

First launched in 2008 by Nobel Laureates Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer, [the Deworm the World Initiative](#) is one of Evidence Action's flagship programs. It works with governments to rapidly scale and institutionalize school-based deworming programs that improve children's health, education, and long-term wellbeing. These government-run, school-based deworming programs use trusted teachers to deliver free medication, donated by large pharmaceuticals, to children. The World Health Organization [recognizes large scale deworming as the standard of clinical treatment](#) in endemic areas.

Deworm the World: Key facts

In 2018, **over 280 million children** were reported to have received free deworming treatment with support from Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative. On average, the program's total delivery cost is **less than US 50 cents per treatment**. The program currently partners with governments in India, Kenya, Pakistan, and Nigeria, and has previously supported Ethiopia and Vietnam.

The Problem: Parasitic Worm Infections

1. Globally, [over 1.5 million people are infected](#) with soil-transmitted helminths, parasitic worms transmitted by eggs present in human feces that contaminate soil in low-sanitation areas. Over 800 million children are at risk.
2. Parasitic worms [affect children's nutritional uptake](#), can lead to anemia, and undermine cognitive and physical development, which in turn affects kids' overall health. [Worm infections are estimated to cause a loss of 200 to 524 million years of primary schooling](#).

The Evidence for School-Based Deworming

- Deworming is proven to have positive effects on children's nutrition, cognition, school attendance (and long-term performance), and long-run income potential. It is one of the most cost-effective interventions to increase school participation. Duflo and Banerjee's Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT (J-PAL) [lists mass school-based deworming as a "best buy" in global development](#).
- [Research conducted in the mid-1990s](#) by Michael Kremer and Ted Miguel demonstrated that conducting free deworming in schools **reduces absenteeism by up to 25 percent** and even improves children's participation in nearby, untreated schools.
- [A follow-up study](#) conducted by Kremer and his colleagues found important long-term impacts from deworming. Treated girls in Kenya performed better on primary school exit exams and were up to 25 percent more likely to attend secondary school than untreated girls. Meanwhile, dewormed boys stayed in primary school longer and were more likely to hold higher-wage jobs as adults.

How Deworm the World Works

Deworm the World **advocates** for school-based deworming to policymakers, **conducts surveys** to help governments understand the burden of worms, and helps **design, scale, and monitor sustainable programs** to reach all children at risk.

Launched in 2013, Evidence Action is a non-profit organization dedicated to scaling evidence-based and cost-effective programs to reduce the burden of poverty for hundreds of millions of people in the world's poorest places. Learn more at www.evidenceaction.org.