



Reaching
the Last
Mile Fund

Reaching the Last Mile Fund

Progress Toward the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis and
Onchocerciasis

2024 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reaching the Last Mile Fund (RLMF)

The Reaching the Last Mile Fund (RLMF) is a global coalition of countries, donors, and partners working to accelerate the elimination of onchocerciasis (OV) and lymphatic filariasis (LF) from Africa and Yemen.

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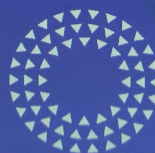
RLMF contributes to the World Health Organization (WHO) neglected tropical disease (NTD) 2030 road map, which calls for at least 100 countries to eliminate at least one NTD by 2030 and a 90% reduction in the number of people requiring treatment.

RLMF was established in 2017 by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in partnership with the Gates Foundation. Its aim was to support the elimination of OV and LF in six African countries and Yemen. In 2023, RLMF expanded to a target USD\$600M fund in support of an ambitious new vision: an Africa and Yemen free of OV and LF. Implementation of the expanded RLMF scope began in July 2024, with a rapid start-up phase in newly added countries while the broader governance structure was being designed. The expansion is being rolled out through a phased approach, allowing investments to be directed where they can have the greatest impact.

UAE | 2023 Neglected Tropical Diseases Pledging Announcement

\$777 MILLION

REACHING
the
LAST MILE
FORUM 2023



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expertise and
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Key RLMF pillars

RLMF has four key pillars in place to achieve elimination goals:



1.

Optimizing program implementation



2.

Strengthening local health systems



3.

Introducing NTD innovations



4.

Forging global partnerships

Pillar 1 remains the central priority, reflecting RLMF's core mission of driving elimination objectives.

Pillars 2, 3, and 4 serve as enablers: strengthening systems, introducing innovation, and building global partnerships to sustain the gains of elimination. They also play a critical role in advocacy for OV and LF programs, raising the visibility of NTDs and mobilizing additional resources to support these national programs.

2024 AT A GLANCE

82.9

million

treatments were distributed for OV

50.4

million

treatments were distributed for LF

7.4

million

people no longer require
treatment for LF

2,265

hydrocele surgeries
were performed

Country spotlight

6.3 million

**people in Uganda no longer require treatment for
OV**

as the country progresses toward interruption of OV transmission.



Delivering impact

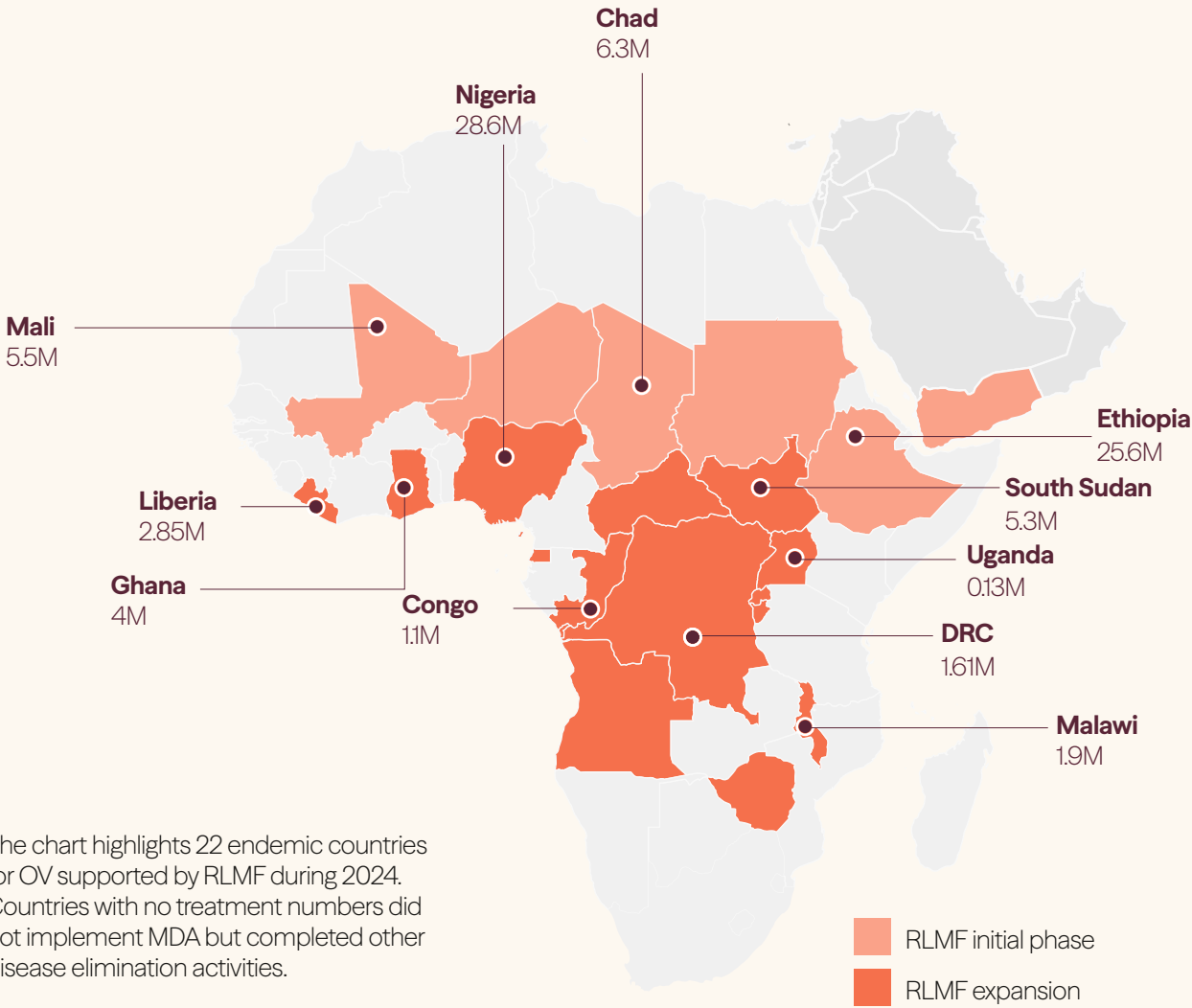
In 2024, RLMF programmed \$28M across 27 countries, providing both funding and technical support to accelerate elimination activities. Seven countries were part of the initial phase, and 20 joined during the expansion phase. RLMF supported elimination efforts, focusing on mass drug administration (MDA), impact assessments, and onchocerciasis elimination mapping (OEM). Countries supported by RLMF funding in 2024 achieved the following:

- **82.9 million treatments** were distributed **for OV** and **50.4 million treatments for LF** across the 16 countries implementing MDA in 2024 (Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe).
- For the countries added to the RLMF portfolio in 2024, MDA was conducted in 65% of implementation units (IUs) targeted to receive OV MDA and 69% of IUs targeted to receive LF MDA. In the IUs where **MDA was conducted, country programs exceeded the WHO treatment target of 80% coverage** of the eligible population for both OV and LF.
- Impact assessments showed that **7.4 million people no longer require treatment for LF** (4.6 million people in Nigeria, 1.5 million in Liberia, and 1.3 million in Chad).
- In Uganda, after a successful stop-MDA assessment in Kasese district, the Uganda Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee formally declared transmission of onchocerciasis interrupted in Kasese **after 32 years of treatment, meaning more than 6.3 million people in Uganda no longer require ivermectin for OV**.
- Insecurity and delays in drug delivery and customs clearance were the leading reasons MDA could not be implemented in some of the IUs targeted for treatment.
- **2,265 hydrocele surgeries** were performed across seven countries (Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal), supporting LF morbidity management, an important component of LF elimination goals.



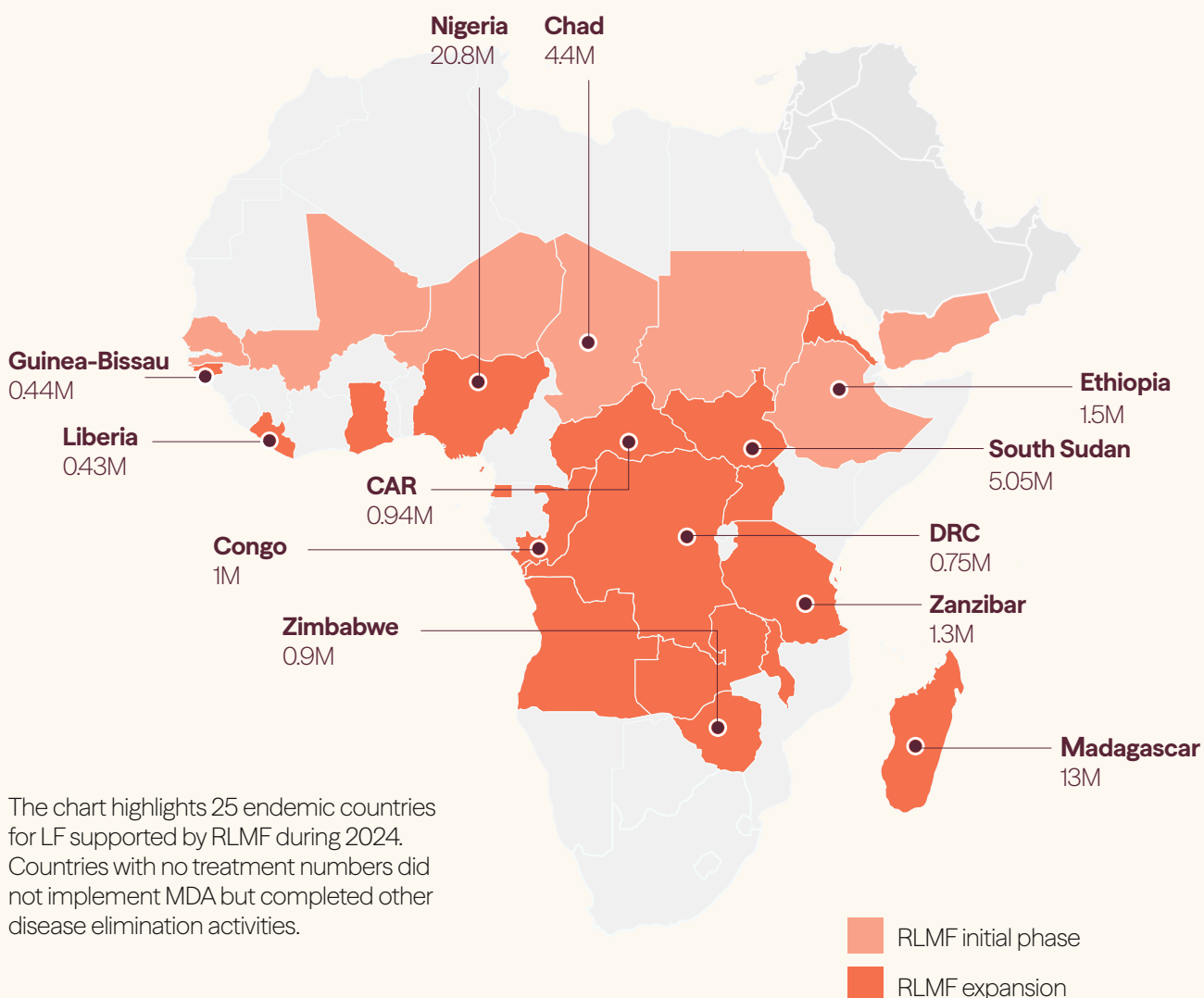
Accelerating progress towards onchocerciasis elimination

OV endemic countries supported by RLMF in 2024 and number of treatments distributed for OV (in millions)



Accelerating progress towards lymphatic filariasis elimination

LF endemic countries supported by RLMF in 2024 and number of treatments distributed for LF (in millions)



Looking ahead: challenges and opportunities

While 2024 marked an important year of progress, the scale of the expansion also brought challenges that required deliberate management. The scale-up of RLMF from seven countries to 27 represented a major change in ambition and required a careful, intentional approach. In 2024, expansion implementation was limited to six months, beginning in July, to allow RLMF to build the necessary foundations for long-term scale-up. In addition, RLMF is committed to ensuring that country ownership drives the design and decision-making of programmatic

priorities. To achieve this, RLMF carried out extensive bilateral consultations with each country that received support in 2024.

While this was a labor-intensive process, it ensured that country voices shaped the program design. The result is a co-investment model that prioritizes national strategies and needs rather than donor-driven agendas, laying the groundwork for sustainable progress.





In partnership

RLMF is supported by a diverse group of partners, including more than 20 philanthropic organizations and foundations. The anchor donors are the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity, the Gates Foundation, and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. The coordinating partners—the END Fund, The Carter Center, and Sightsavers International—facilitate implementation

in designated countries and contribute to aligning strategies and ensuring effective coordination. Looking ahead, lessons from 2024 will shape RLMF's priorities for 2025, with a focus on deeper country engagement, stronger domestic resource mobilization, and continued alignment with national priorities to accelerate progress toward elimination.



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Contact us

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