A step in the right direction

In Ethiopia over 150,000 men, women and children have contracted podoconiosis, a disease characterised by swelling and mossy, painful bumps on the feet and legs. The Mossy Foot Project provides vital medical treatment and holistic support for sufferers and their families.

The Mossy Foot Project

In 1997, Dr Nathan Barlow founded The Mossy Foot Project to treat and care for those affected by podoconiosis, with the long-term goal of eradicating the disease altogether. This non-profit organisation centred in Soddo, Ethiopia, provides indispensable medical treatment and advice to mossy foot patients. A collaborative effort between the US and Ethiopia, the Project has set up 16 rural clinics to administer life-changing treatments, and opened a shoe shop to provide patients with oversized shoes to accommodate the burdensome foot deformities linked to the disease. In severe cases of untreatable podoconiosis, patients are referred for surgery and subsequently supported throughout the recovery process.

In addition to the provision of vital medical attention, social and spiritual counselling is available to both patients and their families, to ensure they are able to effectively cope with the effects of the disease. Patients learn how to reduce symptoms and are given empowering vocational training to establish a means of livelihood for themselves. The Project even provides financial support for recovering patients, offering them micro-loans to start up their own small businesses once they are fit to work.

Another key component of The Mossy Foot Project’s activity in Ethiopia is education. Clinic workers teach the community the importance of wearing shoes, which can completely eliminate the disease. The Project also distributes shoes to children, especially children of existing patients who are more likely to be genetically predisposed to the disease.

The Mossy Foot Project has also begun building homes for widows and abandoned women with mossy foot disease. These women, who often have children to support, are left with no shelter, food or care. The Project thus partners with the community to provide resources for the construction of the necessary infrastructure while the community provides the labour.

Support the Cause

The Mossy Foot Project relies on donations to provide patients with the care they desperately need. To make a donation, please visit www.globalgiving.org/projects/mossyfoot. US $15 provides a clinic with bars of soap for a month and $100 provides 200 pairs of shoes for children of mossy foot families. The Project aims to increase its treatment capacity, and the dissemination of its work could lead to successful practices in other regions and countries. The dedicated staff work in the belief that podoconiosis could be completely eradicated in the next 15-20 years.

About GlobalGiving

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