



Photo by Bartek Pogoda

Since its independence, India has become a world leader in medical advancement due to its incredible medical education system and state-of-the-art private medical facilities. Unfortunately, quality healthcare is still inaccessible for many regions. In rural communities it is estimated that only eighteen hospital beds are available per 100,000 people. Even when medical treatment is available, public hospitals are frequently understaffed and undersupplied. The poor are forced to rely on overburdened, unsanitary facilities as their only source of healthcare. In Rajasthan, the result is that roughly half of the children suffer from malnutrition, forty-nine percent of women are anemic, and approximately one third of births are under-weight. Additionally, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant problem; there are currently around 6 million people infected by the virus living in the country. Public hospitals have insufficient funds to support their communities, and since only fifteen percent of Indian citizens have health insurance, quality healthcare remains unattainable for millions in dire need.

Thousands of public health NGOs are attempting to intervene with the necessary medical care, support, and treatment. In Udaipur, FSD collaborates with local organizations that provide supplies and medical advice. Additionally, FSD supports programs that host educational workshops to promote the importance of hygiene and sanitation and assists healthcare centers that provide immunizations to at-risk children. FSD partner organizations are working within the communities with the greatest need to ensure that all citizens are guaranteed their basic health rights.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in Health in India include:

- Support a Mobile Hospital program that involves doctors conducting regular visits to villages in rural areas around Udaipur to attend to the poor and sick villagers, giving them medicines and bringing critical patients to the main facility in Udaipur.
- Assist on a Health Awareness/Education Program through immunization of pregnant women and infants, registration of births, facilitation of health camps and check ups, training of birth attendants, and facilitation of workshops.
- Support a 24-hour 'Child Line' that helps youth in emergency situations such as abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
- Draft impact assessments on projects concerned with giving the rural poor access to health services and research ways to improve child care and parent counseling through an organization's Integrated Management of Childhood Illness program.
- Assist animal health initiatives that provide preventative medicine, education, and inoculation programs that support animal rights in the community.
- Help with a Care Givers program, teaching individuals how to effectively work with the developmentally disabled.
- Support development of Traditional Health Systems Project – identify, train, and aid networking of health practitioners and their methods. Assist with traditional medical clinics and garden projects to cost-effectively support community health.

For more opportunities in community development in India, visit our website or contact us directly.