



# W H Y                      S H O E S ?

Giving opportunities for education, good health, and life-change through shoes.

Over 31% of the world's population lives on an income of less than \$2 per day indicating the inability of 2.2 billion people to afford basic necessities of life including food and clothing.<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, one-in-three children experience homelessness.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, nurses report that shoes and socks are in the "Top 5 Items Schools Need You to Donate".<sup>3</sup>

More than 1.5 billion people are infected with parasitic diseases transmitted through contaminated soil that could be prevented by wearing proper footwear.<sup>4</sup>

**Lack of proper footwear can have a negative impact on an individual's health, educational opportunities, community involvement, and economic stability.**

1. World Bank, Development Research Group. 2011.
2. American Institutes for Research. "America's Youngest Outcasts." 2014
3. Champions for Kids. "Top 10 Items Schools Need You to Donate." 2015.
4. World Health Organization. "Soil-Transmitted Helminth Infections." 2013.

## The Implications

There are many diseases contracted and spread due to bare feet and the inability of the poor to obtain shoes. The most prevalent among them are soil-transmitted helminth (STH).<sup>1</sup> STH is the most prevalent of neglected tropical diseases and is responsible for significant morbidity and, indirectly, mortality in poor developing countries.

Up to 10% of barefoot populations suffer from podoconiosis, one of the world's most neglected tropical diseases.<sup>2</sup> It is a type of endemic non-filarial elephantiasis prevalent in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroon, Tanzania, and Guinea, particularly in barefoot agricultural workers.

Hookworm is an intestinal parasite that is caused by direct contact with soil contaminated with larvae, or by ingestion of the larvae. An estimated 576-740 million people in the world are infected with hookworm.<sup>3</sup> Hookworm causes anemia, abdominal pain, diarrhea, ascites, and children may experience slow growth and mental development.<sup>4</sup>

With the recent increase in cases and severity of Ebola, one widely-circulated article claimed that walking barefoot could contribute to the spread of this deadly disease.<sup>5</sup> Samaritan's Feet hopes to do all they can do to stop the spread by providing anti-bacterial shoes that will protect feet from contaminated soil.

Once parasites enter the body, they often perforate the intestines, circulatory system, lungs, liver and other organs, and cause physical trauma. They can lump together in balls, and travel into and erode or block the brain, heart and lungs.

Because of the severity of these diseases and symptoms, individuals may not be able to safely work, go to school, travel to markets, or be involved in their community.

1. World Health Organization. "Soil-Transmitted Helminth Infections." 2013.
2. World Health Organization. "Podoconiosis: Endemic Non-Filarial Elephantiasis." 2009.
3. Global Health - Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria. "Parasites – Hookworm." 2013.
4. Delgado, Amanda. "Hookworm Infections" 2012.
5. Zocalo Public Square. "Here is One Thing We Can Do to Control the Spread of Ebola." 2014.



## The Solution

**The mission of Samaritan's Feet is to serve and inspire hope in children by providing shoes as the foundation to a spiritual and healthy life resulting in the advancement of education and economic opportunities.**

Since its founding in 2003, Samaritan's Feet has distributed and washed the feet of over 6.6 million people in over 85 different countries. Additionally, Samaritan's Feet has established regional offices in Argentina, Brazil, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, and South Africa, so that we can serve effectively on the front lines in our battle against this epidemic.

We take the responsibility and opportunity to promote good health as well as sharing hope very seriously. Samaritan's Feet partners with medical personnel and organizations in order to provide treatment, supplies, and proper medication for those in need.

In addition to providing proper footwear and washing the feet of those in need, Samaritan's Feet recently launched The World Shoe. The World Shoe is a biodegradable, protective shoe, created by Samaritan's Feet and its partners, and contains an anti-microbial element which will treat infections. This will help those already suffering from foot-borne diseases.

The solution is shoes. Shoes are needed to prevent, protect, and propel. Join Samaritan's Feet today in the effort to eliminate this epidemic and change the world forever.

