



A SINGLE FOCUS...TO ELIMINATE BLINDING TRACHOMA

The International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) is the only global organization dedicated exclusively to the elimination of blinding trachoma, the world's leading cause of preventable blindness. ITI utilizes the World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed SAFE strategy for trachoma prevention, control and elimination: **S**urgery to correct advanced stages of the disease; **A**ntibiotics to treat active infection; **F**ace washing to reduce disease transmission; and **E**nvironmental improvement to increase access to clean water and better sanitation, which greatly reduces the incidence of blinding trachoma.

A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

ITI was founded in 1998 by The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and Pfizer Inc. By the end of 2007, Pfizer had already donated over 100 million doses of the anti-trachoma medication Zithromax® through ITI. With an annual budget of US\$7.3 million, a headquarters staff of 15, and 6 country offices, ITI is dedicated to high-impact, low-cost outreach to prevent, control, and ultimately eliminate blinding trachoma by the year 2020.

A GLOBAL IMPACT

ITI works worldwide to make blinding trachoma a global health priority and to build effective partnerships to eliminate the disease.

Building on trachoma elimination success in Morocco, ITI-supported trachoma control programs are underway in 15 countries designated by the WHO as highly impacted by blinding trachoma. This includes 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) and two in Asia (Nepal and Vietnam).

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

ITI builds its global impact by collaborating with government agencies and non-governmental organizations at the local, district, national and international levels to:

- Identify regions to target for trachoma control
- Mobilize people and resources to support community education about trachoma
- Cultivate shared ownership of the SAFE strategy and directly support implementation of the “**S**urgery” and “**A**ntibiotics” components
- Promote the “**F**acial washing” and “**E**nvironmental improvement” components
- Integrate trachoma control into approaches to eliminate other Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)
- Advocate for trachoma to be included in wider health and development agendas

A CLEAR VALUE ADDED

As a major implementer of trachoma control services and the SAFE strategy, ITI:

- Advocates and seeks funding to make Surgical services available to patients with advanced disease
- Ensures that Antibiotics to treat trachoma and break the cycle of transmission are efficiently and effectively administered
- Promotes Face washing as a shared public health value
- Supports communities making Environmental improvements such as access to clean water and sanitation

Since launching its first programs in Morocco and Tanzania in 1999, ITI has steadily expanded its worldwide efforts to eliminate blinding trachoma. Through the collaboration and work of ITI and its partners:

- More than 352,000 sight-saving surgeries have been performed and 77 million Zithromax treatments administered throughout 15 ITI-supported countries by the end of 2007.
- Morocco became the first country to complete the campaign for trachoma control in 2006, and is working to achieve WHO certification indicating that blinding trachoma has been eliminated as a public health problem in the country.
- The Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania and Vietnam are on track to complete their trachoma control campaigns by 2010.
- ITI is a lead supporter and implementer of the WHO's GET 2020 campaign to eliminate blinding trachoma worldwide by 2020.
- In Mali, ITI is researching the integration of trachoma and lymphatic filariasis (LF) elimination programs and the potential to improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by enhancing both programs' effectiveness and cost efficiency as well as lead to streamlined planning, coordination and management processes

AN APPROACH THAT PRESERVES MORE THAN JUST SIGHT

The impact of ITI's efforts reaches far beyond the elimination of blindness:

- By addressing broader poverty reduction and human development issues, the SAFE strategy improves the quality of life of millions in the world's poorest countries.
- ITI's efforts empower communities by promoting education and capacity building, and strengthening economic growth and independence.
- The elimination of blinding trachoma helps break the cycle of poverty by increasing children's school attendance and preserving parents' abilities to provide for their families.

For more information on ITI, visit <http://www.trachoma.org>.

To speak to one of ITI's experts in trachoma control, please contact Geoffrey Knox at +212-229-0540 and gknox@geoffreyknox.com or communications@trachoma.org