



# 10 YEARS of NALA

Envisioning a world free of curable diseases that perpetuate the cycle of poverty.



נשיא המדינה  
رئيس الدولة  
THE PRESIDENT

Jerusalem, January 4, 2022

Dear Professor Bentwich and the NALA team,

I am indeed impressed with the impact NALA has made in Ethiopia, under your guidance and leadership, over the past ten years.

Reaching such a milestone, especially through the great period of uncertainty with the coronavirus pandemic, highlights both the agile approach in which you work, as well as the strength and resilience of your organisation and its partners.

Addressing the most basic needs of humanity, through improving access to safe water, educating communities, and supporting the delivery of vital medication to millions of children, is indeed impressive, and true achievement of Tikkun Olam.

There is no doubt that with every project, community, and innovation, you and your team have brought great honour and admiration to the State of Israel.

As the President of the State of Israel I want to wish NALA continued growth in your endeavours, strengthening your partner communities, and making the world a better place.

May God bless you and the State of Israel.

Yours sincerely,

  
Isaac Herzog  
President of the State of Israel



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# With Special Thanks

NALA is only able to carry out the impactful work it does with the support of our incredible supporters and partners. We are grateful to all of our donors, however our long-standing and fruitful relationships with the Pears Foundation, Sightsavers, The End Fund and Merck stand out to us as we recount the interventions we have implemented and the impact we have had on millions of men, women and children over the past 10 years.



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The Pears Foundation has supported NALA since its inception, including core funding which has allowed NALA to implement innovative pilot projects in an effort to assess different materials on the community and their impact on the prevalence of disease. With a keen interest on creating a model for trachoma elimination, we look forward to continuing our work with the Pears Foundation.

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Merck Science and Technology company, a leader in the pharmaceutical sector and the largest donor of drugs to developing countries has supported one of NALA's largest and most impact projects since 2017. In addition to expert advice, Merck has aided NALA in communicating our vision to a wider audience.

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The END Fund, despite being one of NALA's newest partners has supported several projects including the implementation of the WASH-NTD Toolkit at a national level, reaching over 100 districts thus far. Furthermore, The END Fund has been incredibly supportive during the COVID-19 pandemic whereby NALA mobilised its team on the ground to mitigate the threat.

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Sightsavers International is one of NALA's longest standing partners in the field, having implemented several of our projects with their support and expertise. From utilising NALA's expertise on the ground to implement projects, to supporting the creation of NALA's own innovative materials, our work would not be possible without their support.

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# A Message From the President and Founder

It has been my privilege to continue to lead the wonderful NALA team over the last 10 years as it spreads the message of eradicating neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) through community engagement for sustainable behavioral change.

NALA was founded with a vision and goal to eradicate NTDs in Ethiopia and as a small organization we have been able to be both flexible and innovative; an approach which characterizes our work to this day. Despite the challenges of coronavirus, NALA has continued to increase its outreach and impact and become a recognised world leader in this field.

Our response to the coronavirus pandemic was based on our fundamental belief that medicine alone is not sufficient in eradicating disease and our highly developed, holistic model of intervention that combines behavioral change, capacity-building, and community-oriented improvements to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), has proven its value.

When we set out to eradicate NTDs in Ethiopia, we aimed to fight poverty by promoting health. Ten years later, our model has succeeded all expectations, reached millions of people in Ethiopia, been adopted by the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health and gained us universal recognition as experts in behavioral change interventions and community mobilization. Furthermore, during this year we saw the realization of our novel approach for WASH-NTD coordination.

All the components that we developed for NTD and WASH, including the toolkit for WASH-NTD coordination, are optimally suited and were successfully applied to the challenges of COVID-19. NALA mobilized its team and communities to develop and disseminate the means and tools for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Looking ahead to next year and beyond, the most important lesson that COVID-19 has taught us is to continue developing the means and ways for applying NALA's tools of WASH-NTD towards their potential use in coping with pandemics that may threaten developing countries in coming years. Our future lies in continuing to be innovative and dedicated to fighting poverty and in disseminating our experience and lessons to others in Ethiopia and beyond in other countries.


Two major objectives are in my vision for the future:

- The eradication of trachoma in Ethiopia together with our long-standing supporters the Pears Foundation and a coalition of stakeholders dedicated to that goal.
- Establishing a center of excellence that will disseminate our lessons and concepts to other countries and organizations involved in the same struggle.

Thank you all for your fantastic work; both our teams in Israel and in Ethiopia for their outstanding dedication and achievements, our friends here and abroad for their continued support, and Michal Bruck, NALA's CEO, for her extraordinary and steadfast leadership and friendship, in attaining all these wonderful objectives.



Professor Zvi Bentwich



**"We aim  
to fight  
poverty by  
promoting  
health"**

# A Message From the CEO

Watching NALA grow from a revelation that began with treating HIV patients in Israel to a thriving organization that impacts the health and lives of millions of individuals has been inspiring, and I am privileged to have been a part of NALA's story for the last 8 years.

The beginning of NALA dates back to Professor Zvi Bentwich's clinical work in 1991, as part of Ben Gurion University, which led to its eventual establishment as an independent non-profit in 2011. NALA's aim is simple: create disruptive strategies of disease prevention that are adopted as best standards of practice by international actors, including the WHO and Ministries of Health.

Throughout the last decade NALA has led intense community interventions for disease prevention in hundreds of locations around Ethiopia, leading to an incredible 90% reduction average in intestinal parasites. Furthermore, NALA has supported the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health in the design and implementation of a national framework for improved sector collaboration in an effort to eliminate NTDs. So successful is the program, that Ministries of Health throughout Africa have begun to adopt the policy, with technical support from NALA guiding the intervention.

Two main factors enable NALA's continued ability to innovate and thrive: people and partnership.

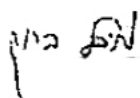
People. NALA's community of volunteers, employees, and multidisciplinary community of experts, have shown incredible commitment to understand and address the root causes of NTDs within communities. NALA to me is a close-knit family in which former workers continue as friends and advisors, providing insight into emerging ideas and innovations.

Partnership. I would like to start by thanking our longest standing partner, one that we would not be able to exist without, the Pears Foundation. Pears' core funding support has been critical, not only for survival, but also for enabling innovation and the piloting of new ideas. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Sightsavers, The END Fund and Merck KgAA, who have all been remarkable partners in creating new projects and scaling up our work at the national level.


I would further like to thank the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health for inviting NALA to collaborate with them on many different levels, with specific thanks to Biruck Kebede, Nebiyu Negussu, and Fikre Seife who have provided leadership to the NTD Sector throughout the last decade.

The last 2 years have demonstrated NALA's resilience and ability to adapt its work to emerging requirements more than ever before, with the coronavirus pandemic and the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia.

I hope you share my excitement for the next decade of NALA, one in which we aim to increase our impact through the testing of new modalities and expansion of locations, in an effort to highlight the global applicability of NALA's models.



Michal Bruck



**"Two main factors enable NALA to innovate and thrive: people and partnership"**



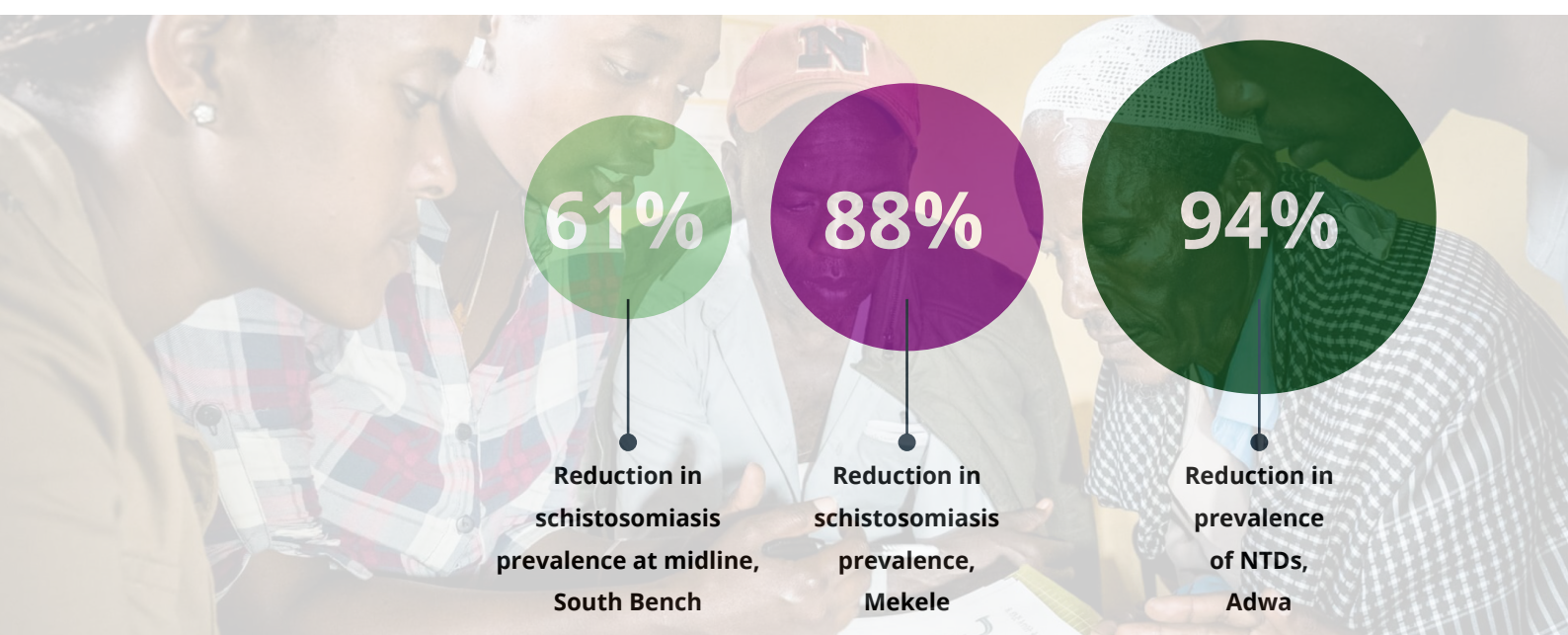
# BACKGROUND

Professor Zvi Bentwich, an Israeli physician and immunologist, was one of the first doctors to work with patients infected by HIV in Israel. It was during Professor Bentwich's work that he found the close correlation between intestinal parasites and HIV/AIDS, and realised the desperate need to eradicate neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in populations at risk of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics.

Starting in 2006, he founded Ben Gurion's Center for Tropical Diseases and AIDS and began partnering with Ethiopian stakeholders to develop a diverse range of models for the control and prevention of NTDs.

In 2011 NALA was established as an independent NGO and has continued to develop into a thriving organization, working with communities across Ethiopia as well as providing technical support and assistance to local authorities around the world.

NALA over the past 10 years has evolved, from a local volunteer-based organisation to an internationally recognised organisation renowned for its unique holistic model of intervention that employs locally-based solutions to enable communities to own and take charge of their health.



The work that NALA has done with communities has resulted in measurable reductions in the prevalence of NTDs, leading to the recognition of NALA as an expert in behaviour change and community mobilization.

NALA strives to create sustainable and long-lasting impact with our partner communities, aiding to break the cycle of poverty through the elimination of preventable and curable diseases whilst continuously maintaining our values of professionalism, integrity, partnership, humility and innovation.

# VISION AND MISSION



## VISION

Create a world free of curable diseases that perpetuate poverty

## MISSION

Break the cycle of poverty by eradicating NTDs through eliminating the root causes, leading to sustainable change and healthier livelihoods.

## CORE VALUES

**Professionalism and Integrity.** We are committed to continuous learning and improvement to provide appropriate activities in diverse environments.

**Partnership and Humility.** We create tools with our partners in an inclusive and culturally sensitive manner.

**Innovation.** We work with the community and experts to come up with new and effective ways to eradicate NTDs.







# IMPACT

**14 Projects**  
Implemented



**250 Districts**  
Receiving  
Interventions



**158 WASH Sites**  
Constructed



**12.5 Thousand**  
Individuals Trained



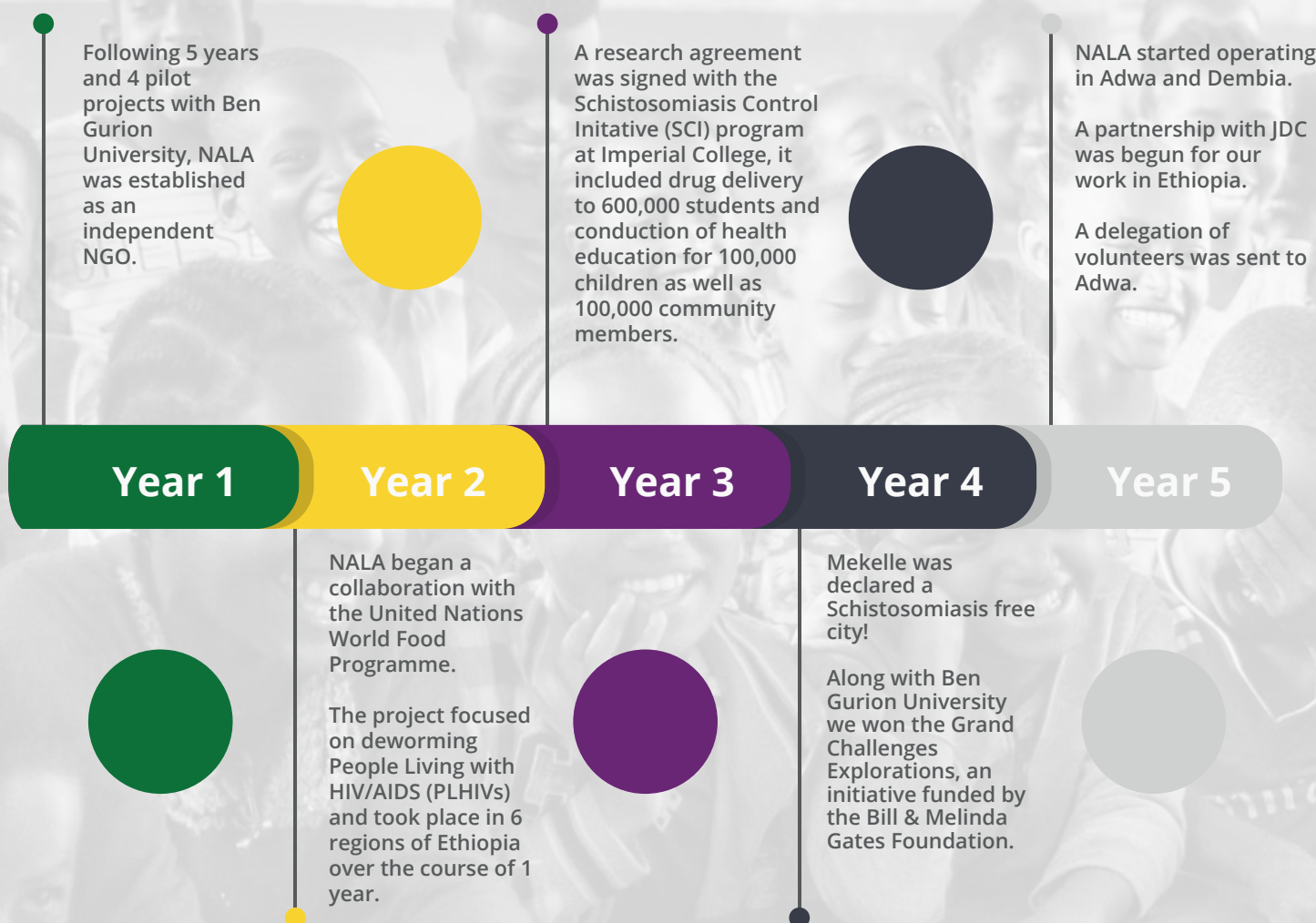
**1.5 Million**  
Children Reached



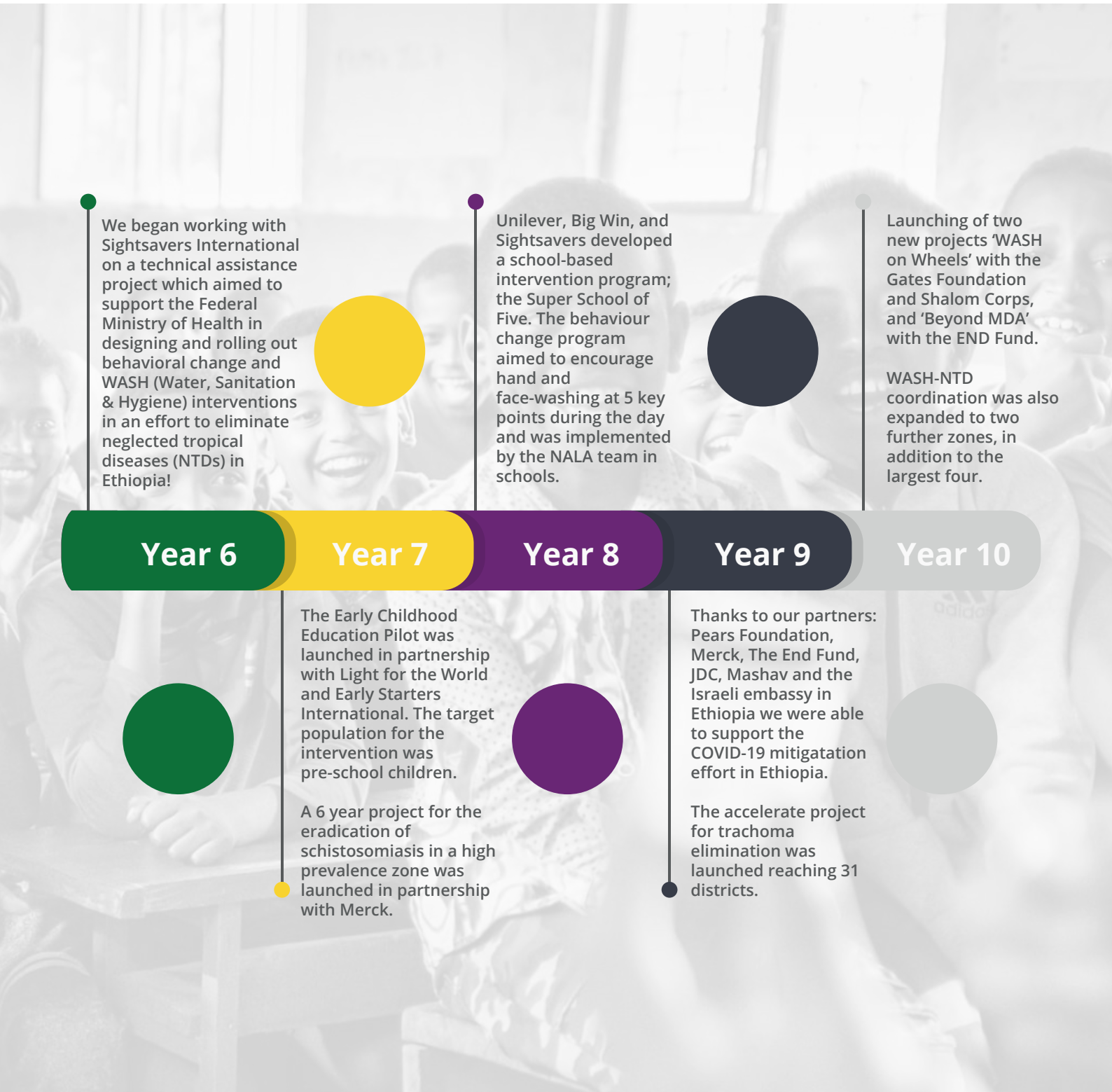
**Average 90%  
Reduction**  
in Intestinal Worm  
Prevalence in  
School Children



# MILESTONES FROM



# THE LAST 10 YEARS





# Past projects



2009 - 2014  
Mekele (Tigray)  
Deworming project



2010 - 2015  
Dembia (Amhara)  
Rural Community Engagement  
for Public Health



2012  
Gorche, Sidama (SNNPR)  
Deworming project



2012 - 2013  
Jijiga (Somali), Assosa (Benishangul Gumuz),  
Bahir-Dar (Amhara), Adama (Oromiya) and  
Mekele (Tigray)  
Pilot on the impact of Deworming with  
People living with HIV and AIDS



2012 - 2015  
Tigray (Tigray)  
Deworming project

# Past projects



2016 - 2019  
Country-wide: Tigray, SNNPR, Amhara  
Oromiya.  
Technical Assistance to Ethiopian FMoH  
on a regional level, and supporting NGO  
implementation on a zone level.



2020  
Addis Ababa, Gondar (Amhara)  
Semera (Afar), Bench Sheko, West  
Omo (SNNP), Adwa, Mekelle (Tigray)  
COVID-19 Prevention and Mitigation



2017 - 2019  
Tigray (Tigray)  
Health Education for Early Childhood  
for Trachoma Prevention



2019 - 2021  
Amhara and Tigray regions  
Super School of 5: hand and face washing  
behaviour change demonstration program



# Elimination of Schistosomiasis and NTDs in the Bench Maji Zone

At the start of 2017 there were an estimated 41.2 million individuals in Ethiopia at risk of contracting schistosomiasis, including approximately 17 million children. Schistosomiasis, a debilitating disease with long-term cognitive and physical affects is categorised as an NTD due to disproportionately impacting the world's most marginalised populations. NTDs, including but not limited to trachoma and soil-transmitted helminths (STH), tend to be grouped together in certain areas termed disease 'hotspots', where despite Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaigns, there remains difficulty in sustaining a low prevalence of infection.

One of the toughest known NTD hotspots is the Bench Maji zone in South-West Ethiopia, where over 50% of school children were reported to suffer from one or more diseases. The 'Intense Community Engagement and Education Project for Elimination of Schistosomiasis and other NTDs as a Public Health Problem' was implemented in the Bench Maji zone in collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and Merck Science and Technology in 2017. The project aimed to reduce disease prevalence by 80% in all schistosomiasis endemic woredas, as well as create a proven model of intense community engagement and education to be adopted by the Ethiopian government, over the course of 5 years.





**271****Schools receiving interventions****63,446****Community members received health education****293,024****People impacted by this project**

## **Impact in Numbers**

**8337****Households reached****144,445****Students reached****738****HEWs and HDAs participated in training sessions**

As part of NALA's ambition to improve our tools and models of intervention towards elimination of NTDs, we place a strong emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of our projects. Baseline assessments were carried out in schools at the start of the project in order to understand the prevalence and practices of the community and school children. Consequently, in December 2020, a midline assessment was carried out in the same communities to evaluate the impact of the program on disease .

The data was collected from two districts' primary school students in grades 5 to 8, and presented reductions in the prevalence of all intestinal parasites in school aged children in both districts, with a reduction to below 10% prevalence of schistosomiasis in one district, and a 61% reduction in the other. Similarly, behavioural questionnaires presented increases in the percentage of children who were aware of intestinal parasitic infection, routes of transmission and better behavioural habits.

The midline data was collected 10 months after a Mass Drug Administration campaign was held in the districts to show the true impacts of education on disease in the community. The reduced prevalence in school children, supported by increased knowledge surrounding the transmission and prevention of schistosomiasis and intestinal worms, show strong evidence for the need for health education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) improvements alongside drug delivery.

**"Strong evidence for the need for health education and WASH improvements alongside drug delivery"**



# WASH-NTD

## Inter-Sectoral Coordination for Elimination of NTDs



The Ethiopia NTD Master Plan for 2016-2020 proposed a holistic approach for NTD elimination, including investment in behavioural change alongside improvements to WASH. Through strengthening coordination between key sectors and stakeholders, in particular the WASH sector, an enabling environment for sustainable disease reduction is within reach.

In support of the NTD master plan, NALA has provided technical assistance to multiple sectors on WASH-NTD coordination in Ethiopia since 2017. This has included the creation of a WASH-NTD technical working group (TWG) which, together with the World Health Organisation (WHO), developed a national WASH-NTD coordination framework.

To support this framework, NALA and the Federal Ministry of Health created a district level WASH-NTD coordination toolkit to serve as a hands-on guidebook for district leaders of various sectors for integrated activities. In 2019, the WASH-NTD toolkit for the district level was endorsed by the FMoH as national policy. The toolkit has thus far been translated to 6 languages, including those of the 4 largest regions supported by NALA-led training which has been delivered in over 200 districts.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Baga nagaan dhufant!



In response to COVID-19 restrictions the FMoH and NALA launched an online training course for WASH-NTD Coordination. The first half of 2021 saw **94 participants** from around the world partake in the training, which an average pass score of 98%. Based on the positive feedback received from participants, the Ethiopian government requested the expansion of the online WASH-NTD Coordination to include a simulation training on the usage of government data systems for decision making and prioritisation.

NALA is aiming to integrate WASH-NTD coordination work into already implemented NTD programs throughout Ethiopia. Our project with Merck in Bench Sheko and West Omo zones (previously Bench Maji zone) in addition to project activities, has also given WASH-NTD coordination training to all districts, with post training support conducted on a quarterly basis. This approach aims to further propel intersectoral coordination and bring about a more rapid end to NTDs.

**"During the COVID-19 pandemic online trainings have enabled us to continue learning [...] the training was interesting, short, clear and gave a step-by-step tool for implementation"**

Feedback from individuals who partook in the online training





## Projects in Focus



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MINISTRY OF HEALTH - ETHIOPIA



Sightsavers

# ACCELERATE

## **Strengthening Capacity to Promote Behavior Change in Support of NTD Elimination and Control Programs**

In 2020 the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health identified a range of behaviour change interventions to be delivered across three regions of Ethiopia in support of trachoma elimination and other NTD control programs. The interventions were designed to be incorporated within existing health education and health promotion programs utilised by Ethiopia's health, education and WASH sectors.

In response, NALA supported by sightsavers, created a plethora of tools and materials to be delivered in the Southern Nations, Nationalities & Peoples' Region (SNNPR).



# INTERVENTIONS



## Gamification

Gamification is an educational strategy which engages school-aged children with entertaining games, challenges and activity booklets on the topics of trachoma prevention. The materials have been translated into over 4 languages, reaching over 60,000 students, with great feedback and responses from the schools.



## Health Extension Package

The Health Extension Program utilises an 'army' of mostly female health volunteers to reach remote area and serve the most high-need families. A training manual alongside a flipbook with illustrations were developed in conjunction with the volunteer's recommendations to ensure they met the needs of the communities.



## My Beautiful Family

My Beautiful Family aims to target behaviour change in homes through nudges (mirrors), emotions (pride) and self-monitoring. In order to ensure that the intervention is culturally sensitive and context appropriate, consultations will be held and the program will be delivered by health extension workers and the health development army.



## Sanitation Marketing

Sanitation marketing is a novel strategy to promote hygiene practises in at-risk communities through social enterprise. The intervention will be launched on a small scale to properly monitor and assess the feasibility, challenges and avoid harming other local businesses. Pre-consultations will be held to determine which products will be marketed.



# Wash on Wheels

**1 year, 300 schools, 250,000 children**

In Ethiopia only **40% of schools have sanitation services**, and **23% have access to water**. Despite the presence of water infrastructure, it is often broken or inoperable resulting in lack of access to water and high rates of NTDs amongst school children.

The WASH failure is in part a result of poor maintenance due to lack of knowledge, materials or deprioritization.

## Mobile WASH Clinics

WASH on Wheels is a vehicle staffed by skilled technicians and equipped with basic tools to ensure access to hand-washing that is accessible and inclusive to all students.

In one year, WASH on Wheels aims to:

- **Train technical teams in districts on recurring maintenance issues.**
- **Refurbish water systems for 300 schools, impacting over 250,000 students.**
- **Create a manual for best practice of basic school water system maintenance.**
- **Produce a standardized water maintenance kit, for government and NGO vehicles.**

Background assessments on targeted schools have presented over 50% of schools with no water access, despite the vast majority have a water supply to the facility. This project aims to create a standard of practice whereby local teams trained by NALA, other NGO or government partners are able to ensure access to safe water in rural schools through Ethiopia, and the world.





# Going Global

## NALA & GPM: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

A quarter of the world's children infected with intestinal worms are found in **India**, where **26% of deaths in under-14s are attributed to diarrheal disease**.

Part of a group of diseases associated with lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, intestinal worms disproportionately impact marginalized and impoverished populations. Both the cause and consequence of malnutrition, intestinal worms can be contained, prevented, and eliminated through simple and effective health measures.

To break the cycle of poverty GPM, an NGO focussed on eliminating malnutrition and improving livelihoods in the Mumbai slums and surrounding rural villages, has teamed up with NALA, to address the root causes of these diseases. Through strong and coordinated partnership sustainable elimination of intestinal worms can be achieved, malnutrition in children prevented, and the cycle of poverty broken.

### The Bal Bawaan Mission

The Bal Bawaan nutrition mission includes a comprehensive set of activities that aims to both directly treat children with malnutrition and address the root causes of diseases through health education.

The materials, developed in partnership with the community, will empower healthcare workers to improve the community's health through better understanding transmission and prevention of diseases. The collaboration of these two organizations with aligned values and approaches, including a holistic approach, implemented by local staff, offers an opportunity for change.



# Research at NALA

As part of NALA's ambition to improve our tools and models of intervention, towards the elimination of NTDs, we place a strong emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of our projects.

From initial stages of baseline assessments, in schools and communities, through on-going monitoring from the baseline of the project, through mid-line and finally the collection of data at the end of the intervention. The data is analyzed in order to improve the present, and future, project.

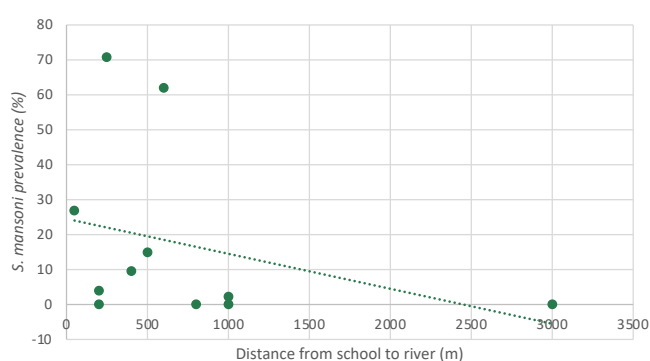
The recent expansion of our research department will allow us to better measure the impact as well as the strengths and limitations of our interventions, towards scaling them up.

Our research department collaborates with researchers from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Tel Aviv University, as well as Gondar University and Mizan-Tepi University in Ethiopia. In addition, we have established collaborations with colleagues from the Yael School of Public Health, New York University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Our research department has participated in international meetings organized by partners such as the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, COR-NTD, the Global Schistosomiasis Alliance (GSA) and the NTDs NGOs Network (NNN).

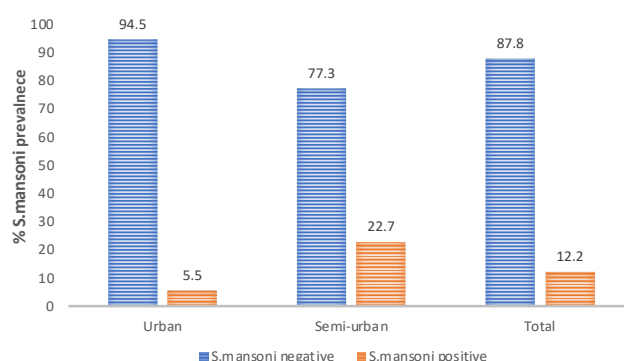
One of our main goals in the coming years is to publish our work in peer reviewed journals in order to reach wider NTD and Public Health audiences.

More recently, NALA was invited to participate in the World Health Organization (WHO) advisory committee on NTDs where we will have the opportunity to introduce our findings from our various interventions.



**Figure 1.** Distance of schools from river and *S. mansoni* prevalence in school-aged children.

The prevalence of *S. mansoni* (schistosomiasis) in school children has a strong negative correlation with the distance to the river source. This indicates the location of schools as risk factor for *S. mansoni* infection in school children.



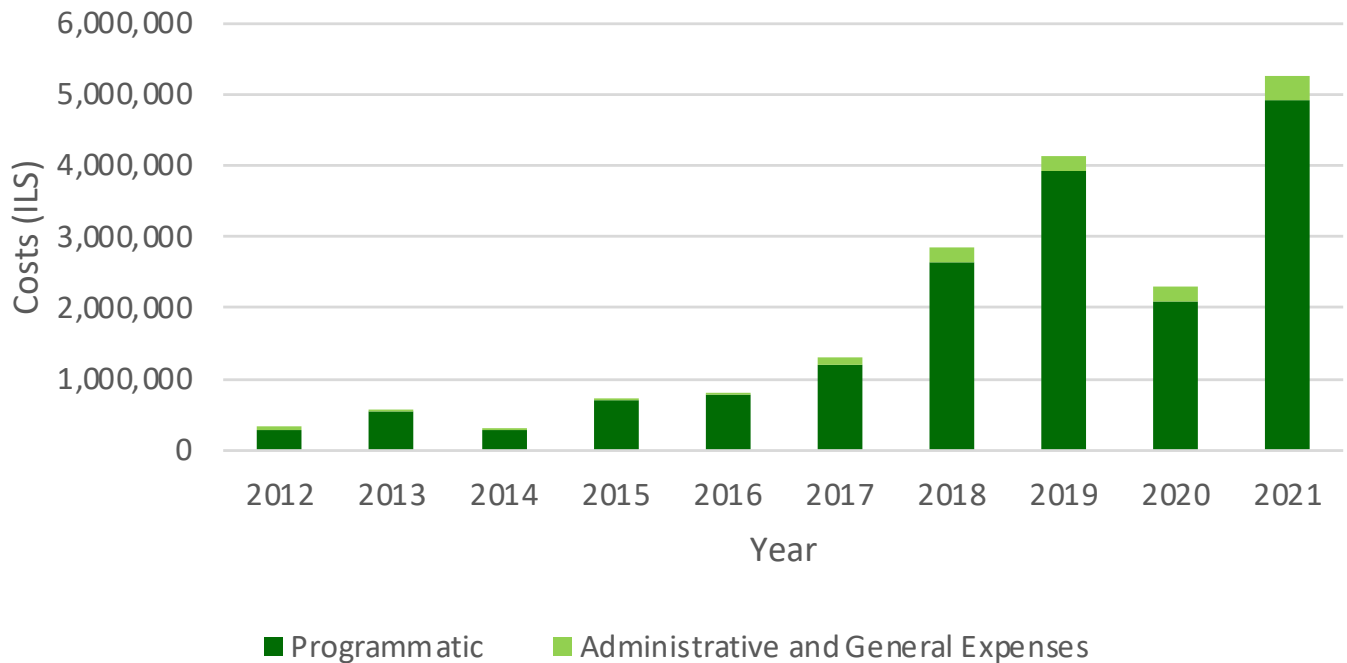
**Figure 2.** *S. mansoni* prevalence in urban vs. semi urban locations, in Mekele City, Ethiopia

Living in a semi-urban location was found as a risk factor for increased disease prevalence, compared to an urban location. Here we show positive vs. negative stool sample results for students from semi-urban and urban settings.



# A Decade of Finances

## 2012-2020 Finances



The last decade has witnessed sustained growth in the impact of NALA, reflected clearly in the number of projects on the ground and the total income each year.

Despite continued growth, the Administrative and General Expenses have never exceeded 10% of the total income, averaging at 7% each year.

Despite a stunted income in 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the halting of projects, 2021, has seen our highest income yet with a 4,918,456 sheqel total income reflective of the three continued projects and two new projects implemented in Ethiopia this past year.



# Become a Partner of Change

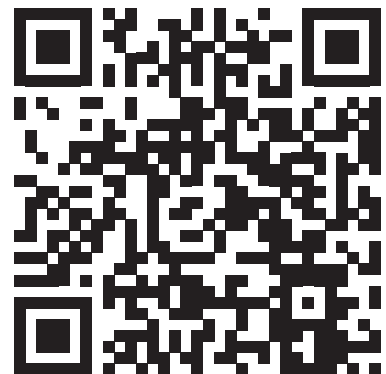
NALA works to eliminate diseases for the 1.7 billion people at risk around the world through simple, innovative, and cost-effective interventions.

So far over 2 million people have been reached, with intra and inter country expansion planned for the next decade.

Help us reach more people by becoming part of the NALA family and give children the opportunity to live a healthy life today.



Donate any currency today via the barcode to support our programs dedicated to ensuring that communities around the world are able to improve their health and break the cycle of poverty.



Donate to our Israeli charity for a tax-deductible donation via our Jgive page and support the elimination of neglected tropical diseases for the 1.7 billion people at risk today.