

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

CONTEXT

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a group of parasitic and bacterial infections that affect approximately one billion people. They are considered "neglected" because they persist exclusively in the poorest and most marginalised populations with low visibility and little political voice. NTDs are most common in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific Island nations. Those living in remote areas with limited access to effective health care are most vulnerable to NTDs and often individuals are simultaneously infected with multiple pathogens. In recent years there has been a shift in awareness over the plight of the world's poorest people afflicted by NTDs and their consequences which can include malnutrition, anaemia, serious or permanent disability (including blindness) and death.

There has been success in the control of some NTDs such as onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis (LF). These successes have coincided with the breakthrough of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) integrated preventive chemotherapy approach to diseases including ascariasis, hookworm infections, trichuriasis and trachoma. This has provided a unique opportunity to make rapid gains in NTD control. Support for interventions against NTDs has come from a number of organisations including WHO, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, pharmaceutical companies and a number of key non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

WHAT WE OFFER

LATH and LSTM have significant experience in NTD programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), research and advocacy. Established in 2000, the Lymphatic Filariasis Support Centre (LFSC) at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) was co-funded by DFID and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to support countries implementing mass drug administration (MDA) for the elimination of LF. The LFSC was awarded a five year grant from DFID, 'Support to the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF)', to facilitate implementation, capacity building, programme advocacy, M&E, and develop partnerships to identify operational and applied research needs. As a result of its efforts the Centre was a catalyst for a number of countries launching LF elimination programmes.

Already a key partner in the GAELF, in 2004 the CNTD took over from the WHO as the GAELF Secretariat. The GAELF brings together national MOHs, WHO, the private sector, international development agencies and foundations, NGOs, research institutions and local communities. CNTD ensures that GAELF operates as an effective partnership through the development of clear communication strategies and in the organisation of key meetings for stakeholders. CNTD collaborates with GAELF academic partners to perform monitoring, evaluation and post-MDA surveillance activities related to LF elimination in countries that have completed five rounds of MDA (using tools developed through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).

The GAELF supports the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF) which has expanded LF treatments from 8 million in 2000 to 546 million in 2007. Of the 83 endemic countries, 48 countries have, or had, active programmes supported by the national MOH.

In 2005, the LFSC was awarded a second five year DFID grant 'Support to the GAELF through the LFSC of the LSTM'. This grant provided targeted country support (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Tanzania) and enabled all of these countries to expand their programmes.

In July 2008, the remit of the LFSC was expanded to become the Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases (CNTD). This expansion was based on the Centre's expertise in a range of NTDs and its capability to support, and build capacity of, national NTD programmes. The CNTD carries out operational research to support the evidence base for NTD control with an emphasis on M&E, progress monitoring tools and informing elimination strategies. CNTD also plays a key role in promoting global partnership for NTD

control by participating in, and coordinating, advocacy and resource mobilisation efforts. In 2009, CNTD was awarded a further five year contract by DFID 'Support for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (2010-2014)'.

LATH and LSTM are major partners in the current \$100 million, USAID-funded, Neglected Tropical Diseases Programme led by Research Triangle Institute (RTI). LATH provides a full-time NTD specialist in the post of Africa Regional Manager, and a range of independent specialist consultants for the delivery of TA. LATH's work focuses on the development of strategies and outcomes specific to policy analysis, advocacy, implementation and improved workforce planning, allocation and utilisation. Within the wider programme, LATH technical inputs are shaping country response to integrated NTD control in 12 countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

LSTM and LATH are founding members of the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Disease Control (GNNTDC) and have led global efforts to raise the profile and secure resources for NTD control, reflected in the substantial increases in support from USAID and DFID in recent years.

CNTD AND LATH CAN PROVIDE:

- TA for baseline studies, M&E and surveillance of NTDs
- The integration of LF elimination programmes with other parasitic disease control interventions
- Support for advocacy to increase country level commitment
- Support for endemic countries to implement MDA
- Strengthening of laboratory facilities for NTD diagnostics including building local capacity
- Operational research, through collaboration with LSTM academic partners working on other NTDs (eg the Innovative Vector Control Consortium and the Anti-Wolbachia Consortium), to address critical questions related to the integrated control of multiple diseases: eg synergies with vector control; when to stop MDA, post-MDA surveillance; cost-effectiveness analysis and characterisation of other end point indicators of improved health
- Donor liaison and advocacy – an essential liaison for communication between donors, international organisations and NGOs
- Strong links with the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) to develop a multiple disease strategy for community directed treatment.
- Programme management services for part or all of the above activities.

SELECTED RECENT EXPERIENCE

Country	Client	Date	Short Description
Global	DFID	2010-2014	Support for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis With this grant CNTD is extending support for implementation to eight countries (DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal and Zambia); providing laboratory and infrastructure services; providing TA to Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Sri Lanka; providing fellowships for postgraduate training in six endemic countries;

			planning regional workshops for training in M&E; supporting operational research to strengthen the evidence base for the implementation strategy; continuing as the Secretariat of GAELF to ensure a successful global partnership.
Ghana	DFID/GSK	2008	Filariasis Elimination Programme Impact assessment, concentrating on a mix of districts where a minimum of 5 rounds of MDA have occurred, to help the national programme make informed decisions to cease MDA.
Tanzania (Zanzibar)	DFID	2008	A triple therapy trial using three drugs, (mectizan [ivermectin], albendazole and praziquantel), which are used separately in MDA programmes, but when given together appear safe for use in populations which have previously received separate treatments of the same drugs. This was the first time the three drugs had been administered together, on a large scale in Africa, and provided a basis for expansion of integrated preventive chemotherapy for helminthes.
Vanuatu	DFID	2007-2008	A survey to measure child transmission of LF to: confirm the reduction of transmission; update the information on the LF file; support patients in caring for the affected parts of their body; monitor the progress of the elimination programme.
Sri Lanka	DFID	2007	Monitoring the effect of MDA on the microfilaria rate and density of intestinal helminthes in three to four localities in Walgama, Matara.
Global	DFID	2005-2009	Support to the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis through the Lymphatic Filariasis Support Centre of the LSTM This grant provided targeted country support to Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Tanzania, enabling these countries to expand their programmes. This grant also included named funding for the Secretariat of GAELF.
Global	USAID	2006-2011	Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases The USAID funded programme, led by RTI in partnership with LATH, represents the first large scale global effort to integrate the treatment of NTDs. The \$100 million programme provides funds to integrate and deliver treatment for five NTDs: LF, schistosomiasis, trachoma, onchocerciasis and soil-transmitted helminthes. It is expected that 40 million people will be treated over five years, coverage will be expanded to new districts and previously untreated NTDs. Programmes are being implemented through national governments, local NGOs, and community groups to ensure there is no duplication of effort. Integration efforts commenced immediately in five fast track countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Uganda) and have since expanded to Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Togo, Haiti and South Sudan.
East and Southern	Bill & Melinda	2006-07	Integrated Control of NTDs LATH prepared a protocol to estimate the cost

Africa	Gates Foundation		effectiveness of integrated versus vertical control programmes. This work was in collaboration with a number of partners including the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative, the ITI and the GAELF. Similarly, LATH assisted the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support their grantees in developing costing methods for integrated NTD control.
Kenya	DFID	2006	Mid-term evaluation of the LF elimination project in the River Sabaki area, Malindi District, Kenya.
Burkina Faso, Ghana, Haiti, India, Kenya, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UK	Gates Foundation/ DFID/ WHO	2001 - ongoing	PhD/Masters and Diploma training for students based in the UK and in-country. This is an ongoing programme of capacity development.
Global	DFID	2000-2005	DFID support to the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis The purpose of this grant was to facilitate implementation, capacity building, programme advocacy, M&E, and develop partnerships to identify operational and applied research needs. The activities of the Centre directly resulted in a number of countries launching LF elimination programmes.