Worldwide, 2.6 billion people have no safe toilets. The economic toll of this situation is stunning.

At any given moment, half of the developing world’s people are sick from diseases associated with unsafe water and a lack of sanitation and hygiene. Health systems, and individuals, pay the price of dealing with these illnesses.

Productivity suffers when people can’t go to work because they are unwell, or when time is wasted trying to find a place to defecate.

Tourism dollars are lost to countries that travelers avoid, either because they do not want to deal with unclean toilets, or because beaches, lakes and rivers are polluted with raw sewerage.

Boys and girls miss class because they are sick, and girls prefer to stay home during menstruation when there are no toilets at school. Lower levels of educational achievement lead, in turn, to lower earning potential in later life.

Each of these situations carries an economic cost.

Just as important as the concern about money, though, is the cost to human dignity:

Without toilets, people have no choice but to defecate by roadsides or railway tracks, in fields, streams and rivers, or in buckets and plastic bags.

For reasons of modesty millions of women have to wait until after dark before going to defecate, risking harassment and even rape.

Poor sanitation prevents individuals, and their countries, from overcoming poverty, and robs them of the freedoms that a reliable income can bring.

But we believe the challenges of sanitation and hygiene can be overcome.

There is a way to turn the situation around, improve health, ensure dignity, create jobs, and ultimately improve the economic wellbeing of societies and countries.

To create this reality, we need your help. Here’s the idea:

**GDP for GDP**

**Good Dignity Practices for Gross Domestic Product**

*How does it work?*

Each of us has a responsibility to help solve the sanitation challenge. We can all contribute to a wealthier and healthier society. What Good Dignity Practices can you support to increase the Gross Domestic Product of your country? Here are just a few suggestions:

- If you are a **decision maker**, you can allocate sufficient public sector funds to promoting sanitation and hygiene.
- If you are an **entrepreneur**, you can take advantage of one of the many business opportunities associated with building, maintaining or emptying toilets or ensuring good hygiene.
- If you work for an **NGO**, you can help people understand the benefits of improved sanitation and hygiene, and thus increase demand for better facilities.
- If you are a **journalist**, you can report on the significant market potential associated with sanitation and hygiene, and the impact that improved services could have on people’s lives.
- If you are a **community leader**, you can build consensus about the need for toilets for all people, and ensure that even the poorest have access.
- If you are the **head of a household**, you can make sure that your family has a safe, clean toilet and a place to wash their hands with soap.
- If you are a **WSSCC member**, you can identify your own Good Dignity Practices and help promote GDP for GDP.

Learn more about how to turn shit into gold at www.wsscc.org