



Strengthening health systems, the Merlin way.

All our work, whether we're responding to an emergency or working long-term in a country, aims to rebuild the health system from the outset. We work within existing health services, we harness local and regional expertise, we train health workers employed in national systems to immediately improve the quality of services on the ground.

Merlin works almost exclusively in fragile states, places where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, for example the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Somalia and Myanmar. Fragile states carry the greatest burden of disease and maternal and child mortality, yet receive the least in all Overseas Development Aid.

We argue that unless aid is reallocated to fragile states, and spent on rebuilding health systems and the health workforce, none of the Millennium Development Goals for health will be reached.

Campaign with Merlin and you'll be working at the heart of health system strengthening.

www.HandsUpforHealthWorkers.org



What are we campaigning on?

Everyone knows there's a global health worker crisis. Few people realise that the crisis - and the preventable loss of life - is most acute in countries caught up in crisis. Hands Up For Health Workers is about championing the rights and needs of health workers in fragile states. Getting global actors to pay attention to the need to train, support and retain health workers on the frontline now.

A few facts:

- There are just 0.6 health workers per 1000 people in fragile states – compared to WHO stipulated 2.5
- 13 of the 15 countries with the highest rates of maternal mortality have experienced violent conflict in the last 10 years
- One in four pregnant women in fragile states delivers alone or with a family member
- Health workers in fragile states rarely receive a living wage and can go for months, even years without any salary at all

What exactly will HUFHW be talking about?

Feedback from our country teams suggest the following are of the biggest concern to health workers:

- All health workers are paid a regular living wage
- All health workers practising in remote and isolated areas receive appropriate incentives to stay
- All health workers are able to practice in a safe and secure working environment
- Funding is provided to train the additional health workers needed to deliver essential health care, and to refresh the skills of existing ones.

What are we calling for?

To get international donors to support national governments to create and implement NATIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE PLANS. Plans that are funded and effectively built around country health needs.

What's next for the campaign?

On May 5th – International Day of the Midwife – we'll be calling for urgent reallocation of aid to strengthen health systems and train health workers in fragile states. Only then can MDG 5 - to reduce maternal mortality by 75% - be reached.

We're calling for international donors and national governments to invest £2.4bn now.

This will

- Double the number of trained health workers in fragile states by 2012
- Cover the cost of a rapid 18-month training of midwives to deliver one midwife for every 175 women
- Deliver all the medical supplies and drugs needed to provide essential health care to pregnant women
- Cover the cost of incentives for staff working in underserved and rural areas to ensure rural people have access to essential care

How can Medsin get involved?

First off, get everyone you know to visit HandsUpforHealthWorkers.org and put their hands up for health workers now!

There are three distinct themes you could campaign on;

- 1. Aid must urgently be reallocated to fund health systems in fragile states - only then can the health-related MDGs be reached**
- 2. All global funding (Gates, GAVI, the Global Fund) must dedicate 50% of their investment to health system strengthening with 25% of that going to fund health workers**
 - a. disease can no longer be tackled in isolation - health workers are central to prevention, treatment and cure
 - b. in this financial crisis, getting the best and most effective return on investment is vital. Investing in health workers and health systems to tackle diseases is far more effective
- 3. All fragile states must have national health workforce plans**

What can you do?

Petition for change

- We want to ensure DFID are lobbied hard to prioritise funding for National Health Workforce plans
We'll be starting an online petition which you could champion and run with.
- Pick an MP who can lobby for change with you. Each Medsin group could choose their relevant MP and email/meet him/her, explain what's needed and what you want them to do. Gives you a chance to see how policy works as well as make key contacts with government
- Support Merlin as we campaign at various key international conferences and meetings over the next 2 years

Get the message out

- Write articles (we can help) for Student BMJ, Student Lancet/any other relevant journals (we can supply pictures)
- Start a HUFHW/Medsin facebook page and get as many people to join. Use this forum to get people to take action at key dates over the next two years (MDG summits, UN days etc)
- Make sure every Medsin event – from the smallest to the biggest – has a HUFHW message and cultivate as much sign up to HUFHW site as possible

Hold discussion groups

- Get people to understand how health aid should really be delivered. Use these forums to sign up more support for HUFHW and Merlin

Fundraise

- Help you to fundraise for HUFHW – whether you want to climb Kilimajaro with Merlin or hold your own club night in support of health workers on relevant student/health days

What Merlin will do

- Put together an info pack complete with posters, postcards, brochures which you can use to get the message out
- Provide key speakers for discussion groups/conferences including Dr Chris Van Tulleken
- Support any fundraising activities you run with posters, pictures, ideas etc
- Keep you on top of all the latest policies so your talks/thinking is backed by facts
- Help you campaign by giving you ideas, introductions to networks/key personnel

To find out more email sally.clarke@merlin.org.uk