

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

HOW FIND IS ACCELERATING IMPACT THROUGH BETTER DIAGNOSTICS

Across the world, more than 1 billion people are affected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), conditions that disproportionately impact the most underserved communities. Despite decades of progress, NTDs remain a persistent health challenge, particularly as climate change and the movement of people and vectors expand disease risk and threaten to reverse gains.

Amid these challenges, **FIND plays a pivotal role in supporting global progress.** As a recognized leader in supporting diagnostic ecosystems in low- and middle-income countries, FIND works with the World Health Organization (WHO), Ministries of Health, researchers, industry partners, and other stakeholders to close diagnostic gaps, accelerate elimination, and strengthen sustainable surveillance systems for NTDs.

Our work has directly contributed to major public health milestones such as the elimination of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT) as a public health problem in Kenya, and accelerated progress toward elimination in Chad and other endemic countries. FIND is combatting visceral leishmaniasis (VL) by advancing access to timely diagnosis and supporting community care, ensuring that people in underserved populations can be diagnosed and treated earlier.

Through innovation, implementation, and strategic partnerships, FIND ensures that countries have the tools and systems needed to detect every case, protect vulnerable communities, and sustain elimination for the long term.

WHY NTDs MATTER

NTDs cause long-term disability, hinder childhood development, reduce productivity, and reinforce cycles of poverty.

- ▶ In 2021, NTDs were responsible for the loss of 14,1 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs) globally
- ▶ Sub-Saharan Africa carries the highest burden
- ▶ More than 1 billion people remain at risk of infection

Even as global attention grows for NTDs like chikungunya and dengue, the majority (60%) of NTDs lack appropriate diagnostic methods, which is a critical challenge for healthcare systems. Diagnostics receive less than 5% of total NTD research and development resources – despite being essential for controlling outbreaks, targeting interventions, and monitoring elimination.

This is why FIND's leadership is so critical.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIAGNOSTICS

Accurate diagnosis is critical to managing and eliminating NTDs. Many of these diseases share symptoms with other illnesses common in the same regions. For example, HAT and VL both cause a high fever – just like malaria – yet each requires very different treatments. When malaria is not correctly diagnosed, or is diagnosed incorrectly, it leads to unnecessary use of antimalarials and contributes to rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR).



WHAT ARE NTDs?

▶ **A group of 20+ conditions that mainly affect people living in tropical and subtropical climates. They include parasitic, viral, and bacterial infections, many of which are preventable, treatable, or eliminable with the right tools and systems.**

FIND COLLABORATES CLOSELY WITH PARTNERS TO FACILITATE:

- Development of high-quality diagnostic tools and access to them
- Training of healthcare workers to use them
- Data systems to monitor diseases
- Manufacturing capacity and supply of tests

FIND's work in closing diagnostic gaps directly advances and is aligned with the WHO roadmap for NTDs.

FIND's long-standing partnership with WHO, health ministries, and endemic communities has directly contributed to progress toward the 2030 goal of interrupting transmission.

FIND'S APPROACH TO NTDs

FIND focuses on improved solutions for diagnosis and surveillance for six diseases that lack adequate or affordable diagnostic tools:

- **Chagas disease**
- **Schistosomiasis**
- **Human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness)**
- **Lymphatic filariasis**
- **Visceral leishmaniasis**
- **Onchocerciasis**

WORKSTREAM 1

Accelerate control and elimination of 6 NTDs, aligned with WHO NTD 2030 goals

FIND drives impact through:

- **Developing new tools** to better support individual patients and population-level management for control, elimination, and surveillance programmes.
- **Leading operational research** to develop improved diagnostic strategies.
- **Supporting access** through scale-up and expansion of in-country elimination programmes.

WORKSTREAM 2

Support sustainable NTD interventions

FIND works to ensure elimination gains are sustained, through:

- **Supporting advocacy** for national funding mechanisms and **integrating NTDs** within regular healthcare services.
- **Shaping the global agenda on NTD diagnostics** through maintaining the online DxConnect test directory and undertaking other activities such as developing target product profiles.
- **Capacity building** for health systems strengthening.

DxCONNECT NTD TEST DIRECTORY

The **FIND DxConnect test directory** is a publicly accessible platform that provides comprehensive information about available diagnostics by disease. This includes where they are manufactured, their performance characteristics, and their stage of development.

The dedicated **NTD test directory** within DxConnect helps decision-makers identify gaps and priority needs, guide investment, and make evidence-based policy decisions. It is a cornerstone of global diagnostic transparency – created and maintained by FIND.

HUMAN AFRICAN TRYPANOSOMIASIS (HAT)

Since 2006, FIND has played a pivotal role in advancing global efforts to eliminate HAT also known as sleeping sickness – a fatal disease if left untreated. Through the development, evaluation, and deployment of rapid, reliable, and affordable diagnostics, FIND has helped drive a more than 95% reduction in HAT cases since the early 2000s.

FIND co-developed and evaluated breakthrough tools such as the SD BIOLINE HAT rapid diagnostic test (a game changer for early detection) that enables simpler, faster screening in remote and resource-limited environments. Frontline health workers can test patients at the point of care without specialized equipment.

In 2025, Kenya achieved the elimination of HAT as a public health problem – a milestone built on collaboration between FIND and the Ministry of Health. FIND has worked on strengthening diagnosis and monitoring its spread in endemic regions of Kenya since 2020.

FIND supports Chad's national programme to detect cases earlier, deploy improved diagnostic tools, and strengthen surveillance in remote regions where the disease persists, accelerating its pathway to elimination.

As cases decline, surveillance remains critical. FIND continues to work with countries to ensure elimination is not just achieved but sustained.

SCHISTOSOMIASIS

➤ **Diagnosis at your fingertips**

Schistosomiasis (SCH) is an NTD caused by parasitic worms that inflict long-term damage to vital organs if left untreated. More than 250 million people are affected by SCH, with around 90% of cases worldwide found in Africa.

➤ **FIND's breakthrough**

FIND is leading the development of a **sensitive rapid diagnostic test (RDT)** designed to strengthen precision mapping, and monitoring and evaluation of SCH national control efforts. By developing a test that only requires a drop of blood from a finger prick, testing is taken out of the laboratory and into the hands of community health workers.