

VENEZUELA

Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

*A platform to bring
comprehensive health care
to the most vulnerable
communities*

Venezuela participates in the Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

Venezuela actively participates in regional efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem. In Amazonas State, three priority geographic areas have been targeted through epidemiological surveys to assess the impact of the disease. The initiative's platform has been leveraged to provide comprehensive health care to people living in situations of vulnerability, especially Indigenous women and children.

Ocular trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide. In the Americas, Mexico eliminated the disease as a public health problem in 2017, followed by El Salvador in July 2026. Guatemala and Paraguay are the countries closest to achieving validation of the elimination of the disease, which remains a public health problem in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. Other countries, such as Bolivia and

Venezuela, have communities that may require interventions. Meanwhile, the disease is suspected to be present in Ecuador, Guyana, and Panama. It is important to implement surveillance measures in these countries to confirm whether or not the disease is a public health problem.

A partnership between the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Government of Canada aims not only to eliminate trachoma but also, through the integration of activities, to strengthen primary healthcare services in the most vulnerable communities, build the capacity of Ministry of Health workers in the 12 participating countries, and demonstrate the value of international cooperation in achieving more resilient health systems and a better future for all.

The initiative is aligned with PAHO's efforts to eliminate more than 30 diseases and related conditions by 2030, through an integrated and sustainable approach that promotes collaboration across sectors and within health systems.

What are Venezuela's main advances toward the elimination of trachoma?

Between 2018 and 2019, Venezuela carried out active trachoma screening in priority communities selected based on their situations of vulnerability, such as proximity to border areas, limited access to water, and poverty.

In the initial phase, 47 communities were assessed. Based on these results, it was decided to conduct broader epidemiological surveys to confirm whether trachoma represents a public health problem in the country. These surveys covered 10 priority areas across 5 states. All of them are very hard to reach.

Venezuela has achieved the following:

- **Territorial approach:** Intervention in three priority geographic areas of Amazonas State, including riverine areas of the Upper Orinoco.
- **Coordinated action:** Strengthening of the multidisciplinary teams of the Ministry of the People's Power for Health (MPPS).
- **Community training:** Conducting workshops for health workers and communities on trachoma, tungiasis, and waste disposal.
- **Inclusion of Indigenous communities:** Building acceptance within communities by promoting women's leadership in project implementation and respecting their worldview.
- **Comprehensive health care:** More than 13,000 people have been served through the trachoma initiative's platform during health campaigns that have included vaccination, nutrition, malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, care for pregnant women, and general medical care.
- **Cultural exchange:** Implementation of 10 Knowledge Dialogues and intercultural gatherings with members of the target communities.
- **Visibility and communication for health:** Widespread dissemination of activities through official channels of the MPPS and PAHO to raise public awareness about these little-known diseases.

- **Strengthening of health teams in the integration of WASH interventions:** More than 70 people completed an online course entitled "Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health: Working together."





What key actions will Venezuela take to accelerate trachoma elimination?

Within the framework of sustained cooperation between the MPPS and PAHO, and as part of the Initiative for the elimination of trachoma in the Americas, funded by the Government of Canada, Venezuela is taking on the challenge of implementing the following actions:

- **Maintaining surveillance:** Maintain trachoma surveillance in priority areas and intervene in areas where implementation of the SAFE elimination strategy is required, overcoming limitations in the delivery of health services in these communities.
- **Completing the territorial assessment:** Conduct epidemiological surveys in the seven remaining priority geographic areas, and identify and georeference foci of active trachoma transmission.
- **Delivery and dissemination of results:** Complete the processing of biological samples, as well as the dissemination and sharing of survey results.
- **Ensuring timely surgery:** Conduct active screening for trichomatous trichiasis (the advanced form of the disease) and ensure its management in the population aged 15 and older.
- **Strategic planning:** Continue designing action plans based on survey results, micro-planning workshops, and updated mapping of key stakeholders.
- **Promoting the WASH strategy:** Implement hand- and face-washing programs in schools and communities identified as at-risk or endemic for trachoma.
- **Progress toward the regional and global goal:** Strengthen the actions needed to move toward validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in Venezuela.



For more information, scan the QR code
or follow this link:
<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/trachoma>

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