

# WHY SHOES?

Shoe Drive Fundraisers  
and the Reuse Economy



## The Problem

### Shoe Waste Piles Up Quickly

Shoes fall under the broader umbrella of textile waste, which also includes your old t-shirts, jeans, and even things like towels and curtains. And when you look at the numbers, it's honestly pretty staggering.

According to the U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), in 2018:

- Americans generated about 17.0 million tons of textile waste. Most did not get reused or recycled.
- Only 2.5 million tons of textile waste were [processed for recycling](#), which was about 14.7 percent of disposed textiles.
- The average person creates about **4.9 pounds of trash every day**.
- U.S. imports of textiles and apparel have [increased by about 182 percent](#) from 2000 through 2023.
- [70 percent](#) of the global population relies on secondhand clothing and shoes.

## The Solution

### Keep Shoes in Use

The circular economy, or as we like to call it, the reuse economy, focuses on using items longer instead of throwing them away. The goal is to keep products in use through reuse and resale, rather than sending them to landfills.

Shoes are a strong fit for this model. Many pairs that are no longer worn in one place still have life left in them to offer value somewhere else.

When shoes are reused, fewer new shoes need to be made. In turn, it helps save resources and reduces waste.



## The Reuse Economy in Action

Funds2Orgs focuses on dignity and long-term impact.

More than 4,000 families worldwide earn income through the resale of collected shoes. These small business owners use shoe sales to support their families, pay for school, and build stability. In many of these communities, shoes are the main form of transportation.

In Haiti, poverty levels have been very high. According to the [World Bank](#), more than half the population lived on less than \$2.41 per day, and about one in four people lived on less than \$1.23 per day. Micro-enterprise opportunities can make a real difference in places facing challenges like these.

### Micro-entrepreneurs in Haiti

Joanna

Every morning, Joanna sets up her shoes near Place Boyer in Petionville.

She is 40 years old and has been selling shoes for many years. The shoes she sells come from Lascahobas, near the border with the Dominican Republic. From there, they make their way to markets where people like Joanna rely on them to earn a living.

On a good day, Joanna has sold between 12 and 18 pairs of shoes, but sometimes business is tough. Even so, she keeps going.

She earns around 2,000 gourdes per day selling shoes, or about 15 U.S. dollars. Those earnings help cover food, school costs, and daily needs for her family.

Her days are long. She works six days a week, from 7 in the morning until 8 at night. Sunday is her only day of rest.

Joanna lives in Bois Verna with her three children. Her husband died during the earthquake in 2010. Since then, she has been the sole provider for her family.

Her dream is simple and clear. She wants to own a small shop. A place where she can sell shoes without standing on the street all day. A place that offers stability and safety for her and her children.



James

James gets his shoes from the Tabarre Market and has been selling since 2020. He started when he was just 13 years old.

Each workday begins with a long commute. James takes a tap tap from his neighborhood to Petionville, a trip that usually takes about an hour and a half. By the time he arrives, he is ready to work. The money he earns helps support his family.

James chose this work because it offers a different path. He has said that selling used shoes gives him an honest way to earn a living and stay away from violence.

"I prefer selling used shoes instead of being a gang member."

For him, this work represents stability, purpose, and a future built through effort rather than harm. Selling used shoes allows James to be part of something constructive. Shoes that might otherwise go unused become a source of income and independence.

When groups and communities collect shoes through Funds2Orgs, they help create opportunities for people like James and Joanna. Each pair supports real choices and real livelihoods.

## Why Shoe Drive Fundraisers Work

Shoes are easy to donate. Most families already have extra shoes at home. Getting the community to donate them does not require spending money or selling anything.

Shoe drive fundraisers match community values. Schools, teams, and service organizations already care about helping others. A shoe drive fundraiser is a simple way to live out those values.

When usable shoes are collected and kept in circulation, fewer shoes end up in the landfill stream. It is a practical, local way for communities to reduce waste while supporting real-world reuse.



## Shoe Drive Fundraisers Make a Local & Global Impact

At Funds2Orgs, we work with schools, nonprofits, faith groups, civic clubs, and community organizations to run shoe drive fundraisers that create real impact.

A shoe drive does three essential things at the same time:

- It helps your organization raise money with no out of pocket costs.
- It keeps usable shoes out of landfills, where they can harm our environment.
- Every pair collected is given a second life, supporting small business owners around the world in the reuse economy.

This is why we provide an opportunity to our partners to fundraise with shoes. Small actions, taken together, can lead to real-world impact. Funds2Orgs is here to help guide you every step of the way.

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