More than 25 million people are at risk of dengue, which is half of Colombia’s population. A number of large-scale outbreaks have occurred in recent years. The number of Zika cases also increased rapidly following a global outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease in 2015.

In May 2015, the community of Paris, in the Bello neighbourhood, welcomed the country’s first release of Wolbachia mosquitoes. This marked the first step towards establishing Wolbachia in the mosquito population and reducing the local transmission of mosquito-borne diseases.

A large-scale research trial is now underway in Bello and Medellin. As well as measuring the impact of Wolbachia on the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases, this research is expected to demonstrate a significant reduction in the number of new cases of dengue, Zika and chikungunya.

Recently, three new cities have joined this initiative in Colombia: Cali in the Cauca Valley; and Itagüí in the Aburrá Valley.

In 2019, when the last epidemic peak was recorded, Cali reported around 15,000 cases of dengue, which accounted for about 15% of the total cases reported throughout Colombia. Cali has also been affected by the most recent outbreaks of Zika. In 2016, more than 15,000 cases of Zika were reported in the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Cases</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>More than 25 million</td>
<td>Half of Colombia’s population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15% of total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medellin</td>
<td>13,336</td>
<td>93.5% Bello (Paris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bello (municipality)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medellin (municipality)</td>
<td>97%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colombia has recorded a marked increase in suspected Dengue cases since 2014 and a notable upswing in 2019. Around 20% of the total cases reported in Colombia in 2016 came from Cali, where 15,000 cases of Zika were also reported.
She was sneezing and there was a stream of blood coming from her nose. She was coughing blood. No one knows how much I suffered looking at my daughter in bed, she was so unwell, pale and very thin. The World Mosquito Program is very important to me and it is excellent!

- Dora Carvajal Perez
Medellin community member and mother of Asly

Hector’s story

Hector Álvarez is a school teacher in Bello, Colombia. He is helping to raise awareness about the World Mosquito Program in his community.

As a social science teacher, Hector is fascinated by the World Mosquito Program’s Public Acceptance Model, which is used to inform and educate the public about the Wolbachia method.

Hector caught dengue in 2013 and had a high fever, so he has first-hand knowledge and experience of the disease. When he felt like he was choking, he had to be seen quickly by nurses and doctors. He tasted blood in all his food, and lost a lot of weight.

The World Mosquito Program is working with partners and communities in Colombia across Bello, Medellin and Cali, to protect people from the suffering caused by mosquito-borne diseases, such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever.

With the help of dedicated people like Hector, we will be able to achieve our vision of a world free from mosquito-borne diseases.

Partners and supporters

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About us

The World Mosquito Program (WMP) is a not-for-profit group of companies owned by Monash University that works to protect the global community from mosquito-borne diseases. The World Mosquito Program uses naturally occurring bacteria called Wolbachia to reduce the ability of mosquitoes to transmit viruses to humans.

Following decades of research and successful field trial results, the World Mosquito Program is currently partnering with communities in 11 countries around the world to implement our ground-breaking solution. We have staff working in countries across Oceania, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, and offices established in Australia, Vietnam, France and Panama.

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