

Who we are.

Jaya Mental Health is one of the only UK charities working to improve mental health in South Asia. The charity is made up of mental health professionals and volunteers with an in-country partner in Kathmandu, Nepal, that leads on delivering many of the projects. Mental health professionals are extremely limited across this region and for many rural and isolated communities, completely non-existent.

Our approach.

Our approach is to work collaboratively with local health posts, hospitals, and local and national governments to create long-term sustainable solutions to the severe lack of mental health services in South Asia.

Our focus is on setting up life-changing mental health clinics and capacity building of existing health workers to bring training and knowledge around mental health care, diagnosis, and treatments. This approach means that mental health care is sustainable with local health professionals and volunteers leading on the mental health care of their own communities in the future.



The need.

Nepal has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, with suicide risk being higher amongst rural, female populations. Community-based reports have purported that **suicide is the leading killer among women of reproductive age.** *

As a country of close to 30 million people and as one of the 20th poorest nations on the planet, Nepal lacks essential structural and human resources able to meet the mental health care needs of its population. Formal health care education remains patchy and inadequate for the needs of a health service which is severely depleted in skilled mental health workers.

The Mustang Community Mental Health Project

Mustang is one of the most remote mountainous districts in Nepal, with an elevation ranging from 1,372 meters to 8,167 meters above sea level. It is also one of the most sparsely populated districts in the country, lacking essential, life-saving health care infrastructure and human resources.

This region is severely affected by **high levels of alcoholism and substance misuse related disorders, gender-based violence and related suicide, with women and girls being most at risk.** It has therefore been identified by the Nepal Ministry of Health and Population and Jaya Mental Health as a region in severe need of mental health services.

This community of **15,000** people rely on one hospital with **only 8 staff**, none of whom have any knowledge or expertise in mental illness. Based on national statistics, it is estimated that 3-4% of the local population (450 – 600 people) is living with severe mental illness and 15-20% (2,250 – 3,000 people) struggling with mental health issues. Stigma and misunderstanding have a huge negative

impact on people who are often ostracized because of their illness. Reports of the abuse of people with mental illness are common.

This community is extremely isolated with many of the roads inaccessible during winter and monsoon months. Communities are living in poverty on a daily income of around £3 per day which is then further exacerbated by the lack of healthcare for people with severe mental illness.

The solution – The Mustang Community Mental Health Project is a life-changing project to bring mental health care and directly save and improve lives in this isolated Himalayan community. Our team will deliver free, walk-in mental health clinics and train local nurses, healthcare workers and volunteers in mental health care.



Jaya Mental Health has already successfully delivered a pilot project of Community Mental Health Outreach in Ilam in Eastern Nepal, building a cost-effective, sustainable model of Community Mental Health Outreach that is replicable to regions across South Asia and beyond. This pilot project has delivered several successful outcomes including the **reduction in suicide rates for this area**. A total of 123 suicides

were recorded in 2019 prior to the start of the pilot project. So far in 2023 this has dropped to 39. (A copy of our evaluation report for this pilot project is available on request).

Through these clinics 226 people received free mental healthcare.

Due to the success of the pilot project, the Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal has formally requested for this project to be replicated and extended to other regions of Nepal.

Starting in Mustang, this project will bring mental health professionals to the region periodically to provide diagnosis and treatment and **improve the lives** of between **450 – 600 people** living with severe mental illness and up to **3,000** people living with mental health issues within this region. We will closely monitor and evaluate the beneficiaries including changes and improvements in suicide rates.

Alongside setting up the clinics, our team will deliver mental health care **training and workshops** to nurses, healthcare workers and community volunteers across this region. This will **build the capacity** of local health services so that they can provide mental health clinics in the future.

Securing funding for this project will enable Jaya Mental Health to replicate and deliver our model of mental health outreach and improve the lives of 15,000 people living in the community of Mustang.

Setting up sustainable mental health clinics has a life-changing impact on communities.



Quote from Januka, Ilam, Nepal (beneficiary from Ilam Mental Health Clinic): ***“I’ve been diagnosed with Schizophrenia. I used to hear voices and could not get any sleep. Jaya’s free support transformed my life; since receiving care I can look after my family, send my children to school and be a good mother.”***



Female Community Health Volunteers in Ilam that have received mental health training from Jaya Mental Health.

*(Suicide in Nepal: A modified psychological autopsy investigation from randomly selected police cases between 2013 – 2015 - PMC (nih.gov))