

# ADVOCACY GUIDE

CAMPAIGNING FOR AN  
AFRICA FREE OF NTDs

CRAFTING ADVOCACY STRATEGY



SpeakUpAfrica.

**NO** NEGLECTED  
TO TROPICAL  
DISEASES



# GETTING STARTED

## THE NTD LANDSCAPE IN AFRICA

Throughout Africa, countries are making progress towards NTD control and elimination goals. In 2017, Togo eliminated lymphatic filariasis (LF) as a public health problem and in 2018, Ghana has done the same with trachoma and Egypt with LF.

These successes also attest to what effective partnerships and collaborations can help achieve. Today 44 countries in Africa have developed integrated multi-year national plans, known as NTD Master Plans, and NTD programs are improving by the day.



One of the main reasons for the important progress on NTDs is that countries have translated international targets into national goals and strategies, with the support of the international community. We have seen over the years that country ownership is essential if we are to deliver tangible results at scale.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom

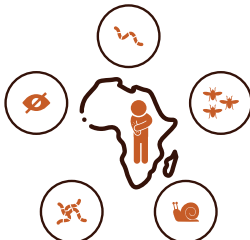
*World Health Organization's Director General*

There is a gap, however, in domestic resource mobilization and other forms of support in the countries with the heaviest burden of NTDs. NTD programmes still often do not receive the required priority in government funding. There is a critical need to scale up the advocacy and visibility of NTD programs at the national and sub-national levels.

### Overall Economic Impact

NTDs in Africa pose a critical threat to development by imprisoning the most vulnerable people in a brutal cycle of poverty and disease. Africa will not reach its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while 620 million people in Africa are affected by NTDs<sup>5</sup>. Research shows that “while NTDs do not pose an immediate threat to mortality, the disability associated with these diseases is extremely burdensome.





## 620 MILLION PEOPLE IN AFRICA ARE AFFECTED BY NTDs

They disproportionately affect the world's poor, decreasing quality of life, worker productivity, and agricultural outputs. The inescapable conclusion is that NTDs are a serious detriment to economic development in many developing nations<sup>6</sup>."

Conversely, the cost-effectiveness of NTD programs is arguably one of the best health investments in global public health today – with small investments yielding large returns. Healthy people are productive people and as countries become healthier, countries become wealthier. Evidence shows that NTD control programs increase school attendance, increase workers' productivity, arable land available for agriculture, increase income among households and improve health. This is especially true in areas of integrated programming with more than one NTD present<sup>7</sup>.



While NTDs do not pose an immediate threat to mortality, the disability associated with these diseases is extremely burdensome. They disproportionately affect the world's poor, decreasing quality of life, worker productivity, and agricultural outputs. The inescapable conclusion is that NTDs are a serious detriment to economic development in many developing nations.

05• <http://unitingtocombatntds.org/news/alma-ntds-2018/>

06• Jeremiah Norris, Carol Adelman, Yulya Spantchak, and Kacie Marano, "Social and Economic Impact Review on Neglected Tropical Diseases (2012).

07• [https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1083/social\\_and\\_economic\\_impact\\_review\\_on\\_neglected\\_tropical\\_diseases\\_hudson\\_institute\\_and\\_sabin\\_institute\\_november\\_2012.pdf](https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1083/social_and_economic_impact_review_on_neglected_tropical_diseases_hudson_institute_and_sabin_institute_november_2012.pdf)

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

### What is this Guide and Who Should Use It?

This guide provides NTD Programme managers and their teams with a model game plan for undertaking an advocacy initiative that aims to promote greater in-country support for achieving NTD programmatic goals. The guide is also useful for NTD stakeholders at the country-level who are working with the NTD programme to achieve its advocacy goals.

This guide is designed to give you, the user, clear directions for successfully arriving at the destination of effective advocacy. In this sense, the guide provides step-by-step directions for:

- Engaging in advocacy for improved policy design, including strategic integration of effort with other public health programs,
- Ensuring political, social and legislative support of NTD prevention, treatment and care as well as the time-sensitive goal of NTD elimination,
- Mobilizing domestic resources, both governmental and private, to meet unmet NTD resource requirements.

### How Will This Guide Assist You?

This guide will provide you with practical advice for:

- Defining your advocacy strategy including the objectives and the types of implementation steps that will help ensure that your advocacy initiative is successful,

## KEY COMPONENTS OF AN ENABLED ENVIRONMENT



**Political commitment  
to NTDs**



**Budget line dedicated  
to NTD control and  
elimination**



**Strong partnerships  
working in synergy  
towards NTD control and  
elimination**



- Building coalitions with government and private sector stakeholders, both decision makers and influencers to champion NTD prevention, treatment, care and elimination,
- Engaging traditional media and using social media to build popular support for NTD goals and to motivate specific target audiences, including opinion makers and public and private sector leaders to make NTD programmatic goals their priority and take the requested actions,
- Developing tools to assist stakeholders in mobilizing support and resources for NTD prevention, treatment and care as well as elimination.

## CRAFTING YOUR ADVOCACY STRATEGY

### Determining Your Advocacy Priorities by Taking Inventory of Implementation and Resource Requirements

Your analysis of a programme's progress and future resource and implementation requirements for achieving NTD elimination within a specific time frame will contribute greatly to the design of a realistic advocacy strategy. Such an analysis will give the programme a clear indication of what actions need to be asked for in its advocacy outreach.

This planning will allow for a clear view of the current NTD landscape and what it will take to achieve the elimination of NTDs by specific dates. This will allow the Programme to decide upon what sorts of further integration with other public health intervention are desirable and allows for an enumeration of current funding commitments and the additional resources that will need to be mobilized. Based on this analysis, programmes can more easily enumerate future costs and existing funding commitments in order to coordinate external and domestic funding requests.





Analytical steps for defining needs typically consist of:



1

**Identifying the programmatic needs:** Based on the best available information, identify priority areas and populations requiring NTD interventions and quantify the medicines, services and activities required for each intervention.



2

**Identifying practical and effective integration:** Identify how NTD interventions can best take advantage of parallel public health interventions and how best to integrate.



3

**Identifying what is currently financed:** Assess the commodities and activities already covered within existing systems and resources.



4

**Identifying additional programmatic and funding requirements:** Identify the commodities, services and activities that still need to be covered.

The data produced in this analysis will feed into the development of the advocacy strategy, for it will help determine what types of specific support and actions will be asked of decision makers.



## AN IDEA THAT WORKED

In Tanzania, the NTD program used NTD disease mapping as a tool to make regional political officials and representatives in the National Assembly aware of the fact that NTDs were harming people in their constituencies. This tactic helped the NTD program to obtain greater support and cooperation at the national, regional and district levels for achieving its goals and objectives.

ESPEN has created a valuable online platform that contains maps of PC-NTDs, highlighting at the subnational level the endemicity of NTDs and the status of Mass Drug Administration interventions. You can reach this portal to download useful maps at <http://espen.afro.who.int/>.

### Establish SMART Objectives

**The goal of your advocacy plan should reflect how domestic resource mobilization and integration with other public health programs contributes to the overall goals of the NTD programme.**

The advocacy objectives are the incremental steps in the overall development and implementation of an integrated NTD advocacy plan.

This table should be populated with specific goals – the description of the destination – and the objectives – the steps needed to be taken to arrive at the destination.



SMART OBJECTIVES		TIPS AND SAMPLES
(S)pecific	What in particular will be achieved if advocacy efforts are successful?	Being specific in framing one's objective helps partners and policymakers mobilize behind a desired outcome and clarifies when an advocacy effort has succeeded.
(M)easurable	To know whether expected results have occurred, quantitative or qualitative descriptors are used to frame the objective.	"Increase a budget allocation for Neglected Tropical Diseases Programmes by 5 percent in the next year"
(A)chievable	Results should be within reach.	Questions to ask when defining the objectives: Is the result achievable with available resources? Is the result possible in the time frame we have? Is there existing support for this issue, within the government and among other key stakeholders?
(R)elevant	The objective being pursued should actively contribute to the overall goal of your advocacy efforts.	There should be a plausible and close link between the planned activities, the resources available, partnerships in hand, and the desired outcomes.
(T)ime-bound	Objectives are more likely to be met when a specific date for achievement or completion is set.	Agreeing on a specific time helps with planning the deployment of resources (e.g., staff or volunteer time, finances) and activities (e.g., policy briefs, budget analysis meeting minutes).

## TIP: BUILD INTERNAL CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY

**The NTD Programme must lead the advocacy effort and take responsibility for the success of activities.**

This leadership ensures country ownership and accountability for mobilizing resources, as well as engagement of other government departments where appropriate. To exercise its leadership in NTD advocacy, it is recommended that the Country Program appoints an Advocacy Focal Person (AFP) to provide oversight and coordination of the advocacy effort.

The AFP could organize an NTD advocacy working group within the Ministry of Health that will assist the AFP in the oversight of the advocacy effort. The working group may include Ministry of Health, personnel from the Finance Department, Health Promotion and Education, pharmaceutical and supply chain, health services and the Ministry of Health office responsible for inter-governmental liaison and private sector outreach, among others. This internal working group will help assure coordination with appropriate Ministry of Health departments to assure effectiveness and compatibility of advocacy activities with other Ministry of Health efforts.



39%

of the global NTD burden occurs in Africa, these diseases destroy lives, prevent children from going to school and keep communities in cycles of poverty.



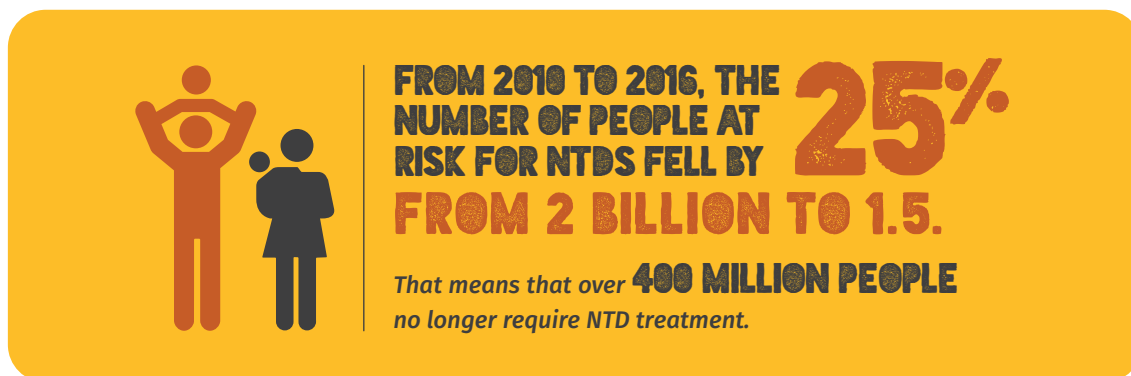
### What Needs to Be Done?

Analysing the background information you have gathered will help you identify the best policy objective(s). Ideally, your policy objective will address a gap or weakness in the existing policy environment and provide an evidence-based solution.

Developing a policy objective may be the most essential step of your campaign plan. Your objective describes the change you want to see happen and helps to identify the actions needed in order to achieve that change. You'll only want to choose actions that you're sure will advance you towards that goal.

NTD PROGRAM GOAL	NTD ADVOCACY GOAL	NTD ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES
Build a sustainable integrated national NTD control program that would eliminate NTDs in accordance with national milestones.	Create an enabling environment with adequate resources and institutional integration to build a sustainable NTD control programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase NTD programme visibility among the country's decision-makers and influencers.</li> <li>• Engage and mobilize key decision-makers and influencers.</li> <li>• Expand NTD advocacy groups to create a network of partners.</li> </ul>





As a guiding framework, check to make sure your objectives are all SMART, or Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Policy objectives should also always contain three key items:

- **A policy “actor” or decision-maker – the person(s) or decision-making body with the power to make your desired change a reality.**  
**Example:** Member of Parliament, minister, relevant parliamentary committee, sub-national legislature, or ministerial office.
- **A policy “action” or decision – the specific action you want them to take or decision you want them to make.**  
**Example:** enact, amend or repeal a policy, allocate funds, or issue a mandate to affect change.
- **Timeline for change – the date by when you want them to act or decide.**  
**Example:** the day, month, project quarter, or year.

## Determine Target Audiences

Once you have identified your advocacy objectives, the next step is to identify the target audiences. There are two categories of target audiences: decision-makers and influencers. You need to target decision-makers and influencers with the right message, on the right platform at the right time.

## Who are your Decision Makers?

Decision-makers are individuals who can take decisions that affect NTD policies, programmes and resources. They include government officials (Prime Minister or President, Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, other mid-level ministry officials, the Cabinet, parliamentarians), and funders (private sector).

Based on your advocacy objectives, it will be important to identify the decision makers and institutions that define the policies to address NTDs as a public health issue (executive, legislative, and ministry). It is also important to determine if these decisions will be taken at national or subnational levels, so that you know who to target.

You may also decide that it is important to include as part of your target audience those who may be consulted by the decision makers before they take the action that you have requested of them. This may include advisors, NGOs and research institutions. It may be important to bring them into the conversation to help ensure that your advocacy effort will be effective.

Try to understand your issue from each of your decision-makers' perspectives. What is their level of awareness and what might be their motivation for support? Understanding the decision-maker will help you figure out how to move them closer towards NTD program support.

## Who Are Your Influencers?

Influencers are individuals or groups who have access to the decision-makers and who may be able to influence them. Influencers come from across sectors, including medical associations and other health-care professionals, faith-based groups, opinion leaders, the media, international leaders, entertainment and sports personalities, academics and may include the general public especially if they vote. Again, it is important to identify key individuals, know their issue interests and understand their motivations.

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO IDENTIFY DECISION MAKERS AND INFLUENCERS AND HOW TO TARGET THEM			
	TARGET 1	TARGET 2	TARGET 3
Target Audience Ministry of Health	Minister	Head of Infectious Diseases	Head of Pharmaceutical Services
Target's Authority (low, medium, high)	High	Low	Medium
Target's Awareness of NTD Issues	Low	Medium	High
Target's Motivational Triggers	Meet SDG goals	Meet health sector targets	Integrate NTD medicines into supply chain
Level of Access	Low	Low	Low
Influencers	Donors, media	Health professional association	Pharmacies

## TIP

- The power of many voices with one message.
- Thousands of voices speaking independently can be ignored or dismissed.
- But by working together to deliver a message with one voice, advocates can make a real difference.





**NTDS KILL AT LEAST 170 000  
PEOPLE EVERY YEAR AND  
600 MILLION  
PEOPLE REQUIRE  
TREATMENT**

## Obstacles and Opportunities

Bearing in mind your goal and objectives, consider the political landscape, the opportunities and obstacles you may encounter:

- To what extent is the general public aware of NTD-related issues?
- Does the government need to be convinced that there is widespread popular support for action? Or of the economic benefits of integrated action on NTD control and elimination? Or of the political benefits that have been obtained by other countries that have taken tangible action?
- Will it be enough to communicate directly with decision-makers? Do you need to communicate with influential individuals and groups, too?
- Along with ministries of health, which other ministries can make a difference? For example, can the education and sanitation ministries take steps to improve sanitation infrastructure in schools?
- What influence does the mass media carry? What are the communication channels most commonly used by your target audience – the Internet, television, radio or print?

## Develop Key Strategies

After you identify your target audiences, you must now determine what activities or outputs are needed to achieve your objectives. The most effective activities will have an immediate and direct impact on your targets. Activities should be chosen based on the objective you are trying to meet as well as your target. It is also useful to coattail an activity around a bigger event, such as World Health Day or a global conference. This will maximize your visibility and ensure the right people are hearing your messages.



### OBJECTIVE

Increase NTD programme visibility among the country's decision-makers and influencers.



### ACTIVITY

- On World Health Day, organize a press conference to report on a success of the country's NTD program.
- Write an op-ed for a major newspaper on an NTD success story.
- Carry out a social media campaign disseminating information about the NTD program, its activities and/or successes.



## AN IDEA THAT WORKED

In Nigeria, letting political figures know that the same type of mosquito that transmits malaria can also transmit Lymphatic filariasis (LF) made them realize that they and their families were also vulnerable to LF and its disfigurements. This realization helped spur support for vector control, including the universal use of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets.



## THE POWER OF BRANDING

Creating visual products and content associated with your NTD programme — is an effective tool for awareness, recognition and also partnering. Branding is a set of associations that links your NTD programme to a graphic, to an idea and even to a partnership. Branding is an attempt to harness, influence, generate or control these associations to advance the goals of your NTD program to prevent, eliminate and eradicate these harmful diseases.

The NTD brand itself is an excellent case study in the significance of branding for creating awareness and action. Branding the various diseases into a category called “neglected tropical diseases” played a decisive role in bringing global attention to NTDs. In 2000, NTDs were not explicitly mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals. They were listed under “other diseases” in MDG 6. By 2015, NTDs had achieved its own “brand” under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), explicitly mentioned under target 3.3 of the health-related SDG3, with progress measures by “number of people requiring interventions against NTDs”.

This was a breakthrough at the highest policy level.

It was only when NTDs became “branded” that donors began to pledge billions of dollars and leaders throughout Africa have formed strategies for prevention, elimination and eradication. Branding as “neglected tropical diseases” also helped align efforts to study and treat the diseases, such as programs that simultaneously distribute drugs for five diseases at once. By creating and maintaining a consistent brand in your advocacy, the target audience will have an embedded impression of your NTD program.

There are different ways to promote your NTD programme brand in your advocacy work. The most important rule is consistency. If your program has a logo, then everything produced by the program should feature the logo. This includes brochures, policy briefs, fact sheets, press releases, PowerPoint presentations, talking points and promotional items. The logo creates an immediate visual association with the NTD program.

You can also create a tagline for your program advocacy. A tagline is a catchphrase or a slogan that, like a logo, creates an immediate association in a person’s mind. A tagline can be a few words, such as “For an Africa Free of NTDs” If the tagline is used consistently, your audiences will internalize the message.



## No to Neglected Tropical Diseases

In November 2018, the “No to Neglected Tropical Diseases” movement was launched. Through this movement, individuals, political leaders, private sector companies and civil society organizations (CSOs) come together to increase awareness, prioritization and national commitment to accelerate the control and elimination of NTDs in Africa.



Combating NTDs and reaching all communities in need can put countries on the pathway to achieving universal health coverage. Where there is poverty, NTDs are commonly an accepted part of life. But this is not inevitable, nor should we accept it. In this sense, the campaign aims to:

1. Increase overall political engagement to NTDs to increase domestic resources for NTDs;
2. Build the capacity of civil society organizations to make NTD decision-making spaces more inclusive;
3. Create an enabling environment at the national level for increased prioritization of NTD elimination.

An online platform has been developed ([www.notontds.org](http://www.notontds.org)) to enable knowledge sharing and facilitate the spread of the No to NTDs movement in Africa. It is designed for stakeholders in all African countries working on NTD control and elimination. The resources aim to support all stakeholders with NTD campaign planning, strategic partnership building, increased visibility and monitoring and evaluation.

### Visual identity



## SAY IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT!

Developing compelling messages to use in your advocacy work is critical. Each message should convey the importance of the problem, a viable solution, the benefits of solving the problem and end with a clear request for a certain action to be taken.

Messages should (be):

- Clear and direct
- Use precise language and active verbs
- Simple and able to be understood by non-technical audiences
- Evidence based and build on your program's experiences
- Action-oriented
- Suggest solutions and a request for action from your target

### How do you create your key messages?

Invest time and effort in crafting and refining strong, effective messages that will convince decision-makers and/or influencers that action is needed. Design your messages to appeal to your target audiences. Remember that it is always easier to motivate someone to act on the basis of their already existing beliefs than trying to convince them of something radically new or different.

- Consider your aims and objectives. What do you want to achieve?
- Consider your audience(s). What will motivate them to act? What benefit will action on NTDs bring them? What attitudes will prevent them from acting? Equally, consider cultural and political feelings and sensitivities. Connect to their value systems and political views. Remember that competition for the delivery of messages is intense.
- Combine the rational and logical with the emotional in order to appeal to people's heads and hearts. On NTD control and elimination, for example, you can refer to protecting future generations from preventable disabilities and stigma.



## AN IDEA THAT WORKED

In Malawi, the NTD program Manager needed government support to deliver the critical medicines and supplies sitting at the airport. He calculated the value of the medicines and supplies on the bill of lading in kwachas and brought it to the appropriate authorities. Seeing the value in national currency, government authorities were spurred into action to provide the logistical support for delivery.



- A good model is often one of problem-solution. “We are doing A because it will solve/improve problem B”; or “We want X to do Y because it will solve/improve problem Z”. Unlike education messages which attempt to explain issues and raise awareness in order to create a context for action, advocacy messages are often more persuasive and include calls to action.
- Do not use jargon or acronyms.

**Ideally, you should have one primary key message and two or three secondary key messages.**

Your primary or core message should be broad – appealing to all audiences, the theme that will hold your advocacy campaign together, simple and direct in order to gain maximum attention – you may be addressing an audience of thousands or even millions of people with widely differing views and knowledge. More technical and complex arguments can be brought in at a later stage.

Your secondary or tailored messages should support your core message and explain how it can be achieved; be concise and memorable; be targeted to the needs, perceptions and preferences of your target audiences – answering the question “what does this have to do with me?”.

It is helpful to test your messages with a focus group to ensure that the target is getting the message that is intended. A focus group is a small group of people whose opinions about the message are studied to learn the opinions that can be expected from a larger group. For example, once you have developed a set of messages, you could invite a demographically diverse group of people (e.g. men and women, young and old, urban and rural) to give their opinions about the messages (e.g. what does the message mean, what is your response to the message). Based on the different feedback from the people in the focus group, you will be able to fine-tune your messages for maximum impact.



## AN IDEA THAT WORKED



In Nigeria, including pictures of people with NTD-related disabilities in advocacy materials captured the attention of high-level political figures who were unaware of how NTDs could disfigure and impair people from leading productive lives. This new realization helped spur politicians to take the budgetary actions that were requested of them. **If you use pictures of people with NTD-related disabilities, be sure that the pictures used respect the subjects and are not offensive to your target.**

Be sure to also put a human face on the NTD story. Effective advocacy relies on conveying the human dimension of the problem; this can trigger an emotional response and create empathy in your target audience. For example, this might be a story about how physical disfigurement led a person to be stigmatized and lead an unproductive life; or how a child with an NTD was unable to attend school because of illness. With proper treatment, the child recovers and is able to be educated - fulfilling his or her potential on the path towards leading a healthy and productive life.

A set of clear messages can help you develop impactful talking points:



Have stories, arguments, evidence and data to support claims, and photographs to illustrate them. Real-life stories are a powerful way of showing why comprehensive, integrated action is vital.



Consider creating quotes.



Facts and figures are useful, but use numbers carefully – if you use too many it can overload and confuse your audience. Balance statistics with stories that convey the human cost of NTDs.

## Sample Messages



Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of parasitic and bacterial infectious diseases that affect more than **1.5 billion** of the world's most impoverished people, including **836 million children**.



**40%** of the global NTD burden occurs in Africa, these diseases destroy lives, prevent children from going to school and keep communities in cycles of poverty.



From 2010 to 2016, the number of people at risk for NTDs fell by **25%** from 2 billion to 1.5. That means that over 400 million people no longer require NTD treatment.



In 2016, NTD programs reached **one billion people** with treatment for at least one NTD.







Intestinal worms limit the educational opportunities of children by keeping them out of school and therefore damaging their long-term economic outlook.





**Onchocerciasis** also known as river blindness is an eye and skin infection caused by parasitic worms. In 2016, more than **197 million** people in **31 countries** worldwide needed treatment for river blindness, the majority of the burden occurs in Africa, according to the World Health Organization.



The five most common NTDs can be treated for less than **US\$ 0.50 person**, per year.



Women who contract **schistosomiasis** are **up to three times** more likely to contract HIV/AIDS. Prevention and treatment of **female genital schistosomiasis** is a social justice, reproductive health and **human rights issue**.



**Lymphatic Filariasis** is a mosquito-borne disease caused by parasitic roundworms. It is a serious threat to approximately 406 million people in the African Region.



Every **US\$1** invested in NTDs leverages **US\$26 drug donations** for mass treatment campaigns.



In June 2018, **Ghana** has become the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to eliminate the painful and potentially blinding eye condition **trachoma**.



**Soil-transmitted Helminths / Intestinal worms** are caused by the feces of an infected person, intestinal worms thrive in resource-deprived areas that lack proper sanitation infrastructure. More than 1.5 billion people, or **24%** of the world's population, are infected with soil-transmitted helminth infections worldwide.

