



**VIVOBAREFOOT**

**MISSION PROGRESS REPORT**

**2018-2019**

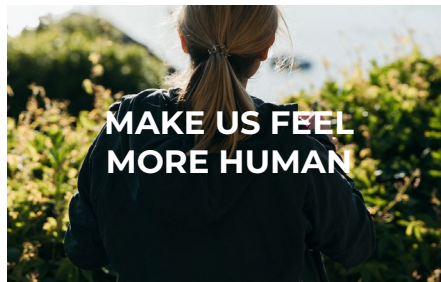
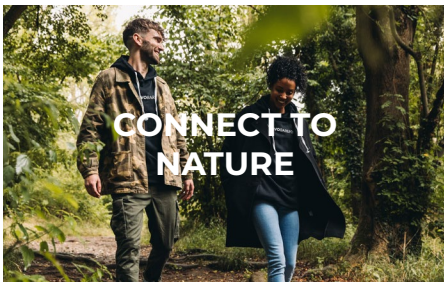
[vivobarefoot.com](http://vivobarefoot.com)



# VIVOBAREFOOT

Vivobarefoot is a purpose driven company with a sustainability philosophy as its foundation. Vivobarefoot started life as a sub-brand of the Eco Fashion brand Terra Plana, and the move to focus on Vivobarefoot was inspired by the definition of sustainability given by John Ehrenfeld in his book, Sustain-Ability: "Sustainability is humans and other life flourishing on Earth."

The only excuse for filling the world up with more 'stuff' is to produce products or experiences that do least one of these three:



We realized that, alongside the unshakable, first principle bio-mechanical truths behind barefoot movement, Vivobarefoot were the only shoes that ticked all these boxes, and so in 2012 the decision was taken to launch Vivobarefoot as a stand-alone brand.

This is our first Mission Progress Report, an exciting marker in the journey of our company. In the spirit of the above definitions, this report addresses our efforts to improve the health of feet, people and the planet!

Vivobarefoot is founded on the principle that the health of people is intimately connected to the health of the planet and the closer people are connected to nature, the more they will do in their everyday lives to protect it.

This report lays out the various sustainability (health of people and planet) impacts we have undertaken in the last year and a few glimpses into the future.

Despite the health enhancing products we make, we are still a long long way from perfect - in fact we are quite a long way behind some of the big companies in certain supply chain sustainability respects: our chemical testing is only at the beginning stages, our control of the first and second tier supply chains are minimally audited, despite strong codes of conduct, and our journey to zero waste through the supply chain is just beginning!

# VIVOBAREFOOT

As this report is published, there are virtually no end of life solutions for our shoes... (yet, we look forward to some exciting new circular initiatives in 2020) and our packing and supply chain logistics have plenty of room for improvement. We've hired an awesome team backed up by world leading consultants to address these issues and look forward to further embedding health and sustainability into the heart of the Vivobarefoot organisation – a never ending journey of minimising the impact of our products both on humans and the planet we all tread.

Galahad Clark, Founder and CEO  
Vivobarefoot

# VIVOBAREFOOT

## VIVOBAREFOOT VALUES

### WHY

#### TO RECONNECT PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

We believe personal and planetary well-being is only possible when humans connect to themselves, each other and the planet. Feet, People, Planet.

### HOW

#### BY INSPIRING A WORLD WITH LESS PADDING AND MORE FEELING

Our sedentary cushioned lifestyles are making us, and our planet, sick. Our technology has changed exponentially, but our physiology and psychology have not. We believe modern technology should help embrace nature (not disconnect)! We rebel against a cushioned world.

### WTF – WIDE, THIN and FLEXIBLE

#### MAKING SUSTAINABLE FOOT-WEAR AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO BAREFOOT, FOR STRONG FEET AND SENSORY FEEDBACK

We create foot-wear and experiences that literally bring people closer to nature. We are at our creative, caring and moving best when our senses are fully engaged. Together, through our feet, we can be one people standing on one earth. A revolution is a'Foot.

### OUR VALUES

#### WALK THE TALK – BLAZE THE TRAIL – MOVE MORE (IN NATURE)

We are honest and transparent (we walk the talk); we are innovators and disruptors (we blaze the trail); we continuously improve and inspire each other to connect with nature (we move more).

### SUSTAINABILITY

#### REGENERATION – WELL-BEING – ACTIVISM

We aim to make products that are not only circular, but regenerative; we believe personal and planetary health and well-being are intimately linked and aim to enhance both; we aim to activate our community to reconnect to nature and fight for a more sustainable planet.



# VIVOBAREFOOT

## VIVOBAREFOOT IN NUMBERS

### COMPANY

**64**

People in London head office

**57%**

Women in top two tiers

**100%**

Vivobarefoot people are committed to have sustainable impact change  
- Employee engagement survey May, 2019

### SHOES

**512K**

Pairs of life changing wide, thin and flexible shoes produced

**242K**

Pairs made using animal free materials

**141K**

Pairs made with recycled PET

**19.8K**

Pairs made with biosynthetic polymers

**151K**

Pairs made from wild hide leathers

**29K**

Ethiopian Soul of Africa shoes produced

### EDUCATION AND MOVEMENT

**2M**

People reached through social media with education content

**1.5M**

Shoespiracy documentary views

**11K**

Online users of 'Barefoot Journey' tool

**5K**

Copies of "Do You Want Your Feet Back?" books sold

**3.5K**

Visitors to the VVagon

**1K**

Foot and movement education sessions in Neal Street, Covent Garden

**30**

Swimruns sponsored

**05**

University Partnerships

# VIVOBAREFOOT

## VIVOBAREFOOT MOVEMENT AND BAREFOOT EDUCATION

In 2018/2019 Vivobarefoot continued to educate people on healthy natural movement and the transition back to strong feet. Having built a network of coaches all over the world Vivobarefoot are proud to have helped thousands of people enjoy movement again.

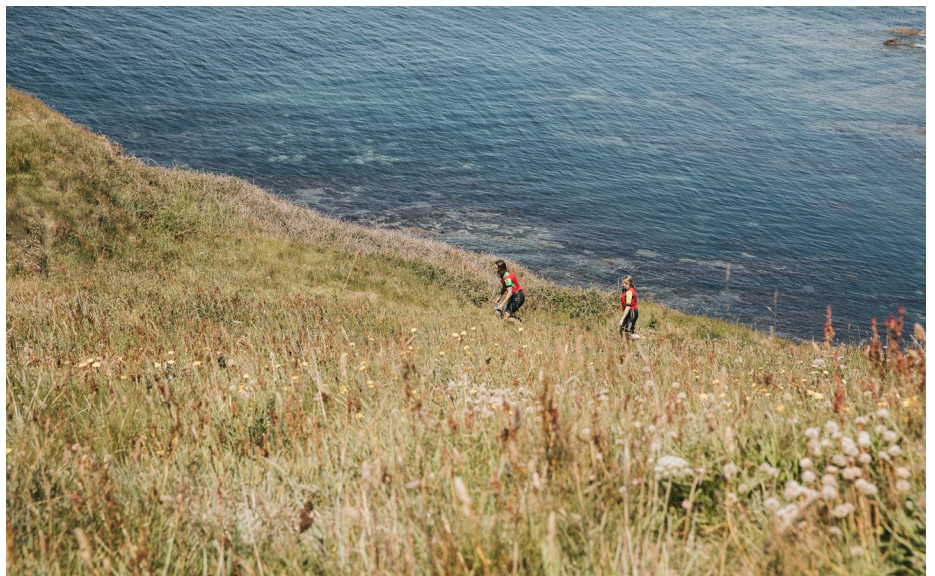
In London, the Vivobarefoot concept store in Covent Garden gave over 1000 people 90 minute running education and movement sessions. There are 20 Vivobarefoot concept stores around the world all offering healthy natural barefoot movement courses and approximately 150 coaches giving healthy foot guidance to clients all over the world every day.

**“We all have the right to pain free feet and the ability to learn efficient movement skill. Improving foot health and walking and running techniques are catalysts to pain free living. Learn how to move with elegance and pleasure.”**

— Benjamin Le Vesconte, Personal Technique Coach

**“I started running a couple of years ago and realized something was going wrong. I was developing bunions and my feet were always tired and stiff. I met Ben a year ago, we worked on my running technique and practiced toe and ankle exercises to improve strength and flexibility. Now I have much less pain, my big toes are straighter and I’ve gone on to run a marathon in 3:48. Thank you Ben!”**

— Louise F, Vivobarefoot customer





# VIVOBAREFOOT

Alongside analogue education from brilliant people all over the world Vivobarefoot has built a series of digital tools for education:

The Barefoot Journey. A self-diagnosing tool for customers to help with an introduction to barefoot and set them on their way with a series of exercises tailored to their 'barefoot level'. 10.8k people have gone through The Barefoot Journey since launch.

[vivobarefoot.com/journey](https://vivobarefoot.com/journey)

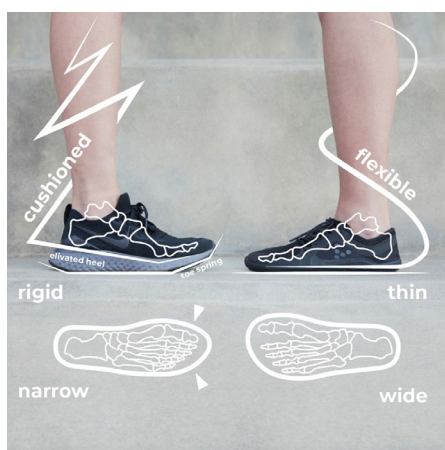
A series of educational videos sharing exercises and drills to help people on their journey towards natural healthy movement reaching from 15k to almost up to 60k direct views on Instagram per post. Total reach of video via Instagram alone is 286,025 views.

16 educational blog posts were made on the Vivobarefoot website that were directly related to foot health and wellbeing.

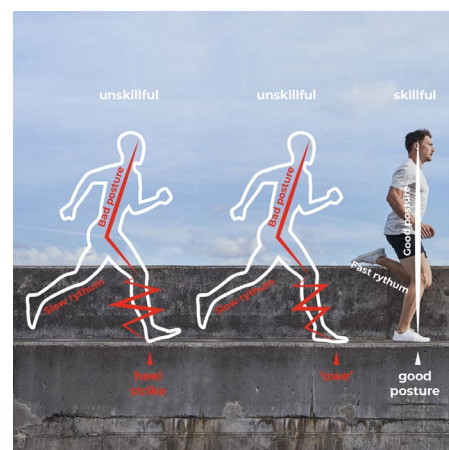
20 social media posts with education content were made in 2018/2019, each generating up to 7k 'likes' on Instagram. Total reach from social media – 1,937,741 people (Instagram only).



FEET



SHOES

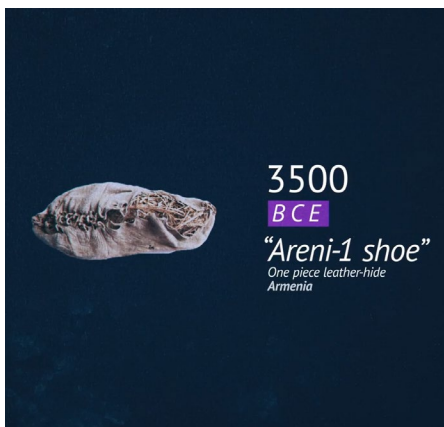
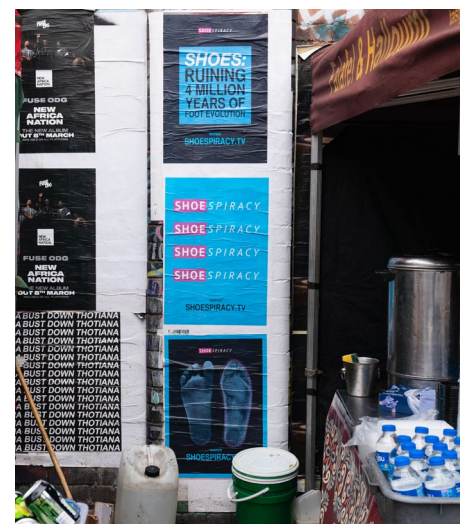


MOVEMENT

# VIVOBAREFOOT

Vivobarefoot launched the short documentary Shoespiracy in March 2019, featuring some of the biggest names in the game; Dan Lieberman, Irene Davis, Mike Fritton and Chris McDougall, to raise awareness of the barefoot journey (viewed 1.5m times) and try to inspire an independent production company to make the full length version.

[shoespiracy.tv/](http://shoespiracy.tv/)





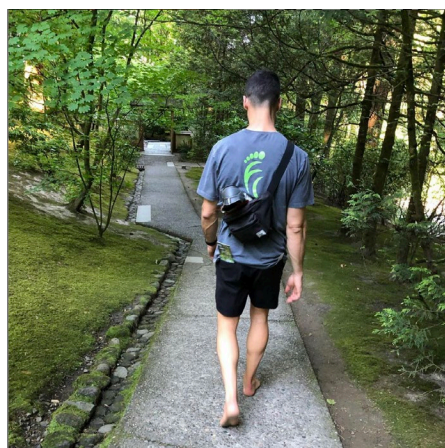
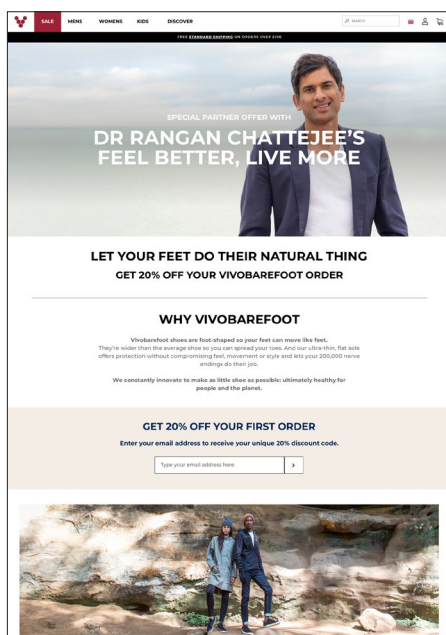
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Vivobarefoot continued to work with third party education providers to further the mission of healthy natural movement for all:

Rangan Chatterjee, BBC doctor in the house. Author and broadcaster of Feel Better. Live More. Number 1 health podcast in Europe.

The Foot Collective. 170k Instagram presence and global education program.

Move U. 1m Instagram presence. Educating healthy natural movement with various courses and tools.



# VIVOBAREFOOT

## VIVOBAREFOOT PARTNERSHIPS

Vivobarefoot believes that in order to make a revolution, we need partners. Vivobarefoot collaborates with universities, non-profit organizations and individuals behind the progressive space we are pushing in health and wellbeing, furthering our understanding and impact on healthy natural movement.

### UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS:



#### 1. Northumberland University: Dr. Mic Wilkinson

In 2018/2019 we concluded our 3 year partnership with Northumberland and Dr. Mic Wilkinson.

We expect in 2019/2020 a series of papers to be released from the experimental research.



#### 2. Foot strength, Liverpool University: Dr. Kris D'Aout

PhD research is funded by Future Footwear Foundation and KASK (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of University College Ghent) in collaboration with Liverpool University.

In 2018/2019 Liverpool conducted a particularly exciting piece of research with Dr Kris D'Aout and PhD student that measured the increase in foot strength from wearing barefoot shoes.

The preliminary results showed a 60% improvement in foot strength after 6 months of wearing barefoot shoes.

#### 3. Improving balance, Liverpool University: Dr. Kris D'Aout

Vivobarefoot is collaborating with Liverpool University on an Innovate UK grant titled, "Preventing Falls in Older People by Innovative Connected Shoe: development and biomechanics study".

The initial results have already shown that balance in Vivobarefoot shoes is improved by up to 40% compared to regular padded shoes!

The research is to be completed in Spring 2020.

#### 4. Indigenous biomechanics: Dr Catherine Willems & Dr Kris D'Aout

Vivobarefoot have been indirectly involved in an exciting study conducted between Dr Catherine Willems and Dr Kris D'Aout measuring the biomechanics of indigenous groups that don't wear conventional shoes showing that their biomechanics are almost identical to barefoot – meaning indigenous shoe making 'is' barefoot shoemaking!

The research paper is due to be released in 2019/2020.



# VIVOBAREFOOT

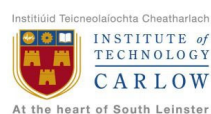
## VIVOBAREFOOT PARTNERSHIPS



### 5. Harvard University: Dr Irene Davis, Professor at Harvard Medical School, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

In 2019, Vivobarefoot started a partnership with Irene Davis and the Spaulding American National Running centre in Harvard. Vivobarefoot is sponsoring a PhD student to conduct a study on the impacts of conventional padded footwear for kids.

The research will be published after a 3 year study in 2022.



### 6. Institute of Technology Carlow, Department of Science and Health: Dr Peter Francis

In 2019, Vivobarefoot started a knowledge transfer partnership with Dr. Peter Francis to part fund two PhD students. One student will investigate differences in pain and biomechanics reported from minimalist footwear use, and the other will investigate developmental differences in foot structure between children who grow up barefoot relative to shod.

We are very excited about our University partnerships... Watch this space!



# VIVOBAREFOOT


## SHOES

**“We believe that the perfect shoe has minimal interference with natural movement and minimal impact on the environment. Barefoot shoe making is sustainable shoe making in that it’s about making shoes that are healthy for you and ultimately need to be healthy for the planet. Materials are only part of the challenge but every little helps on the journey to make less... shoe.”**


— Asher Clark, Design Director

### OUTDOOR


Dedicated to creating products for people to experience nature to the fullest.




TRACKER  
NATURAL



MAGNA TRAIL  
RECYCLED




PRIMUS TRAIL  
RECYCLED




ULTRA BLOOM  
BIOSYNTHETIC

### ACTIVE


Dedicated to active lifestyles.



PRIMUS LITE  
RECYCLED




PRIMUS BIO  
BIOSYNTHETIC




PRIMUS KNIT  
NATURAL

### EVERYDAY


Wear barefoot shoes daily, doing whatever it is you do.



UTILITY PACK  
RECYCLED




GOBI  
NATURAL




ABABA  
NATURAL

### KIDS


Barefoot kids grow up healthier and smarter.




OUTDOOR COLLECTION  
Take kids further into the wild...  
"barefoot"



ASPINALL FOUNDATION  
Supporting awareness of animal  
extinctions.




KIDS ULTRA BLOOM  
BIOSYNTHETIC




ABABA  
Social enterprise for kids

### INDIGENOUS SHOEMAKING


Made by indigenous cobblers in Namibia and India.



SAN-DAL



FF BANTU



FF KOLHAPURI





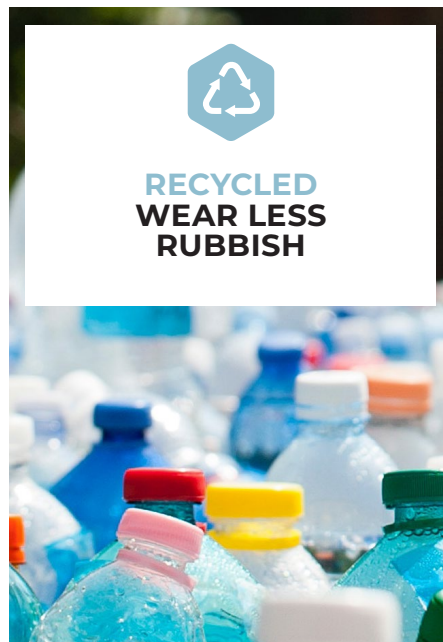


# VIVOBAREFOOT

## SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

First and foremost, Vivobarefoot believes that barefoot shoemaking is sustainable shoemaking. The 'less is more' design approach always puts minimalism, form and function first.

We plan to phase out all virgin oil-based materials, therefore all our materials will be either:





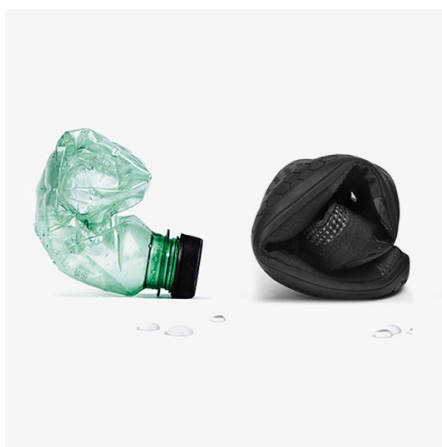
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## RECYCLED

Reusing materials reduces the need for taking anything new from the planet, preserving nature. It also lessens the manufacturing impacts needed to make new materials. Ocean plastics are a great feedstock for this.

One third of our shoes in 2018/2019 were made using PET recycled components – 141,802 pairs (60,614 pairs sold via Vivobarefoot own channels).

Recycled PET use has been growing across the range. In 2018 we introduced more recycled fibres into over 50% of our vegan line including eco mesh linings and uppers in the Primus and Motus shoes. How is it done? The PET (plastic) bottles are washed, and the labels are removed. They're then shredded and turned into granules which are melted, extruded and stretched over rollers into long string fibres. These fibres are spun into a malleable, durable yarn that can be woven to create a functional working material ideal for shoe making.



## BIOSYNTHETIC

Using renewable alternatives to petroleum oil-based materials which feed the fossil fuel industry. 'Less petrol, more plants'. Vivobarefoot currently uses algae bloom and corn-based materials in the range.

Following the release of the Ultra Bloom in 2017, which was the first shoe to repurpose algae choking the world's waterways, we launched the Ultra Bloom EVA – 13,350 pairs were made in 2018/2019. Followed by the Primus Bio (6,501 pairs made) which uses a natural industrial yellow dent field-corn called 'Susterra Propanediol'. Developed by Du Pont Tate & Lyle Bio Products, this plant-based biosynthetic polymer has allowed us to create an incredibly high performing shoe that is also our lightest and most environmentally sound yet.

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Susterra Propanediol uses 42% less energy than the standard petroleum-based materials used by the global footwear industry. And 56% less greenhouse gas emissions.



## NATURAL

Made from plants, animals or soil. These are made from renewable materials with useful physical properties which will help to achieve things like reducing the need for chemicals, or being able to be recycled easily. They include hemp, cotton, wool, silk, leather, tencel and rubber. 'Nature has the best technology'.

In 2018/2019, 151,137 pairs were made with Wild Hide leather. Wild Hide is sourced from Pittards Tannery in Ethiopia. This naturally-scarred leather is provided by small-scale farmers and a by-product of the local food industry.

Pittards have been working with Ethiopian farmers to tan quality leather in Edjersa since 2005, and have consistently upheld standards in sourcing and quality that have led them to become a trusted partner. Pittards holds an ISO 14001 certificate.





# VIVOBAREFOOT

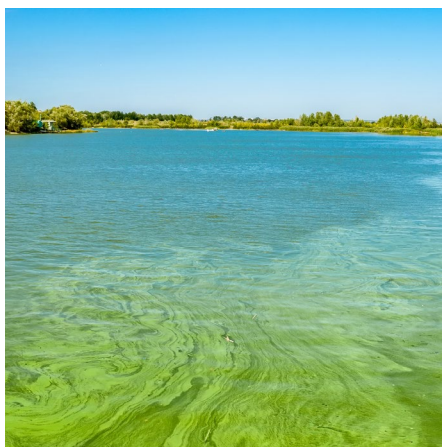
Vivobarefoot also made 18,000 pairs of shoes from camel hide, which is another source of Wild Hide! Put simply, leather is one of our oldest resources and it remains to this day an outstanding material for making shoes. It's light and breathable, malleable yet durable... it gains durability with age, and as a natural material, it doesn't hang around for thousands of years once you're finished with it – on average, leather takes just 25-50 years to biodegrade... by contrast, the average pair of (plastic) shoes takes around 1000 years!

We know that the alternatives to leather are still poor quality and contribute to the fossil fuel industry that is guilty for the most widespread animal welfare impacts, to whole communities and ecosystems, so to do the best we can with natural leather is an important part of making the most sustainable shoes that use less materials, less chemicals and last a long time.

## ANIMAL FREE

In 2018/2019 just under half the shoes we made were animal-free – 242,129 pairs. Our animal-free range continues to grow, offering innovative natural and man-made materials which are mitigated by incorporation of recycled PET bottles and re-constituted algae.

These alternatives are a fantastic option to traditional leather, though they do come with some technical setbacks. Breathability and durability are issues often faced with synthetic materials. What's more, such shoes tend to lose lustre with age and are hard to responsibly dispose of when no longer wearable.



# VIVOBAREFOOT

## **GOLDEN LAST**

With the decision to start producing shoes in Vietnam in 2019 we have moved all our products onto an updated even more pure and better feeling barefoot last – the result of years of learning and evolution. By the end of 2019 all our shoes will be on the most perfect version of this barefoot shape providing unparalleled foot health in a shoe.

## **SOUL OF AFRICA**

Intertwining three critical domains of living – the Human, the Natural and the Ethical – under the social enterprise Soul of Africa range, we have created an authentic range of shoes made in Ethiopia. Empowering the makers at the ethical production line we set up, using sustainable natural materials (Wild Hide and WFTO certified canvas) and supporting inspiring, life-changing community projects. The Soul of Africa range is unique, genuine and barefoot social innovation done sustainably.

Vivobarefoot Africa shoes (Addis sneaker, Ababa slip on and kids mini-me versions, plus sandals) speak directly to Laetoli footprints, making a connection to our ancestors who walked the Earth with minimum protection to allow maximum freedom of movement.

Made in Ethiopia, an ancient land, which is the birthplace of the human race, motherland of runners, dancers, natural creatives and place of abundant beauty. With a pair of shoes we celebrate people, nature and movement.

The factory in Addis Ababa has passed the initial stage of the Proudly Made in Africa audit, which confirms the quality assurance, ethical sourcing, value add onto local materials, and the products and production is socially beneficial.

The Soul of Africa range supports community projects in 2018/2019, with 10K EUR donated to the Desert Flower Foundation, from the collaboration with Waris Dire, while an additional 20K EUR was generated for local community support. Exciting and authentic product collaborations, such as Waris Dire and the upcoming Jean-Michel Basquiat in 2021, are used to tell a positive story and make a difference.

2018/2019 also saw the launch of the Akaso range co-created with the Kara people of Ethiopia, world-famous for their authentic body painting art, along with the aforementioned shoes inspired by Waris Dirie, a Somali nomadic born supermodel, triathlon runner and human rights activist who set up the Desert Flower foundation following the release of the book and film “Desert Flower” which became the strongest statement in the fight against FGM (female genital mutilation).

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Since the launch of the factory, Soul of Africa has been acknowledged at:

- Winner of Natwest Everywoman award
- Winner of London+Acumen pitch
- Shortlisted for UK Social Enterprise awards category International Impact
- Shortlisted for Deal of the Decade by Pioneers Post, 2018
- NatWest Wise100 List: 2018 Recognizing Leading Women in Social Enterprise
- Presenter at TBLI Social Impact Investment Forum 2018, Stockholm
- Participated at the World Economic Forum as part of the UN Global Initiatives in Davos 2019









# VIVOBAREFOOT

## FUTURE FOOTWEAR FOUNDATION

2018/2019 was the fourth year Vivobarefoot have sponsored and worked with the Future Footwear Foundation and Dr Catherine Willems.

Future Footwear Foundation aims to stimulate progress in the understanding of human locomotion and sustainable footwear for body and environment by studying and working with indigenous cobblers. The foundation works on an international level with different cobbler communities around the world, institutes and organizations.

In 2019 Dr Catherine Willems launched the book 'Do you want your feet back?', with Els Roeland (co-editor) and Thomas Nolf (MA Visual Arts: Photography, KASK).

The book presents a refreshing and much-needed vision on anthropology, craftsmanship, and design, clearly depicting the integrated roles of artisans, scientists, and industry partners.



## PERSISTENTLY HUNTING THE PERSISTENT HUNTERS

Galahad's and Asher's family have been cobblers for six generations, but on a trip to Namibia looking for the last persistence hunters in the Kalahari, they were introduced to cobblers making hunting sandals adapted to their environment for many generations. But, due to hunting restrictions they were running out of skins to make their original sandals and were starting to have to use old car tyres and hand-me-downs to make their shoes. And so, the San-Dal project was born to revive the artisan skills and making of the traditional hunting sandals of the Ju'/hoan San people. Vivobarefoot was already working with the Future Footwear Foundation, an organisation focused on sustainable and indigenous footwear projects, bio-mechanics and foot health, and Dr Catherine Willems of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KASK) of University College Ghent. Led by Flora Blommaert at the Future Footwear Foundation, we re-introduced the skins and the local cobblers did the rest!

# VIVOBAREFOOT

The Ju/'hoan San community in Namibia are one of the oldest people on the planet. The term Ju/'hoan San means 'true people' in the Ju/'hoan language. The San, who number around 27,000 people in Namibia, have resided in the northern Kalahari Desert region for thousands of years. The sandals were used for many generations for persistent hunting, but the craft of making this footwear had died out. The how-to knowledge and memories, however, were still preserved in the minds of the oldest village members.

In 2016 a crowdfunding campaign was launched to preserve the ancient art of sandal making and bring the Ju/'hoan San skill to the world. After a tremendous amount of dedication, love and hard work led by a team of inspirational devotees, the full Kickstarter order was completed by August 2018. Since then, we have now delivered the first round of 500 SAN-dals made post-crowdfunding to sustain the craftsmanship in the area. Vivobarefoot has now committed to bring to the world a very limited amount of 1,000 pairs every year! The idea of building an atelier in the local village started to grow. The cobblers reflected on the future construction of a production unit. Together with the community the implementation of such a centre is one of the goals of the future.

**“The good aspect is that people here now have their own project, besides maybe trying to get jobs in tourism, from the government, for different companies. Maybe for you people from overseas, our footwear looks unique. For us it is what our elders, our ancestors were making. Today, for us, now that we have access to skins again, it seems we have got something back that we thought was in the past and lost.”**

— !Ui Kunta (Steve Kunta). Ju/'hoan cobbler, translator and local guide, Tsumkwe





# VIVOBAREFOOT

## 3D PRINTED SHOES

In 2018/2019 Vivobarefoot worked closely with Future Footwear Foundation to build out the first 3D printed Vivobarefoot shoes based on the idea that the modern industrial complex is unsustainable. We believe that true sustainable shoe making of the future needs to resemble indigenous shoemaking of the past. Shoes made to individual feet. Shoe by Shoe, Foot by Foot from local sustainable materials that can easily be repairable or recyclable.



# VIVOBAREFOOT

## MOVE MORE

Vivobarefoot's mission is to reconnect people and the planet – and inspire people to move more, through firstly creating great tools (in our case outdoor shoes) and then enabling amazing events and experiences in nature, and appropriating nature to inspire natural movement.





# VIVOBAREFOOT

## SWIMRUN, ÖTILLÖ, THE VVAGON AND OTHER EVENTS

In 2018/2019 Vivobarefoot continued its international sponsorship of Ötillö Swimrun sponsoring 10 events around the world and creating dedicated Swimrun shoes.

Perfectly philosophically aligned with joint missions to reconnect people with nature, Vivobarefoot are proud to have inspired many inside and outside our community to participate in these ultimate nature events.

Vivobarefoot has also sponsored another 20 swimrun events and held the second annual Vivobarefoot retreat in Bantham, Devon with the headline being a truly epic Swimrun.

The Vivobarefoot Vvagon series, a transportable, pop-up experiential space began a tour of the UK in April 2019 offering advice on healthy movement and living more sustainably. The Vvagon started its route at London Fields delivering a range of activities throughout the day, including a talk and book signing by TV-presenter and wellness and nutrition expert Jasmine Hemsley.

We created the Vvagon in collaboration with Studio Hardie (of George Clark's Amazing Spaces) using sustainable natural materials and biophilic principles. Powered by solar, and roof made of recycled non-toxic rubber, so you could drink the rainwater run-off! The Vvagon is our way of sharing the VIVOBAREFOOT life. A hub for community, movement and education, the Vvagon is a social experiment to peel back the layers of modern-day necessities to find a happier and healthier, person, community and planet.

In 2018/2019, the Vvagon has been at 16 events, delivering workshops with The Happy Pear, Ross Edgely, Tony Riddle, Max La Manna, Tim Howell, Amanda Keetly, Laura Try, and many more awesome people.

Our 2019/2020 report will be published in July 2020.











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