SRI LANKA

The World Mosquito Program has partnered with the Sri Lankan Government to bring our Wolbachia method to local communities in Colombo. Supported by the Australian Government, the primary goal of this project is to pilot the implementation of our Wolbachia method in Sri Lanka. If successful, it could serve as a model for future large-scale implementation as a low-cost and self-sustaining method for the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever.

In July 2017, the World Mosquito Program established a research partnership with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine to examine new, more effective ways to protect communities from mosquito-borne diseases. Our project in Sri Lanka is being established in the Colombo area, with the first mosquito releases to take place in 2020.

With 25,000 cases reported in the first 6 months of 2019, the Sri Lankan dengue epidemic has emerged as a serious public health concern.

**PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE**

After conducting laboratory studies to examine the impact of Wolbachia on dengue and chikungunya viruses in Sri Lanka, we are now engaging with the community to explain our Wolbachia method in order to gain community acceptance. If the community engagement phase is successful and we gain public acceptance in 2019, we will release Wolbachia-carrying mosquitoes in 2020.

**MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASE BURDEN IN SRI LANKA**

1 project site

19.44 km²

218,866 target population

21 project staff

3440 volunteers who released mosquitoes

2 local partners and supporters

December 2019

Colombo

Project start: 2017

Community engagement: 2018 & 2019

Collecting disease incidence data: From 2019

Release Phase: From 2020
Dengue has become a major problem in Sri Lanka. I found out that the dengue epidemic can be eradicated using the *Wolbachia* method so I feel surprised and happy. I hope this method will be successful in our country.

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**Suhail’s story**

At home in Colombo, 23-year-old Suhail knows a lot more about dengue now that nearly everyone in his family has had the mosquito-borne disease. He used to think that dengue was just a fever that comes and goes, to be treated with paracetamol, but now he knows that it can be life-threatening. Suhail’s father was working in Abu Dhabi and couldn’t make it home in time. It was the first time Suhail had ever seen his dad cry.

Now whenever anyone in the family gets a fever, they get a blood test straight away – Suhail says that the first thing that comes into his head is “what if it is dengue?” When he gets bitten by a mosquito, he thinks: “What if that’s a dengue mosquito? You can’t tell the difference between a normal mosquito and one that’s carrying dengue.”

“If the *Wolbachia* method can reduce the threat of dengue, we can sleep peacefully, we won’t have to worry so much about losing our loved ones.”

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**About us**

The World Mosquito Program is an international, not-for-profit initiative that works to protect the global community from mosquito-borne diseases including dengue, Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever.

Our approach has widespread support from communities, governments, research institutes and philanthropic partners around the world. Through collaboration and innovation, we can make a difference to millions of lives.

Currently the World Mosquito Program works in 12 countries in Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. Our ambition is to protect 100 million people by 2023.

In addition to the Oceania Office in Melbourne, Australia, the World Mosquito Program has a regional Asian Hub in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and plans for an Americas Hub in Panama City, Panama.

These hubs support projects in their respective regions and contribute to core global operations.