

The Worm Project

Combating World Hunger Through Parasite Removal

Newsletter

Issue No. 21 Spring 2022

Bridging the Gap in Deworming Coverage

Story courtesy of Vitamin Angels

Photos © Vitamin Angels MX / Rohit Jain IN21

NOTE: The Worm Project partners with Vitamin Angels to distribute deworming medicine to children under age five.

Partnerships with local governments and civil society organizations are an effective way to extend deworming coverage to children in underserved and marginalized communities.

Globally, STH affects more than 1 billion people. Extending deworming coverage to communities that are underserved not only reduces illness, it promotes health and economic equity on a global scale.

India has the world's most acute parasitic worm problem, with STH affecting 250 million children. To reduce this alarming statistic, the government of India provides albendazole tablets to children ages 1-19 through schools and anganwadi (preschool) centers.



However, universal coverage has not been achieved due to various barriers to access. Children in one region of India, for example, may have different access to government health

Worm Walk to benefit The Worm Project

When: 9 am, Saturday, May 21 (Meet at the pavilion)

Where: Franconia Community Park, 671 Allentown Road, Telford, PA 18969

Come walk with your family & friends to show support for children suffering from parasitic worms.

All Ages Welcome
(Playground, Games, T-shirts available)

Donations are appreciated.



services than children in another. This contributes to higher rates of illness, malnutrition, and other health risks. In the mountainous state of Nagaland, poor road infrastructure coupled with a history of marginalization has created challenges for residents to obtain government health services.

In an effort to improve health equity, there's been growing recognition that civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a critical role in working alongside national and local governments to reach underserved populations and provide quality health care. It's this approach to collaboration that Vitamin Angels has leveraged since inception.

To deliver albendazole to hard-to-reach districts in Nagaland, Vitamin Angels established a partnership with a local CSO back in 2011. Building upon that effort, in 2016, they began an ongoing partnership with the Nagaland State Government, in coordination with CSOs, to connect even more children with deworming tablets. Last year, through the collective efforts of the government and 15 CSO partners, 300,000 children ages 12-59 months received albendazole in Nagaland.

(continued on page 2...)



In an ongoing effort to improve program implementation, Vitamin Angels conducted a survey to identify gaps in coverage, barriers to access, and the effectiveness of its partnership model on health outcomes. Findings indicate that coverage in Nagaland increased 74.2% due to combined efforts of the government and CSOs and that the children reached were from economically vulnerable (and often underserved) populations. They continue to catalyze partnerships between government and civil society organizations to reach more children across the state, including by entering into a formal agreement with the National Health Mission to provide technical assistance on albendazole distribution best practices.

Powered by partnership, our efforts are making a meaningful impact on the lives and health of children in India. Thanks to the continued support of The Worm Project, we continue to advance access to albendazole for the children in underserved communities globally.

MAMA Project and Worm Project join forces to deworm children in the Kibera slums of Kenya!

Story courtesy of Mama Project

Photo credits: MAMA Kenya

Editors Note: MAMA Project is a locally based nonprofit dedicated to promoting Child Survival around the world.

Kibera is a huge sprawling “informal settlement” on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya. The modern city attracts families hoping to find work and a better life. But,

ironically most of the families find themselves trapped, working for meager wages, and experiencing lack of access to all of the necessities of life, including clean water, sewer systems, medical care and nutritious food. Parents are working hard to feed, shelter, clothe and educate their children. Violence, injustice, poverty, and despair are rampant, and so is malnutrition. Intestinal parasites flourish in the contaminated environment and add to the suffering and malnutrition.

The usual MAMA Project deworming strategy involves mass deworming campaigns as community outreach events, inviting everyone, assessing the growth of children, doing screening and medical care, teaching, and deworming. Then along comes COVID! The Kibera slum went into a prolonged lock-down. People could not assemble in groups for any reason.

MAMA Kenya had a dilemma. How can we get the 200,000 deworming pills donated by the Worm Project to the children during COVID lockdown? The answer was by



Children at play in the Kibera Slum outside Nairobi, Kenya
Photo Credit Ruth Cole

joining forces with others who were working in Kibera, and together training 200 Community Health Volunteers to go door to door, assess the growth of children, look for malnutrition, teach and DEWORM!

This deworming process during COVID has been a catalyst for new expanding partnerships between MAMA Project and other groups, public and private, who are likeminded and dedicated to helping the poorest of the poor. Most of the workers who went door to door are also parents raising children in Kibera. We have many stories to tell of the families that we have met, the ups and downs of their lives, and how the tablet of albendazole delivered to them by a neighbor opened the door for more help to come in.

One family in Kibera:

Miriam age 22 and Patrick age 25 are parents to twin girls who were born in December 2020. They also have an 8-year-old son who has had to drop out of school because there is no money for school fees. Both parents also dropped out of primary school.



Community Health Volunteer Rita giving nutritional counseling to Miriam, mother of Samara and Marya who are making a good recovery from malnutrition – Photo credit MAMA Kenya

Prior to the pandemic, Patrick supported the family as a casual laborer, and now even as the economy is recovering, work is scarce. Consequently, both of the baby girls became severely malnourished. The babies became stunted and under-weight and lost interest in eating. Miriam tearfully narrates the story of their suffering with malnutrition. The family, including the young children eat only one meal per day, and that is mostly carbohydrates.

This family illustrates the situation of so many in places like Kibera! Parents struggle to provide food for their children, who then have to share the precious food with parasites who have a voracious appetite. Meanwhile malnutrition makes children lethargic and parasites give children stomach pain and loss of appetite!

So, the family was dewormed with albendazole donated by the Worm Project, then enrolled in the MAMA Project nutrition program.

Miriam and Patrick now have a new support network that includes the community health volunteer, Rita, who encourages and teaches them, a support group of other mothers with malnourished children, but also the resources of deworming meds from Worm Project, and food supplement from MAMA Project! Thank you all for being part of this work of love!

Submitted by Dr. Priscilla Benner, MD; director, MAMA Project and Evelina Ndilu; MAMA Kenya Representative

Medicine Purchases

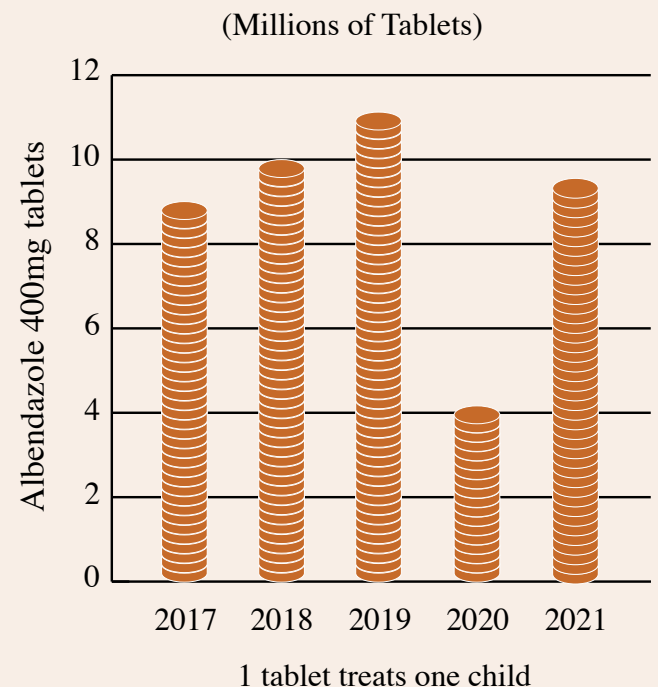
The Worm Project was able to purchase and donate enough deworming medicine to treat almost 10 million children in 2021.

Thanks to your donations, these children will grow up healthier and not have to suffer from parasitic intestinal worms.

We are thrilled with your generous response to our pleas for donations after a difficult 2020 where donations were less than half our goal. With donations still pouring in, we have been able to start off 2022 by purchasing medicine to treat another 4 million children!

May God bless your caring for “the least of these”!

*“... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
(Matthew 25:40)*



Thank You to Our Business Sponsors



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The Worm Project: What we do:

The Worm Project buys medicine to treat children infected with parasitic worms in the poorest countries of the world.

- Over 800 million children (roughly 1/4 of the world's children) are at risk of being infected with parasitic worms
 - Parasitic worms cause physical and cognitive impairment in children due to malnutrition
- The Worm Project purchased and distributed enough deworming medicine to treat 4.2 million children in 2020
- Each deworming tablet costs less than 3 cents and treats one child for parasitic worms
 - One tablet kills virtually all the worms living in children
 - Medicine is extremely effective and safe
- All-volunteer Christian organization is extremely cost effective
 - Expenses are extremely low
 - Donations are tax deductible

*"... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."
(Matthew 25:40 NIV)*



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Contact Us

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You Can Help!

Charitable donations can be made by check or through our website at wormproject.org. Debit or credit card and PayPal options are available by clicking on the **Donate** button on our website.

Checks should be made payable to:
The Worm Project
 and sent to:

The Worm Project
Mosaic Mennonite Conference
 1000 Forty Foot Road, Suite 100
 Lansdale, PA 19446