



Community Health & Wellbeing

Strengthening resilience in
coastal communities

THE CHALLENGE

Health outcomes depend on more than access to a clinic

Across coastal and island ecosystems in India, occupational hazards, non-communicable diseases, adolescent health issues and mental health concerns shape community health and wellbeing. Remoteness and gaps in health services often lead to significant out-of-pocket expenditures, which in turn create greater financial instability in poorer households.

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI), geographical remoteness adds another challenge to accessing essential healthcare services. Climate change compounds these challenges through heat stress, erratic monsoons, seasonal disruption in fishing activities and repeated shocks and disasters that have both physical and mental health impacts.



Dakshin Foundation works alongside frontline health workers and local institutions to strengthen connections between coastal communities and public health systems.

We identify and train community catalysts who raise awareness about health issues, rights and available services, while helping communities bridge access gaps and providing the support they need.

Part of Dakshin's SeaChange framework

SeaChange seeks to build resilient communities and ecosystems through community-led action. Health and wellbeing are its key components.

Assess health needs

Understand local health needs, barriers to care, healthcare-seeking behaviours and emerging health risks through screenings and community engagement.

Build capacity for community health

Identify and train community catalysts, frontline health workers and local institutions to strengthen community-led health initiatives and preventive health behaviours to enhance community resilience.

Improve access to healthcare

Deepen engagement between communities and local health systems by improving awareness of health rights and entitlements, supporting referrals and strengthening access to essential health services.



**Six interconnected
areas of health work**

- **Community health leadership**

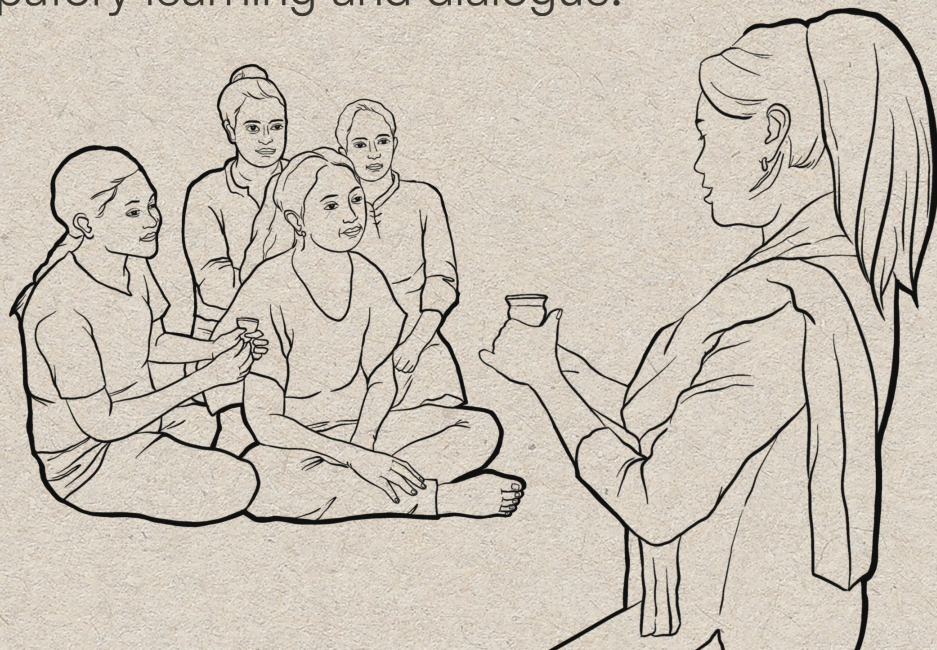
We identify and train community catalysts who act as a bridge between coastal communities and health systems. We also work with frontline health workers and local institutions to strengthen and contextualise health awareness for fishing communities and improve access to services to support community wellbeing.

- **Health screenings and preventive care**

We conduct screenings and public engagement programmes on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), occupational health, nutrition, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). These initiatives support early detection, improve awareness and strengthen preventive healthcare in coastal communities.

- **Adolescent health**

We create safe spaces for children and young people to engage with issues relating to gender, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health and wellbeing through participatory learning and dialogue.



Artwork credits: Apna Kuruvilla

- **Mental health and wellness**

We create spaces for conversations that address mental health concerns arising from livelihood uncertainties, occupational stress and challenges with emotional regulation, while helping community members build and strengthen culturally relevant coping mechanisms. These efforts normalise help-seeking by reducing stigma, fostering peer support and improving access to psychosocial care.

- **Occupational health**

We work with fishing communities, including women, to understand and address occupational health hazards associated with fisheries and related livelihoods. This helps support preventive and adaptive measures that reduce injuries and ill-health.

- **Climate and health**

We examine how heat stress, seasonal changes, communicable diseases and climate-related shocks affect health and wellbeing. This work builds an understanding of climate-health impacts and informs pathways for climate adaptation.



Artwork credits: Apna Kuruvilla

● WHERE WE WORK

Across India's coasts and islands

Odisha

Andaman &
Nicobar Islands

Tamil Nadu

● KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Dakshin's community library and resource center in Wandoor, Andaman islands

- Approximately **1000** participants have engaged in sessions on mental health, adolescent health, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills across coastal and island communities.
- Nearly **300** community members have participated in non-communicable disease screening camps, supporting early detection and preventive healthcare.
- More than **250** community members, including over 100 adolescent girls, have participated in Menstrual Hygiene Management Day activities.
- Over **120** forest guards and community members participated in collaborative health screening camps organised in partnership with local institutions.

Primary institutional donors



Key thematic donors

- Accenture Solutions Private Limited
- Australian Consulate, Chennai
- Dasra UK



Photo credits: A. Lalita, Agnesia Dung Dung



Partner with Dakshin

Dakshin Foundation seeks to work with the government, research institutions, civil society organisations, philanthropic partners and practitioners who share a commitment to improving health, wellbeing and resilience in coastal communities.

To explore opportunities for collaboration, write to info@dakshin.org

Artwork credits: Smitha Shivaswamy and Current Conservation