



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## ELIMINATING ELEPHANTIASIS

Indonesia has the third-largest lymphatic filariasis (LF), or elephantiasis, burden worldwide with roughly one in every three Indonesians at risk. The United States supports Indonesia's efforts to improve access to prevention and treatment, thereby safeguarding lives, livelihoods, and economic development.

A tropical, parasitic disease that affects the lymph nodes and lymph vessels, Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) is spread by infected mosquitoes. Their bites deposit a parasite that travels to the lymph system. While most cases are symptomless, long-term damage to the lymph system causes swelling in the legs, arms and genitalia. It also increases the risk of frequent bacterial infections that harden and thicken the skin (elephantiasis).

People with LF often cannot work because of extreme physical pain and social discrimination. This means they cannot put food on the table, pay their medical bills, or make meaningful contributions to the economy. But with safe, cheap, single-dose medicines and successful mass treatment campaigns, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) like LF can be prevented and eliminated.

MUHAMMAD FADLI (RTI INTERNATIONAL) FOR USAID

## ACT TO END NTDS | EAST

In Indonesia, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) “Act to End NTDS | East” (Act | East) program advances the Government of Indonesia’s ability to identify, treat, and eliminate LF. At the national level, USAID Act | East supports Indonesia’s National NTD Program to advance evidence-based strategy development, planning, coordination, and surveillance.

At the district level, USAID Act | East also supports the Government of Indonesia to implement its NTD control and elimination programs (including mass preventative treatment campaigns and disease mapping) as well as track progress towards elimination of LF as a public health problem. With key partners such as the World Health Organization, international pharmaceutical companies, and others, USAID Act | East treats and educates communities across the country. The program also helps district governments assess whether they have achieved their mass drug administration goals and, if not, determine the next best steps. Finally, USAID Act | East trains provincial and district staff and regional labs on survey implementation and supervision. All of these activities in Indonesia contribute to reducing the global burden of LF.

## RESULTS

Since 2011, USAID has been supporting the Government of Indonesia to achieve their goals for NTD control and elimination. USAID Act to End NTDS | East builds on previous USAID’s efforts, which have supported over 145.4 million treatments for LF. Through USAID support, Indonesia first began reaching all districts in need of LF treatment in 2017. To date, 128 out of the 236 endemic districts in the country no longer require mass treatment. USAID support has ensured that 71 million people are living in communities no longer requiring LF treatment, representing a 64-percent decrease in the number of people at risk of LF in Indonesia. USAID Act | East has also supported more than 22 surveillance surveys to track and verify elimination of transmission.

In 2022, the USAID Act | East program will assist the National NTD Program to:

- Organize a national workshop to coordinate and synchronize surveillance activities;
- Implement surveys to assess the impact of treatment in 35 endemic districts; and
- Train and mentor over 80 health professionals in LF survey techniques and protocols.

## CONTACT

Tim Meinke, USAID  
[tmeinke@usaid.gov](mailto:tmeinke@usaid.gov)

Jim Johnson, RTI  
[jjohnson@rti.org](mailto:jjohnson@rti.org)