

HEALTH IN ACTION

Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet Newsletter

Autumn 2021



In this edition:

Going further

Plus: Legal regulation of drugs, tribal communities defend their rights and more...

**HEALTH
POVERTY
ACTION**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter, Health in Action. My name is Bangyuan Wang, and I work as Health Poverty Action's Head of Programmes for Asia. It's my job to oversee, develop and support our activities and teams across Asia. I'm immensely proud of the way our dedicated staff and volunteers work with communities to support people's health, wellbeing and livelihoods.



In this edition, we launch our 'Going Further' appeal, looking at how we need to go further than international development organisations have traditionally to address the links between poverty, poor health and injustice. We are asking supporters to contribute whatever they can so we can go even further to tackle both the causes and symptoms of poverty and ill-health.

Thank you for your generous support – I hope you're encouraged to learn how, together with our partners in the Global South, we're going to places that other development organisations rarely do.

Front cover: Our team delivering medical supplies in the mountains of Myanmar

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Get involved!

Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet share resources and expertise so we can better support marginalised communities to enhance their health, livelihoods and wellbeing.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT – HEALTH FOR ALL IN A JUST WORLD


- ✉ Health Poverty Action, Kemp House, 152-160 City Road, London EC1V 2NX
- ☎ +44 20 7840 3777
- 🌐 healthpovertyaction.org / findyourfeet.org
- @ fundraising@healthpovertyaction.org
- @ fyf@fyf.org.uk
- f HealthPovertyAction
- 🐦 @HealthPoverty

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GOING FURTHER



Our winter appeal focuses on how Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet are working with communities to go further than development agencies have traditionally and tackling both the causes and symptoms of poverty and ill-health.

Today, despite the advances we've made in science, technology and medicine, far too many people still struggle to enjoy the kind of health, security and prosperity that some take for granted.

If we want to build a healthier, more prosperous world, we need to look at the whole picture. We need to go further than international development organisations have in the past. We need to go wherever people's lives are being impacted.

While development organisations and government agencies often focus their efforts around big towns and cities, people living in rural communities are frequently neglected.

And while international development is often presented as a simple matter of charity, we believe we need to ask difficult questions and confront the big issues - from global inequality and unfair trade to social discrimination and environmental degradation.

Because, even as we work with communities to ensure that people can grow more food, the effects of climate change can destroy an entire year's crops overnight.

And big issues, such as unfair global trade, directly impact people living in the remotest villages - making it harder for those in the Global South to trade commodities for a decent

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price. This in turn leaves whole communities struggling to earn a living and pay for healthcare.

At Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet, we deliberately work with some

of the most marginalised communities around the world and address the fundamental issues that force people into poverty and ill-health. We don't pick the easiest road; we pick the one that will make the biggest difference to people's lives.

ON THE BORDERLINE IN MYANMAR

The 2,186-kilometre border between China and Myanmar is an isolated, mountainous region. Decades of internal conflict in Myanmar have left much of the population living in extreme poverty and the quality of healthcare remains one of the lowest in the world.

For over 20 years, Health Poverty Action has been working with communities in Myanmar to bridge the gap between rural townships and health facilities. The northeast part of Kachin State is one of the remotest regions where we work. It can be up to 12 days' walk from the closest roads and many people pay huge expenses to receive simple medical treatments.

It is equally difficult for health workers to travel to these remote areas. Many communities are completely inaccessible during the winter season, with roads covered in heavy snow from December to May. Khao Ze, a Health Poverty Action Community Mobilization Officer from Kachin State, tells us:

"It's a huge challenge. The natural environment here is very difficult. The rain never stops during the rainy seasons and some areas have

no access at all...But I want to do it...so I will take responsibility to reach every corner of our homeland."

Clashes with the government and ethnic minorities mean that tensions are high, and people are wary of both the central government and outsiders. We work with these communities to earn their trust and understand the cultural barriers that impact on their health. Very few NGOs have the authorization, knowledge or ability to work here, meaning that our impact is absolutely vital.

In collaboration with local government, we're working to ensure that people can benefit from effective healthcare. We train health workers with local knowledge of these communities and their dialects, provide mobile clinics that reach the remotest villages, and supply equipment to regional clinics.

Tian Yanghui, the manager of our office in Pangwa, tells us:

"I think people have faith that, in the near future, the health system will be able to function well."

That's why our local team in Myanmar will trek for six weeks through the freezing mountains to deliver medical supplies in areas controlled by armed ethnic groups. And it's why we confront policy issues that are complex and sometimes controversial, like the shortcomings of the



▲ Our team in Myanmar treks for weeks to reach some communities



▲ Our teams in Sierra Leone and Namibia ensure people in remote villages can access healthcare



piecemeal approach to international development or the impact of the 'war on drugs' on people's lives.

Taking on these barriers to health and prosperity doesn't make our work easy. But, just like the communities we work with, we won't accept the status quo if it takes away someone's chances of living a healthy, prosperous and secure life.

Donate now:

Donate to our winter appeal and together we can go even further to address both the causes and symptoms of poverty and ill-health.

Together, we can ensure that people living in isolated communities can receive treatment for serious illnesses and support when giving birth.

And together, we can confront the difficult issues that force people to live in poverty and ill-health. Whether working with activists to protect tribal people's land rights or exposing unfair trade arrangements that leave countries struggling to support themselves.

 www.healthpovertyaction.org

 Health Poverty Action, Kemp House, 152-160 City Road, London EC1V 2NX

THE LAND OF FORESTS

Spotlight on

FIND
YOUR
FEET



Find Your Feet has worked in India for over 30 years and in Jharkhand State, in the east of the country, since 2001. Jharkhand, meaning ‘the land of forests’, is primarily rural, with only around a quarter of the population living in cities¹. Forest and tree cover constitutes about a third of the geographical area of the state.

Jharkhand also has one of the largest populations of tribal communities in the country, with 17 out of 24 districts considered as ‘tribal districts’.

Although Jharkhand accounts for more than 40% of the mineral resources of India², 39.1% of its population lives below the poverty line and nearly a fifth of children under five years of age are malnourished³.

The forests are the main source of income and livelihood for the tribal communities, and we are currently focusing on working with them to strengthen community structures, so they can better advocate for their rights.

Since 2009 we have been collaborating with a network of local partners, with funding from the Big Lottery Fund, European Commission and The Oak Foundation, on projects to empower tribal communities. Crucially, we are working to ensure tribal people can claim their legal forest rights, as entitled in the Forest Rights Act 2006, to preserve their traditional lands and forests.

Our work has led to the establishment of a network of village-level Community Based Organisations (CBOs) working to promote tribal people’s rights.

1 – India Census 2011

2 - <http://jharkhandminerals.gov.in/content/1/1>

3 – UNDP, Jharkhand Economic and Human Development Indicators Factsheet 2017

These organisations have grouped together to form the Tribal Rights Forum (TRF), which is responsible for representing and supporting the village-level organisations. The TRF has provided a vital forum to promote tribal people's rights and was part of the nationwide campaign that led to implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

There are over 17,000 CBO members, including over 9000 women, who are leading development initiatives in 150 villages. We have trained TRF and CBO members so they can better advocate for their communities. Together, we've arranged public meetings where people have shared their grievances around public service delivery with local civil servants, who have subsequently resolved these issues quickly.

Alongside our local partners, we also trained members of 80 village Forest Rights Committees (FRCs), which specifically work to support villagers' access to forests, and they are now actively submitting applications for forest rights.

▼ **Tribal Rights Forum meetings bring together people from many communities to advocate for their rights**



◀ **We train and support local activists so they can secure rights to forest land for their communities**

The Tribal Rights Forum, alongside other local activists, has successfully lobbied the state government to introduce a standardised procedure for processing forest rights applications. Previously government officials were rejecting applications on the grounds that they were not submitted in an appropriate manner, although there was no clear process.

Tribal communities and individuals are now often able to successfully claim forest rights within a few months of applying, where previously they had faced long delays and claims often went unresolved. It was recently revealed, through a 'Right to Information' request, that 49 individual forest claims remained unresolved since 2017. TRF members put pressure on the authorities and these claims were finally sanctioned in July 2021.

Through the efforts of trained TRF and FRC members, tribal families are now able to enjoy easier access to forest land and more secure livelihoods.

Your contributions mean we can continue to work with tribal communities to secure people's rights and livelihoods. Please visit www.findyourfeet.org to donate today.

A WORLD WITH DRUGS

Legal regulation through a social justice lens

Four years ago, Health Poverty Action was approached by community leaders from the Global South. They wanted us to address an issue that is rarely given the attention it deserves from development organisations despite the colossal harms it causes to people and the planet.

These leaders wanted to end drug prohibition.

We can clearly see that current global drug policy works in direct opposition to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty, inequality, corruption and violence. The so-called 'war on drugs', has been a war on human dignity, life and health.

We recognise that it is often injustice, inequality and vulnerability that drives people to engage in the drug trade, whether as consumers, producers or suppliers.

We have joined thousands around the world calling for a new approach. This is the approach

of legal regulation; regulating the global drug market to promote equitable development, champion public health, safeguard human rights and protect the environment.

It is an opportunity that governments are beginning to explore, but is not without risks. Designed well, with social justice, human rights and public health at its heart, legal regulation could be transformative. However, if legal regulation and the new markets it creates are shaped by corporate interests, it could perpetuate many of the same problems caused by prohibition.

Health Poverty Action has worked with NGOs, farmers, and academics to identify 15 key priorities to be included in legal regulation policy that will strengthen sustainable development and global equity.

You can see these priorities presented in graphic form on the next page. You can read more about this work and download our report on legal regulation here: <https://bit.ly/3vKYuGw>

Lens 1 Incorporating these 15 objectives into Legal Regulation will strengthen and reinforce these Sustainable Development Goals, which intersect and are mutually beneficial to each other's success.

Good Governance and Services

Rebuilding accountable governance and efficient, culturally appropriate and locally funded state services and institutions

Peace and Reconciliation

Ending armed conflict and violent crime.
Building trust and collaboration between state and impacted communities.

Regulating corporate behaviour, influence and power

Prioritising small scale sustainable production, distribution and retail.
Commitment to social equity, due diligence and tax contributions

Trade Justice

Transparent, accountable and equitable terms of trade throughout the supply chain

Tax Justice

Leveraging taxation from the trade to provide funding for state services in health, education and accountable governance

Restorative Justice

Expungement, decarceration and reparations to repair the harms of prohibition for impacted communities, groups and individuals.

Gender Justice

Affirmative action to ensure womenX participate in, and shape, the transition to a legally regulated drugs market

Racial Justice

Affirmative action to ensure BIPOC communities can participate in, and shape, the transition to a legally regulated drugs market.

Sustainable Livelihoods

Communities and small scale actors engage and thrive in the new legal markets, free from criminal sanctions.

Cultural and traditional rights and knowledge are prioritised, included and safeguarded

Labour Rights

Ensuring workers have the right to unionisation, fair pay, equal opportunities and health and safety

Just Transition

Ensuring a peaceful, well-planned and equitable transition from illicit to licit, and accountability for all stakeholders with consideration for local contexts.

Community and marginalised stakeholder participation

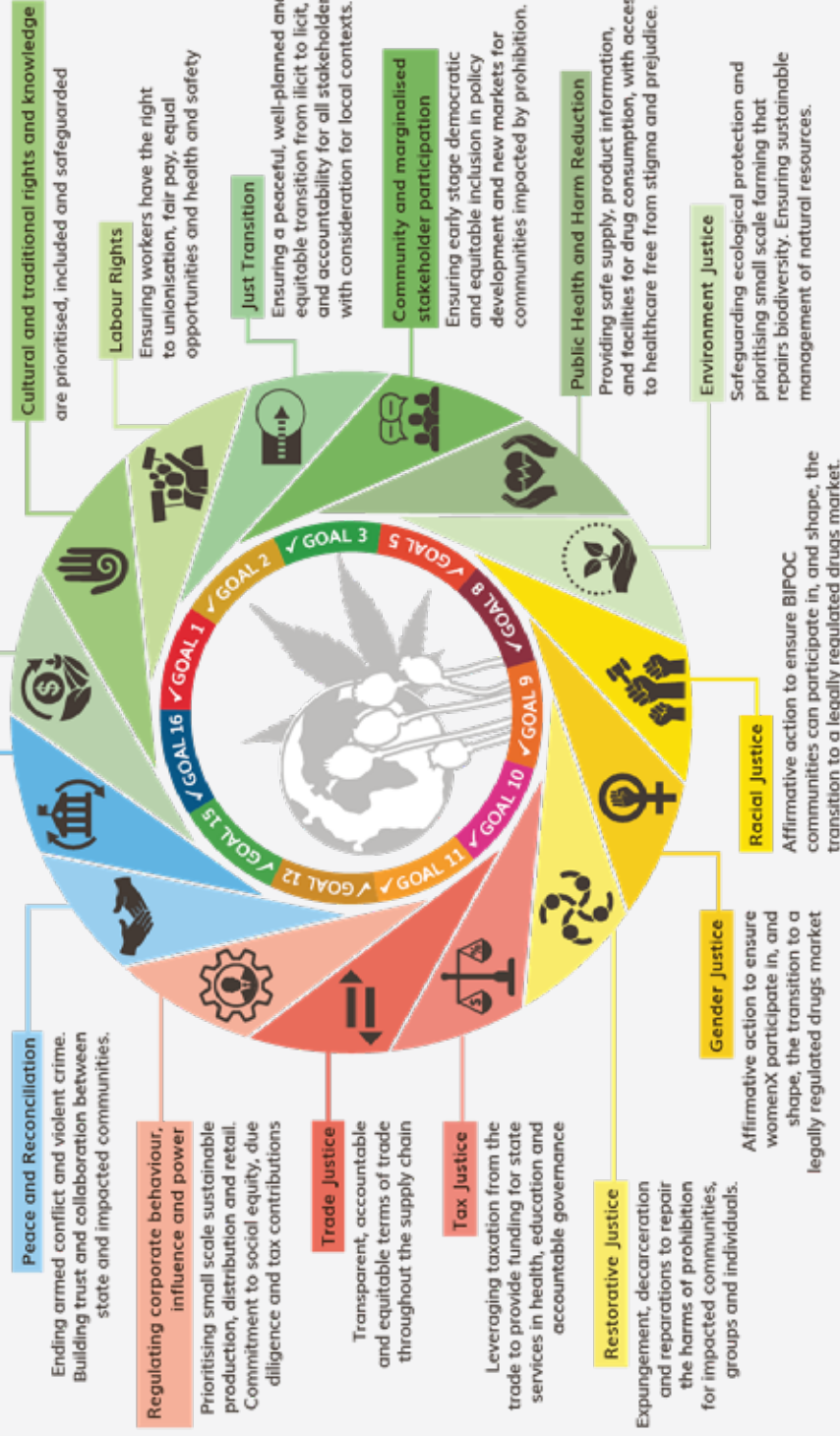
Ensuring early stage democratic and equitable inclusion in policy development and new markets for communities impacted by prohibition.

Public Health and Harm Reduction

Providing safe supply, product information, and facilities for drug consumption, with access to healthcare free from stigma and prejudice.

Environment Justice

Safeguarding ecological protection and prioritising small scale farming that repairs biodiversity. Ensuring sustainable management of natural resources.



**A GIFT IN YOUR
WILL HELPS PEOPLE
AROUND THE
WORLD CONTINUE
TO TAKE CHARGE OF
THEIR OWN HEALTH.**



Stand with the communities, campaigners and doctors who've been taking a different approach to tackling poverty and poor health for over thirty-five years.

Health Poverty Action was founded in 1984 by a young doctor on his return from Afghanistan. Today, because of our committed supporters, we are able to work in 18 countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

To find out how even a small gift in your will can make a huge difference, please contact

fundraising@healthpovertyaction.org

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There are many ways to support the work of Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet. Here are just a few ways, and you can find more on our websites at www.healthpovertyaction.org and www.findyourfeet.org.



Royal Parks Half Marathon

Thinking ahead to training? Get your place now in the Royal Parks Half Marathon for 2022. Entry costs just £35 with a minimum sponsorship target of £350 and we'll be here to support you every step of the way.

London Marathon

Looking for something bigger? Join Team HPA next October and take on the world-famous TCS London Marathon 2022. Registration costs £150 with a minimum sponsorship target of £2,000 and applications are open now!

Support while you shop



If you're already plotting out your holiday shopping, check out easyfundraising for a great way to raise money for Health Poverty Action whilst you shop online. easyfundraising works with over 4,000 retailers who donate to your chosen cause as a thank you for shopping with them. Simply sign up at easyfundraising.co.uk and select Health Poverty Action. Then each time you begin your shop at easyfundraising you'll be supporting our work, at no extra cost to you.

Get involved!

If you're interested in getting involved in any of these opportunities, or have other unique fundraising ideas, please contact Kelly Douglas via email at k.douglas@healthpovertyaction.org

WE NEED TO GO FURTHER THAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS HAVE TRADITIONALLY



If we want to make the world healthier and more prosperous, we need to look at the whole picture. We need to go wherever people's lives are being impacted.

Make a donation today

With your support, alongside our partners across Africa, Asia and Latin America, we can go to places that other international development organisations rarely do.

Together, we can ensure that people living in isolated communities can receive treatment for serious illnesses and support when giving birth.

And together, we can confront the difficult issues that force people to live in poverty and ill-health, like unfair trade arrangements that leave countries struggling to support themselves.

Please give to our winter appeal and stand with communities and activists across the world as together we build healthier, more prosperous lives for all.

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How to donate:

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Email: fundraising@healthpovertyaction.org

Mail: Health Poverty Action, Kemp House,
152-160 City Road, London EC1V 2NX

