



PATHWAYS TO HEALTHCARE IN THE ISLANDS

WHY IS COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPORTANT?

The health and wellbeing of coastal and marine communities are shaped by their environments, livelihoods, and social structures. However, these communities often face barriers such as limited access to healthcare, financial constraints, and inadequate health governance. Additionally, traditional health knowledge and community-based support systems are often overlooked in mainstream healthcare interventions. Strengthening these systems while ensuring access to quality healthcare is essential for building resilience and sustaining coastal communities. That is why Dakshin believes that fostering community health is key to long-term security and social equity.

HOW DO WE PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH?

Dakshin's work towards improving healthcare access and strengthening community-based health systems in coastal and marine landscapes. Launched in 2019, the programme collaborates with marine fishing communities in the South Andamans to enhance quality of life, reduce out-of-pocket healthcare costs, and promote holistic wellbeing.

Health engagement is built on a Socio-Ecological Model, embedding wellbeing initiatives within health interventions tailored to the communities' geo-socio-political context. The approach prioritises promoting health and wellbeing in coastal fishing communities while placing them at the centre of health governance. It integrates this understanding to strengthen pathways of care between communities and collaborates with frontline workers to improve service delivery.

Our work spans multiple aspects of health, including:

- Non-communicable diseases, mental health, and occupational health
- Young people's health rights, gender sensitisation, adolescent and reproductive health
- Community-led health governance and advocacy

Using interactive tools such as storytelling, art, and games, we create safe and inclusive spaces for discussions. With the support of the Direct Aid Programme, Australian Consulate-General, Chennai, we have set up a community library as a hub for learning and peer support with children and young people.

Our approach strengthens community-led health responses, enhances resilience, and fosters long-term engagement with local health systems, ensuring coastal communities can advocate for their health rights and access essential care.



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