

Review

Contributions of the Guinea Worm Disease Eradication Campaign toward Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

Kelly Callahan^{1*}, Birgit Bolton², Donald R. Hopkins¹, Ernesto Ruiz-Tiben¹, P. Craig Withers¹, Kathryn Meagley²

¹ The Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America, ² Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America

Introduction

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The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of eight international development goals that were established by the United Nations in 2000. The goals are to be achieved by 2015. The goals are: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2. Achieve universal primary education; 3. Promote gender equality and empower women; 4. Reduce child mortality; 5. Improve maternal health; 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7. Ensure environmental sustainability; 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Guinea worm disease (GWD) is a parasitic infection caused by the Guinea worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*). It is a debilitating disease that causes severe pain and disability. The disease is transmitted through contaminated water. The Carter Center, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has led a global campaign to eradicate GWD. The campaign has been successful in reducing the number of cases from over 3 million in 1980 to zero in 2015.

The eradication of GWD has contributed to the achievement of several MDGs. First, it has helped to reduce child mortality (MDG 4) by preventing the deaths of children who were infected with the disease. Second, it has helped to improve maternal health (MDG 5) by preventing the deaths of women who were infected with the disease. Third, it has helped to reduce poverty (MDG 1) by allowing people to work and earn a living without the burden of the disease. Fourth, it has helped to improve education (MDG 2) by allowing children to attend school without the risk of infection. Finally, it has helped to improve gender equality (MDG 3) by allowing women to work and earn a living without the burden of the disease.

The eradication of GWD is a testament to the power of international cooperation and the commitment of the Carter Center, the CDC, and the people of the world to eliminate disease and improve the lives of the most vulnerable.

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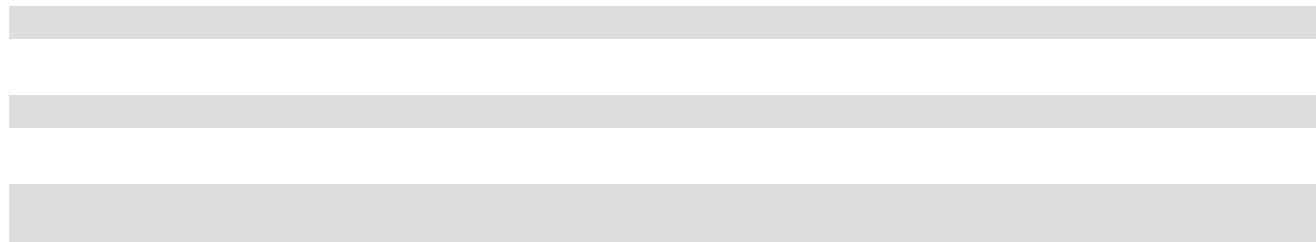
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* E-mail: ecallah@emory.edu

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Table 1. The Millennium Development Goals and Targets.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	Targets
Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty	Target A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US \$1 a day Target B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people Target C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	Target A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women	Target A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality	Target A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health	Target A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio Target B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases	Target A: Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS Target B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it Target C: Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Target A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources Target B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss Target C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation Target D: By 2020, achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers



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