We are ending a major cause of physical disability worldwide.

Over 2 million children are growing up with a severe disability that prevents them from walking to school, playing with friends, or enjoying simple moments of daily life without pain and difficulty.

This condition is caused by a common birth defect, known as clubfoot, which causes one or both feet to turn inwards and upwards. Although treatment for clubfoot is widely available at birth in the US, Europe, and other wealthy countries, only one in five children in low- and middle-income countries has access to the low-cost, nonsurgical solution—a series of casts that restore full mobility and functionality to the feet for life. Many of the 2 million children living with neglected clubfoot today—who could still be treated—will endure lifelong stigma, neglect, exclusion, and poverty because of their disability.

This is a solvable problem—95% of cases can be cured for an average cost of $500—yet it remains a systematically overlooked and underfunded global health crisis.

Evidence shows that clubfoot is completely treatable for a low cost, but a lack of awareness and shortage of investments from global health funders has perpetuated this unnecessary problem for many of the world’s most vulnerable children. Clubfoot affects 1 in every 800 babies and is the most common birth defect in the US—above Down Syndrome and cleft lip—yet it has fallen through the cracks of global development, with no major donor funding the solution on a global scale. This absence of attention and urgency has compounded over time, and now millions of children are living with this debilitating condition. Millions more will grow up with its devastating consequences without additional investments.

While we cannot eradicate the birth defect, we can prevent the extreme disability it causes globally.

MiracleFeet is solving this problem by building local capacity within the existing public health infrastructure of each country where we work. We strengthen health systems to address barriers to treatment across the entire spectrum of care: mobilizing midwives and frontline health workers to identify and refer babies with clubfoot to a clinic for treatment, training healthcare providers in the orthopedic standard of care known as the Ponseti method, and collaborating with Ministries of Health and government agencies to incorporate all elements of our model into the public health system over time—ensuring national treatment systems will have the tools needed to sustainably address this problem for future generations.
MiracleFeet is mobilizing a global coalition to end this historically neglected issue. MiracleFeet is the largest organization dedicated exclusively to clubfoot disability, and we are poised to take unprecedented action toward solving this problem for every child—forever. To support this vision, MiracleFeet established its own NGO in India—MiracleFeet India—dedicated to tackling the world’s largest clubfoot population. MiracleFeet is also an engaged member of the Global Clubfoot Initiative (GCI), a 31-member clubfoot umbrella organization that provides essential medical credibility to MiracleFeet’s programs and unites the global clubfoot community for long-term sustainability.

We have shown that this is possible, and our approach is working. MiracleFeet has successfully scaled its model to 26 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In many countries, we are already reaching over 60% of all children born with clubfoot each year—proof that we are inexpensively and effectively changing lives and the status quo.

And, a 2018 external impact evaluation of MiracleFeet programs in India, Tanzania, and the Philippines validated our long-term impact on children’s lives and local healthcare provider capacity. An astounding 98% of guardians said their child’s quality of life improved as a result of treatment, and 94% of patients are always able to walk without difficulty. Treatment success rates were consistently high across every country studied, confirming MiracleFeet’s model and the Ponseti method are both highly effective and inherently scalable across diverse contexts and geographies.

MiracleFeet innovations deliver a powerful treatment at scale. Our suite of innovative tools—funded by Google.org and designed in partnership with best-in-class industry and academic leaders at Stanford, Boston Children’s Hospital, Dimagi and Suncast—facilitate our capacity to implement quality programs at scale: a $20 award-winning brace, worn at night to prevent relapse; a 3G-enabled data collection app for providers, which supports monitoring and evaluation; and an eLearning platform for training providers, built with the Royal College of Surgeons-accredited curriculum.

To support this vision, MiracleFeet established its own NGO in India—MiracleFeet India—dedicated to tackling the world’s largest clubfoot population. MiracleFeet is also an engaged member of the Global Clubfoot Initiative (GCI), a 31-member clubfoot umbrella organization that provides essential medical credibility to MiracleFeet’s programs and unites the global clubfoot community for long-term sustainability.

We have shown that this is possible, and our approach is working. MiracleFeet has successfully scaled its model to 26 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In many countries, we are already reaching over 60% of all children born with clubfoot each year—proof that we are inexpensively and effectively changing lives and the status quo.

And, a 2018 external impact evaluation of MiracleFeet programs in India, Tanzania, and the Philippines validated our long-term impact on children’s lives and local healthcare provider capacity. An astounding 98% of guardians said their child’s quality of life improved as a result of treatment, and 94% of patients are always able to walk without difficulty. Treatment success rates were consistently high across every country studied, confirming MiracleFeet’s model and the Ponseti method are both highly effective and inherently scalable across diverse contexts and geographies.

MiracleFeet innovations deliver a powerful treatment at scale. Our suite of innovative tools—funded by Google.org and designed in partnership with best-in-class industry and academic leaders at Stanford, Boston Children’s Hospital, Dimagi and Suncast—facilitate our capacity to implement quality programs at scale: a $20 award-winning brace, worn at night to prevent relapse; a 3G-enabled data collection app for providers, which supports monitoring and evaluation; and an eLearning platform for training providers, built with the Royal College of Surgeons-accredited curriculum.

Together, this is a problem we can solve in our lifetimes.

The following opportunities to join our global movement will have transformative impact on MiracleFeet’s programs—and vulnerable children’s lives—over a 2-5-year period.

$1 million will build capacity for scale in Nigeria, the largest population in Africa, where 9,000+ babies are born with clubfoot every year. MiracleFeet’s program in Nigeria is currently reaching 2% of babies who need treatment, and rising population and birth rates will only heighten the clubfoot burden in Nigeria over time. 864 million births in Nigeria are expected by 2100—over 1 million of them with clubfoot. Until a comprehensive system is established, the urgency and demand to identify and treat babies born with clubfoot in Nigeria will grow exponentially.

$5 million will accelerate our work to scale treatment systems throughout MiracleFeet’s highest priority countries in Asia—India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines—where 42,000 children are born with clubfoot every year. Investments will strengthen in-country infrastructure, bolster regional teams, increase local provider training and capacity building, and stimulate clinic and enrollment growth in these high-need countries, together representing 25% of the global clubfoot burden.

$10 million will be catalytic for systemic change throughout MiracleFeet’s highest priority programs in India, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda, where 56,000 children are born with clubfoot every year—comprising a third of the global burden of neglected clubfoot cases. A commitment at this level will not only support comprehensive systems to treat future generations of children born with clubfoot in these countries, but it will lay the groundwork for global scale and structural improvements in the broader clubfoot landscape. A joint effort between MiracleFeet entities will drive large-scale bottom-up implementation through local country partnerships, while GCI’s commitment to advocacy and provider capacity, training, and mentorship will ensure our solution affects long-term global transformation.

A $500 TREATMENT provides full, lasting mobility in 95% of cases

175,000 BABIES are born with clubfoot every year

Fewer than 1 IN 5 HAVE ACCESS to treatment globally

For a child born with clubfoot, treatment levels the field. It unlocks doors to education and economic opportunity—for life. Few investments have this kind of impact on a child’s future.

www.miraclefeet.org
February 2020