

NEGLECTED DISEASES (NDs) SUCH AS INTESTINAL WORM INFECTIONS, RIVER BLINDNESS, LEPROSY, CHAGAS DISEASE AND SCHISTOSOMIASIS HAVE AN ENORMOUS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND ENTIRE COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF DISEASE BURDEN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WORKER PRODUCTIVITY AND THE INTELLECTUAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.



IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN MORE THAN 210 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE AND THEY BEAR THE BURDEN OF NEGLECTED DISEASES. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NDs TO THESE SOCIETIES IS ESTIMATED TO BE AS GREAT AS THE BIG THREE: HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA. THEY COMPRISE A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE AT ALL LEVELS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES.



**I**nvestments are needed to implement and scale up the effective strategies which are known to treat and control Neglected Diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean and to test new strategies. If we take advantage of the low cost of treating and controlling NDs and utilize PAHO's extensive networks and partnerships, expanded treatment and control and even disease elimination are in our reach. Improved control and prevention of NDs will be a major contribution to poverty alleviation and reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals.

PAHO is implementing a new integrated strategy to prevent, treat and eliminate NDs. PAHO, the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO), has been in existence for over 100 years and is recognized as the oldest international health agency in the world. We have a large network in the Americas with health agencies and non-governmental development organizations, in addition to field offices in 35 different countries.



Children in Northern Argentina about to receive deworming medicine provided by the Ministry of Health, September 2005.

**We need your support for Neglected Diseases control. Please contact:**

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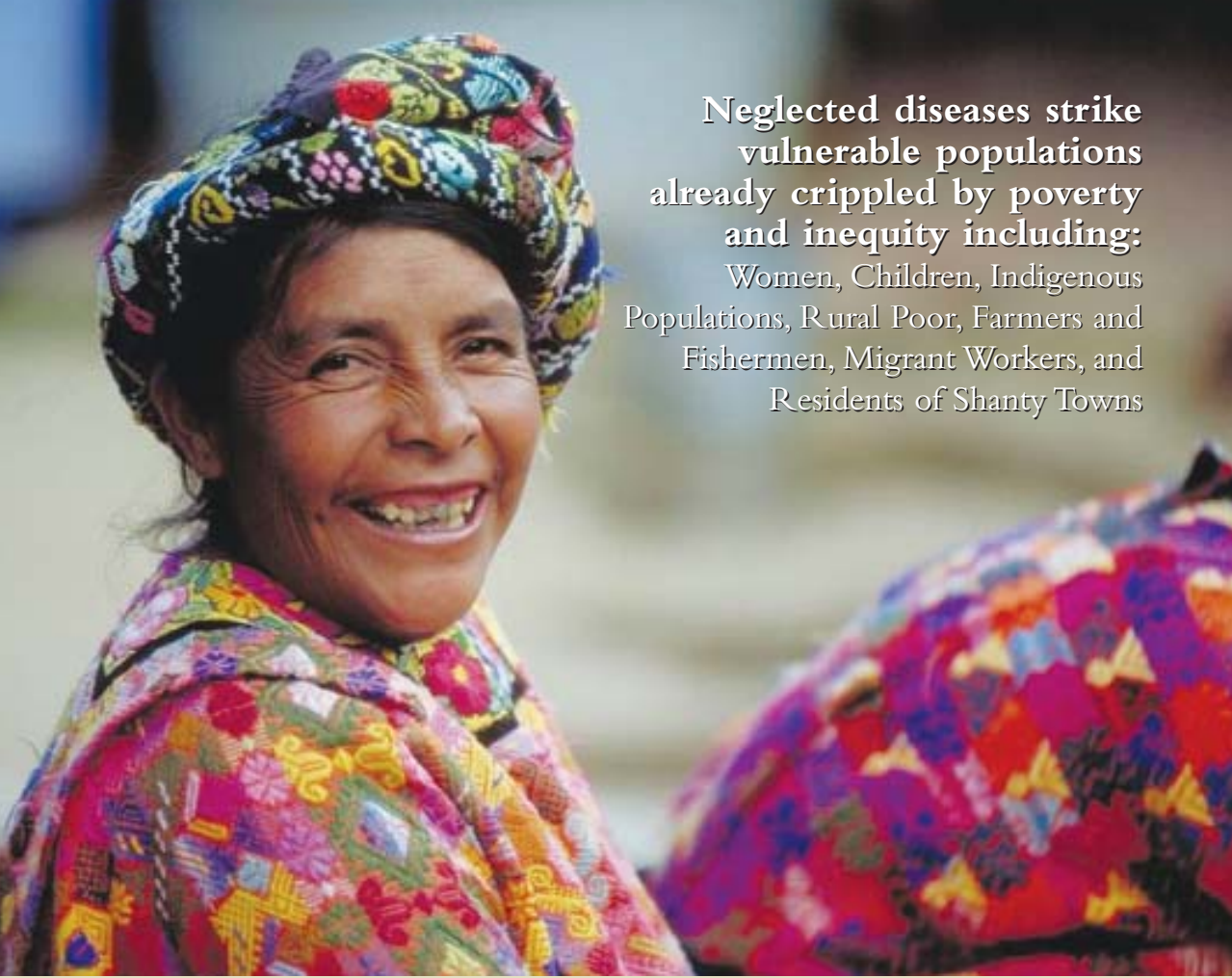
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Investing in the prevention and control of neglected diseases is a cost-effective investment in sustainable development

## NEGLECTED DISEASES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

The hidden killers of productivity and economic development





**Neglected diseases strike vulnerable populations already crippled by poverty and inequity including:**  
 Women, Children, Indigenous Populations, Rural Poor, Farmers and Fishermen, Migrant Workers, and Residents of Shanty Towns

**Important Neglected Diseases in the Americas**

*In shanty towns and slums*

- ⊙ Elephantiasis (lymphatic filariasis)
- ⊙ Weil's disease (leptospirosis)
- ⊙ Leprosy (Hansen's disease)

*In some indigenous communities*

- ⊙ River Blindness (onchocerciasis)
- ⊙ Parasitic skin diseases (scabies, sand fleas and fungi)

*In rural and agricultural areas of several countries*

- ⊙ Snail fever (schistosomiasis)
- ⊙ Liver Fluke (fascioliasis)
- ⊙ Kala-azar and Cutaneous leishmaniasis
- ⊙ Chagas disease (American trypanosomiasis)
- ⊙ Cysticercosis and Trichinosis
- ⊙ Plague

*In most impoverished populations*

- ⊙ Roundworms, hookworms and whipworms (soil-transmitted helminths)

**PHYSICAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF NEGLECTED DISEASES VARY BUT INCLUDE:** anemia; blindness; malnutrition and impaired childhood growth and development; damage to internal organs; permanent long-term physical disability and premature death. Many low-cost and effective interventions are already available to control a number of NDs, however, the majority of affected people do not have access to them.



PAHO's **integrated, intersectoral, interprogrammatic, multi-disease** approach seeks to secure sustainability of interventions used to treat, prevent and control neglected diseases and help people escape poverty traps.

PAHO's ND strategy does not simply treat disease, but also contributes to poverty alleviation and the fulfillment of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Global health issues have global consequences that not only affect those living in developing nations but also directly affect the interests of those living in developed countries.

- \* ⊙ Healthy, productive citizens are essential for global economic growth and regional security.
- ⊙ Populations which are healthy and economically stable reduce pressure on the environment and economies and reduce the risk of devastating humanitarian crises.
- ⊙ Due to the frequency and relative ease of international air travel, programs which control the spread of infectious diseases reduce the threat of infection to populations in countries in the Americas and elsewhere.

**THE IMPACT AND COSTS OF TREATING (OR NOT TREATING) NEGLECTED DISEASES**

For several NDs early diagnosis and treatment, such as deworming, combined with preventive measures reduces adverse effects on health and development.

In Brazil, over US\$1.3 billion in wages and industrial productivity were lost due to worker's infection with CHAGAS DISEASE

Brazil's Chagas Control Program prevented 277,000 new Chagas infections and 85,000 deaths. In total 1,620,000 years living with disability and illness were prevented

The Chagas control program saved US\$847,000,000 in expenditures: 64% of this in savings of healthcare expenditures and 36% in social security expenditures

LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS (Elephantiasis) is the second largest cause of long term disability resulting in US\$2 billion in lost productivity globally

Treatment with cheap drugs, hygiene and self-care to the affected limbs leads to alleviation of the pain associated with the disease, stops further development of the disease and kills the adult parasites

Countries that have successfully interrupted transmission of Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) estimate that for every dollar invested in LF elimination up to US\$15 return in benefits were observed

INTESTINAL WORMS cause malnutrition, anemia and stunting, reduce daily school attendance, and impair intellectual and cognitive development which result in low paying jobs or unemployment

Regular deworming with safe, highly effective, cheap drugs reduce worm burden in children. Children catch up in growth with their uninfected age group. School attendance and performance increase resulting in improved earning potential and productivity in adult life

In Mexico, a three year deworming intervention in one region saved US\$15 million in consultation costs alone