors, friends, and family. They work with The Carter Center and Nigeria’s federal Ministry of Health and are on the frontline in the battle against neglected tropical diseases in their communities. Kasuwa has worked

to fight diseases like river blindness, malaria, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and intestinal worms. “Our people now experience a freedom from these diseases,” he said.

Kasuwa’s community is in one of two states in Nigeria where transmission of lymphatic filariasis, a mosquito-borne disease, has been stopped entirely through mass drug administration of donated medicines and distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets. Nigeria has the highest prevalence of river blindness on the continent, although it has been reduced significantly.

Kasuwa said he works as a volunteer because he has a sense of responsibility to his neighbors. “I am picked from among my brothers not because I know better than them or I can do better than them, but because the people of this community know me very well,” he said. “They know my commitment.”

Kasuwa sees his role as a community drug distributor as empowering his neighbors. “I love the people of my community,” he said. “I love to see the progress of my community. It boosts my morale to keep on going. It’s my contribution to their success.”



Joel Kasuwa measures a boy in Amper, Nigeria, to ensure he receives the correct dose of medication.

The Carter Center’s work is made possible through the generous support of donors like GSK, Izumi Foundation, Merck KGaA, Merck, Sir Emeka Ofor Foundation, and USAID’s ENVISION project, led by RTI International.

Tom Saater

2015: Over 75 Million Treatments

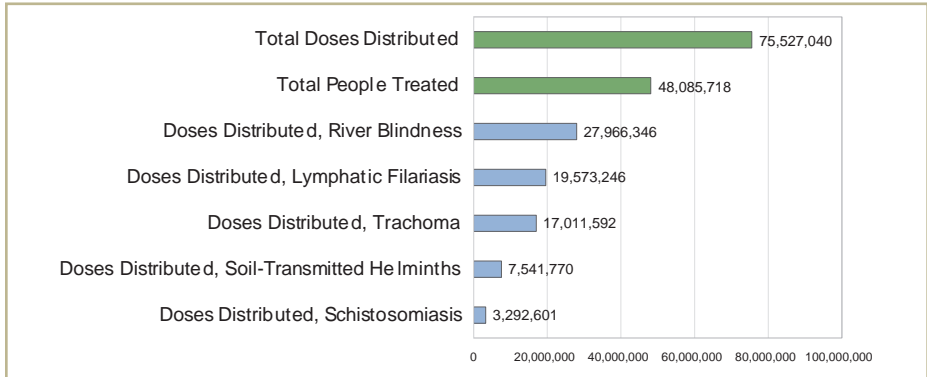


Figure 3 . Doses of treatments for neglected tropical diseases supported by The Carter Center, 2015

