Guatemala remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. Although considered to be a lower middle income country, Health Poverty Action works in indigenous municipalities in the highlands that have poverty rates of over 90%. Guatemala has a strong legal framework for civil society participation, but faces serious challenges to implementation of that framework. Weak government, organised crime and corruption have added to historical problems such as discrimination against the indigenous Maya population. As a result:

- Maternal mortality for indigenous women is 3 times higher than for non indigenous women
- In Health Poverty Action’s work area, 36% of all births are to child and teenage mothers
- The murder rate in Guatemala is the world’s 7th highest, and the 3rd highest for women
- 48% of children suffer from chronic malnutrition, and up to 94% in some communities
- The country has huge levels of debt, mostly accrued during their four decades of civil war

Health Poverty Action has been working in Guatemala since 1995 on a variety of projects to improve the health of the country’s poorest and most vulnerable communities, such as:

- Improving health services in rural communities
- Tackling violence against women
- Improving reproductive, maternal and newborn health
- Building networks and supporting advocacy for culturally appropriate interventions to improve health
- Increasing community engagement in issues surrounding their health rights

Medical Elective in Guatemala
Students undertaking a medical elective with Health Poverty Action will be able to observe and support a variety of activities such as:

- Support the training of traditional birth attendants
- Observe and support doctors in the national hospital
- Shadow doctors from different departments
- Support the work of HIV clinics in local hospitals
- Gain an insight into conventional health care by supporting work in rural health clinics

Please note at least basic Spanish will be required

Through Health Poverty Action you can tailor your placement to suit your interests and skills so do get in touch and we can work together to provide you with a unique and unforgettable experience. Get in touch on 020 7840 3777 or electives@healthpovertyaction.org