

HEALTH IN ACTION

Health Poverty Action and Find Your Feet Newsletter

Summer 2023



In this edition:

Cambodia in Motion

Plus: Drug policy and the environment, Malawi in Motion and more..

**HEALTH
POVERTY
ACTION**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter, Health in Action. My name is Meach Monethmolyta and I work as a Project Officer and Social Worker for Health Poverty Action in Cambodia. In my role, I help communities to counter the spread of malaria and support people with drug dependency. I'm incredibly proud and passionate about the innovative work that we do alongside communities in Cambodia to improve people's lives.



In this edition, you can read about some of the groundbreaking initiatives we've established together with our partners in Cambodia – from producing affordable mosquito repellent, to pioneering a harm reduction approach to drugs, to providing solar power to rural households. As we launch our Cambodia in Motion appeal, you can learn more about the ways you can contribute to this vital work.

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest. I hope you're inspired by reading about the exciting work that we're doing alongside communities in Cambodia and globally.

Front cover: Health Poverty Action vehicle in rural Cambodia

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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

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Registered charities in England and Wales, numbers 290535 and 250456





▼ Our team in Cambodia installs solar power systems in rural communities

CAMBODIA IN MOTION

OUR SUMMER APPEAL FOCUSES ON OUR WORK WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND HEALTH WORKERS IN CAMBODIA TO FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BUILD HEALTHIER, MORE PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES.

Our team in Cambodia has been working with communities in the country for over 30 years to improve people's health and livelihoods. During this time, they've built working relationships with people and institutions across the country – from the capital, Phnom Penh, to relatively inaccessible forest regions bordering Laos and Vietnam.

Most of our team are from Cambodia or long-term residents of the country, so they have a good understanding of social issues and cultural dynamics. This intimate knowledge of Cambodian society, combined with experience of working on projects tackling issues ranging from malaria and HIV to

food insecurity and rural poverty, has enabled our team to think of novel ways to support people's health and livelihoods.

Working alongside communities, we've developed innovative partnerships with the public, private and voluntary sectors to address some of the most serious challenges facing people in the country.

Continues over ►

Affordable energy for all

Access to electricity is often denied to marginalised populations, including many rural communities in Cambodia. Despite their demands, access to national grid power is often far too expensive.

We are working with a social enterprise called Empower Cambodia to provide solar power systems to rural communities. This initiative enables families to access clean water, refrigerate food and power appliances. Having access to electricity at home greatly relieves the burden on women, reducing the frequency of long trips to collect water and leaving more time to spend with their families.

Community members also undertake training on maintenance, so they can continue to use these resources long after we have left their community. And families can sell excess power generated back to the national grid, providing an additional source of income.



▲ Head Nurse Peel Meayath supports people with drug dependence at our treatment centre in Phnom Penh

Support don't punish

The so called “war on drugs” has failed. Despite its stated intentions, it has failed to reduce the harms associated with people using drugs. In response, many organisations, health workers and community leaders are supporting approaches that prioritise health – providing medical and mental health support to help people address issues around using drugs.

We are involved in a project dedicated to harm reduction, and we're going further. Rather than focusing on one area, such as providing healthcare support to help people overcome addictions, we provide holistic support.



▲ Our team in Cambodia travels to remote rural communities

At every stage, we promote harm reduction over criminalisation. We work alongside the police to test street drugs for potency and contaminants, to prevent overdosing and poisoning. We provide medical and mental health support as people address drug addiction, and when people have contracted HIV through drug use. Crucially, we maintain a children's home, so the children of people receiving treatment are looked after until the family is ready to be reunited.

Effective policies and programmes must look at the bigger picture, including the wider causes and consequences of drug addiction, and ensure that people get the support they need and deserve!

Holy Fire: tackling malaria impactfully

According to the World Health Organisation, over 600,000 people are estimated to have died from malaria in 2021. This is a preventable disease, yet essential medicine and preventative measures are often denied to some of the most vulnerable communities.

Affordable mosquito repellent is a key component in preventing the spread of malaria. However, all too often, profit is put before people – and this essential product is denied to those on low incomes.

We are working alongside community leaders to supply affordable mosquito repellent. By establishing a not-for-profit social enterprise to produce 'Holy Fire' mosquito repellent, we are creating a sustainable model which will enable the community to benefit from affordable repellent in the long-term.



▲ We've developed an affordable mosquito repellent to prevent malaria

Donate now:

Give to our Cambodia in Motion Appeal and support community leaders, activists and health workers in Cambodia finding innovative ways to build healthier, more prosperous communities. **All donations received by 30th June 2023 will be doubled by a generous supporter, up to a total of £2,500.** To donate today, please visit 📄 <https://bit.ly/3BPRfKx>

MALAWI IN MOTION

WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE EXCITING INITIATIVES WE SUPPORT IN MALAWI

At Find Your Feet we've been working alongside communities in Malawi for many years to tackle a range of issues that people face – from insecure livelihoods to lack of nutritious food to social inequality. The projects we have developed alongside our partners utilise holistic approaches to create long-term change and build healthier, more prosperous communities.

Over recent years, we have been working with rural farming communities to improve and secure families' livelihoods, health and wellbeing through a combination of education, practical support and collective action.

We've supported farmers to undertake training, share their expertise, pool resources and help each other to produce greater volumes of more diverse crops and products. This has enabled farmers to better support themselves and



▲ **Martha (left) has established a bakery business. Local communities are benefiting from new water sources (right)**

their families, both through trading and through access to a more varied, more nutritious diet.

Furthermore, over 200 households in the communities we work with have established backyard gardens in recent years, growing a range of foodstuffs primarily for family and community consumption.



Farmers have benefitted from learning how to utilise and process their produce to improve their families' nutrition in addition to generating income. Training around food processing and cooking lessons have enabled farmers to produce more nutrient-rich meals for themselves and to open a range of businesses – providing sustainable sources of income.

A total of 28 farmers have now established bakery businesses, enabling them to maximise income by processing the grains and root vegetables they are already growing to produce bread, scones, doughnuts and more. Others are engaged in drying fruit and producing fruit juices, reducing food wastage and providing another way to capitalise on agricultural produce.

We have helped farmers establish beekeeping clubs, with over 80 people undertaking training in honey processing, packaging and development of by-products such as

wax and candles. These clubs are now producing and selling honey and other products locally and in regional markets.

Environmental degradation is a key issue that impacts on farming communities in Malawi. These communities are some of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, threatening their ability to earn a living and feed themselves. We support farmers to learn climate-resilient farming techniques and protect crops from negative environmental impacts like drought and loss of soil fertility.

We are encouraging the expansion of irrigation in these communities and have helped them plant 16,000 tree seedlings to support soil fertility and development of forested areas. As they grow, these forested areas help to mitigate the effects of drought and flooding.



▲ Rural cooperatives are producing, packaging and selling honey

► We're supporting rural communities to develop and maintain sources of clean water



Another way we have contributed to entrepreneurship and financial security is through supporting the establishment of village savings schemes. These schemes offer people a way to save collectively and a source of credit, so they can access capital to start businesses.

Access to safe water remains a challenge in the communities we work with, given that they are situated in a relatively dry region. This presents a particular challenge to women, who are often responsible for farming activities and managing household needs, such as water for cooking.

Many homes in this region previously lacked toilets and people often resorted to drawing water from unsanitary sources, leaving them vulnerable to water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea.

We have worked with communities to improve people's access to water and sanitation, along with their

knowledge of related issues.

Over recent years, we've established handwashing facilities and supported over 1800 households to construct toilets, improving community sanitation and contributing to a reduction in the spread of diseases.

Together with our partners, we've also helped to dig and rehabilitate boreholes, so that communities can access safe and sanitary water supplies. In recent years, we've helped over 5000 households gain access to a clean and sustainable supply of water. Community members have formed committees to oversee these water sources and we've helped to train 55 people to manage and maintain these important community resources.

As we continue working with these communities, we look forward to sharing more about the steps they are taking to build a future free from hunger and poverty.

Your contributions mean we can continue to work with communities in Malawi to find sustainable ways to improve people's livelihoods and lives. Please visit www.findyourfeet.org to donate today.

ALIGNING DRUG POLICY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

EXPOSING THE LINKS BETWEEN DRUG PROHIBITION, ORGANISED CRIME AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

▲ Colombian police destroy a narcotics laboratory

Between 13th and 17th March, Health Poverty Action participated in the 66th Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) session in Vienna, the United Nations' (UN) principal forum on drug policy.

In collaboration with Transnational Institute, Global Drug Policy Observatory, International Drug Policy Consortium, Washington Office on Latin America, and Viso Mutop, Health Poverty Action had the pleasure of chairing a timely event entitled 'Aligning Drug Policy with Environmental Protection'.

We were joined by Jhon Alexander Rojas Cabrera, Governor of Narino, western Colombia, and Marta Machado, the National Secretary for Drug Policy in Brazil. Both spoke of Colombia and Brazil's multiple environmental crises and the need for cohesive policies that support governance, Indigenous People's rights and land sovereignty.

During the event, panellists spoke about the far-reaching consequences of the global drug regime on the environment and biodiversity, including the

undermining of climate mitigation and adaptation programmes in key ecologically fragile regions. The UN drug control system often operates at odds with UN regime complexes in other issue areas. This event explored how punitive drug policies have empowered organised crime and accelerated environmental degradation.

Recommendations for environmental harm reduction approaches were presented with a strong focus on aligning international governance instruments of the UN, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, and Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

You can watch the full recording of the event online here:

<https://bit.ly/3C7gbUD>



A GIFT IN YOUR WILL HELPS FAMILIES ACROSS AFRICA AND ASIA CONTINUE TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR OWN LIVES

Stand with the communities, campaigners and activists who've been taking a different approach to tackling poverty and hunger for over sixty years.

Find Your Feet was founded in 1960 and originally focussed on supporting Eastern European refugees. Today, because of our committed supporters, we are able to work with communities across Asia and Africa.

**To find out how even a small gift in your will
can make a huge difference, please contact
fyf@fyf.org.uk**





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.




London Marathon 2024

Want to run the London Marathon 2024? Then join #TeamHPA on 21st April and run to support health justice for all! Applications are only £100, and sponsorship targets are £2,000. If you're interested, email tl.jarsdel@healthpovertyaction.org for an application form.

Singing

Choirs for Change 2023. Are you part of a choir or singing group? Why not join us in Winter 2023 to raise funds for health equality with our Choirs for Change campaign! Please email tl.jarsdel@healthpovertyaction.org for more information and to register your interest.

Shopping

Fundraise for Free! Whether you're doing your weekly shop or buying exam season essentials,  easyfundraising is a great way to raise money for Health Poverty Action with no extra cost to you! easyfundraising is a browser app that 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 online through easyfundraising you'll be supporting our work for free.

Get involved!

If you'd like to get involved in any of these opportunities, volunteer at some of our events or have other unique fundraising ideas, please contact Tabitha-Levis Jarsdel via email at tl.jarsdel@healthpovertyaction.org.



CAMBODIA IN MOTION

COMMUNITIES IN CAMBODIA ARE COMING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS LONGSTANDING CHALLENGES TO PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Across Cambodia, we're working alongside community leaders, health workers and public officials to develop exciting initiatives addressing people's immediate concerns and contributing to long-term health and prosperity. From producing affordable mosquito repellent to developing community-based solar power systems to breaking new ground with a harm reduction approach to drugs - together, we're thinking of new and sustainable ways to improve people's lives.

Please give to our Cambodia in Motion Appeal and support community leaders, activists and health workers in Cambodia finding innovative ways to build healthier, more prosperous communities.

All donations received by 30th June will be doubled by a generous supporter, up to a total of £2,500.



How to donate:
Web: www.healthpovertyaction.org
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