

Deworm the World Initiative

Helping governments deliver deworming treatments that improve children's health, education, and long-term wellbeing.

Recommended by *GiveWell* and *The Life You Can Save* as one of the most cost-effective interventions in the world.



About

Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative helps governments launch, scale, and sustain school-based deworming programs. For less than \$0.50 per treatment, children are freed from worm infection, improving their health and enabling them to attend school regularly.



Worms spread primarily in areas with inadequate sanitation, which primarily affect poor communities.

WHY DEWORM?

Over 868 million children globally are at risk of contracting parasitic worm infections. If left untreated, infections can lead to anemia, malnourishment, and impaired mental and physical development—ultimately affecting children's educational outcomes and income as adults.

Children can go years undiagnosed, enduring a persistent feeling of weakness and malaise, **making it difficult for them to attend or concentrate in school**. Worms disproportionately affect the poor, who are less able to afford the costs of diagnosis and treatment.

Our program brings **free treatment to children at their schools** instead of placing the burden on the families to obtain it. We partner with governments to regularly treat all at-risk children in places where at least 20% are infected with worms, as recommended by the World Health Organization.

Our Impact



1 BILLION+
TREATMENTS DELIVERED
SINCE 2014*



<\$0.50
TOTAL COST PER CHILD
PER TREATMENT



*Government reported treatment data.

How it Works

Our government partnerships work through a technical assistance model, where we support governments to design, launch, strengthen, and sustain high-quality school-based deworming programs.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY WITH GOVERNMENTS

We advocate with governments to launch deworming programs. We work closely with them to establish effective policies and operations, mobilize domestic support, and share knowledge about improving cost-effectiveness and results.

PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

We work closely with the Departments of Education and Health and Women and Child Development to design a program with joint ownership, develop operational plans and budgets, coordinate logistics, and provide on-the-ground support to ensure a high quality outcome.

TRAINING AND DISTRIBUTION CASCADE

We consistently design and support training through an efficient multi-tier cascade approach that is tailored to the local context, ensuring knowledge reaches from the national level through to the teachers and anganwadi (pre-school) workers responsible for administering deworming medication.

DRUG MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

We help governments evaluate appropriate drug treatment strategies and dosage, support drug procurement and tracking, including through global pharmaceutical donation programs, and design robust serious adverse events protocols.

PREVALENCE SURVEYS AND MAPPING

We work with epidemiologists and local partners to assess worm prevalence and intensity, obtain data to develop a targeted treatment strategy, and determine parasitological impact once programs are in place.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MOBILIZATION

We work with governments and communications experts to design locally appropriate awareness campaigns that communicate messages through a wide variety of channels to increase acceptance and effectiveness of deworming programs.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We help governments design monitoring systems to measure effectiveness in achieving intended program results. We also conduct independent monitoring to validate program results, and evaluate the impact of programs in reducing worm prevalence and intensity.



"Of the deworming charities we have evaluated, [Deworm the World] has the strongest track record of demonstrating that its programs are effective."

- GiveWell, 2018

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Independent rigorous research, including by Nobel Laureate Michael Kremer, shows that deworming leads to significant improvements in **nutrition, cognition, school participation, and future earnings.**

- + A meta-analysis found that deworming programs lead to an **average weight gain of 0.3kg in children**, equivalent to moving a three-year-old from the 25th to the 50th percentile of WHO child growth standards.¹
- + Children who were less than one year old when their siblings received deworming treatment show **significant cognitive gains comparable to between 0.5 and 0.8 years of schooling.**²
- + A randomized controlled trial in Western Kenya found that children who received deworming had a **25% reduction in school absenteeism**, when compared to those who did not.³
- + Following those same children in Kenya, researchers found that receiving two to three additional years of deworming **increased their income by 13% and consumption by 14%** two decades after treatment.⁴
- + A study using historical data from the United States in the 1910s found that parasitic worms could have explained as much as **22% of the early income gap between the North and South.**⁵

1 Croke, K., Hicks, J.H., Hsu, E., Kremer, M., & Miguel, E. (Working paper): Does mass deworming affect child nutrition? Meta-analysis, cost-effectiveness, and statistical power.

2 Ozier, O. (2016). Exploiting Externalities to Estimate the Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Deworming. World Bank- Development Research Group.

3 Miguel, E. & Kremer, M. (2004). Worms: Identifying impacts on education and health in the presence of treatment externalities. *Econometrica*, 72:159-217.

4 Hamory, J., Miguel, E., Walker, M., Kremer, M., & Baird, S. (2020). Twenty Year Economic Impacts of Deworming. *University of California, Berkeley*.

5 Bleakley, H. (2007). Disease and Development: Evidence from Hookworm Eradication in the American South. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

About Evidence Action

Evidence Action scales evidence-based and cost-effective programs to reduce the burden of global poverty. We bridge the gap between research about what works and solutions for people in need, to effectively serve hundreds of millions of people in the world's poorest places.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Grace Hollister, Chief Engagement Officer

grace.hollister@evidenceaction.org

