

THRIVABLE INSIGHTS FROM THE THRIVABILITY MATTERS WEBINAR

Hi, passionate thrivability enthusiast. We live in unprecedented times. The numbers prove that climate change is here to stay. Social injustices corrupt the very fabric of our society, and misinformation and false narratives clog our devices through mainstream and social media. It's important to have reliable information from people who stand to gain nothing from sharing it with you. A person's agenda defines their motivation. THRIVE's agenda is to assist others to build a thrivable future, while our passionate volunteers walk the talk to deliver an authenticity that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Every month, THRIVE delivers a knowledge-filled [webinar](#), straight to your screens, providing statistics, facts, tips, tricks, and hints on how we can solve the problems our world faces everyday. from new innovations and discoveries, to the actions that people and communities take every day to make our world just a little more thrivable.

Each month, a particular solution is unpacked, disseminated, and investigated, to see how it applies to us and how we can play as a global team, on the playing field of Earth, to reach these goals. It isn't enough for us to sit passively by and let governments and businesses make our decisions for us. After all, their motivation is driven by their agenda. What does that mean for us?

Our aim is to arm you with the knowledge to change from being simply sustainable to terrifically thrivable. Therefore, I'd like to introduce you to Martin Drewry. He was an esteemed guest for the October 2024 Thrivability Matters Webinar, who spoke to us on SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Martin's focus is on pivoting from providing aid, to resolving the problems that prevent people from gaining what they need to survive and thrive.

The thrivable insights that follow are his precious pearls of wisdom that he was generous enough to share with us during the Q&A session that follows every webinar.

INTRODUCING MARTIN DREWRY



Martin Drewry is the CEO of Health Poverty Action (HPA) – a politically progressive NGO with programmes in 17 countries.

With 400 staff worldwide, mostly originating from communities they serve, HPA works with some of the world’s poorest and most marginalised populations.

Martin has worked in the international development sector for over 30 years.

He was co-founder of the Trade Justice Movement, and one of the leaders of Make Poverty History and several other high-profile campaigns.

Q & A

In your view, what are the policy changes that any government should adopt to accelerate progress toward eliminating poverty and hunger?

Apart from climate change, I think by far the single biggest challenge facing the world today is ever increasing levels of inequality. This impacts not only on poverty and hunger, but on almost everything. First there is the obvious fact that some having extreme levels of wealth means others go without. But even more important is the way extreme inequality distorts power.

When some individuals own more wealth than entire nations, it becomes almost impossible for populations to truly hold power to account. When power is so great, and so unaccountable, all kinds of social evils follow. The single most important SDG is the one about tackling inequality. That is the key to tackling all the others. So the most important policy change all governments need to make is to set and report against targets to reduce inequality.

In particular, reducing inequality should be the stated purpose of ***all*** ‘aid’ budgets. Everything that is done through aid can be framed and measured as being about tackling inequality. I think that is a far more productive, and much less divisive, framing than using the language of aid and charity.

Can you comment on the role of ‘Education as a Weapon’ to tackle inequality?

I think the key thing here is tackling inequality within education. Education can indeed be a tool for tackling inequality, but if education is itself unequal then it can also result in the opposite. That means several things, including:

- Everyone having an equal right to education.
- Education being appropriate to their needs, recognising things such as neuro-diversity, language and culture.
- Education equipping people to tackle inequality, i.e, learning about both the extent and the causes of it, and being equipped with the skills and knowledge to advocate, influence and bring about positive change.



Can you share a few examples or models where we see a perfect blend of sustainable farming and economic empowerment to counter Hunger and Poverty together?

I would point to examples from the Food Sovereignty movement. This is organised around a set of principles in which people not only have access to food, but have power over equitable access to it and its sustainable means of production. A key organisation is the wonderful peasants' movement, La Via Campesina.

They explain the concepts on this web page: [Food Sovereignty | Explained : Via Campesina](#)

Talking about peace and demilitarisation, we understand that many countries, such as in Africa, struggle from civil wars and conflicts. What can be done to solve hunger problems in these areas in such situations?

Health Poverty Action (HPA) is very rooted in the Alma Ata concept of primary health care. This emphasised the importance of addressing the social determinants of health, especially the need to demilitarise, and convert arms spending to healthcare spending. To address problems of hunger, and indeed all the issues raised in the SDGs, it is essential to understand and address the causes of war and conflict.

Indeed, the carbon emissions alone from the current levels of war and militarisation in the world mean there will be no future for any of us unless we do that.

What are the 'driving forces' in a society which help organisations like yours to succeed in their mission of eradicating poverty?

In Health Poverty Action we believe the key thing is to address not just the 'what', but also the 'why'. When people are dying from diseases that can easily be treated, it is comparatively easy to identify what needs to be done, and make the case for aid or emergency response support. But that will only provide interim help, and only for a minority, unless we address the deeper questions of why the health systems and other essential services are so weak in the first place. That means talking inequality, and addressing the ever-increasing gap between the world's richest and poorest. It's not possible to tackle extreme poverty without also tackling extreme wealth (and the unaccountable power that goes with it).

According to HPA, which society / state / country / government (recognised/unrecognised) has been most challenging to deal with?

Ah, a difficult choice, as the bar on that one is set very high! It's safe to say that all governments in the world need to do more to address inequality, and to ensure power is accountable. I am best placed to speak about my own government, as it has played more than a part in causing so many of the problems in the world the SDGs need to address. I am speaking in particular of the UK's colonial history, and involvement in the slave trade. While some of that is in the past, many of the power relationships established

during those times continue today in new forms, continuing to drive inequality both within and between countries. The UK needs to take responsibility for its former roles, and address modern forms of those same injustices, such as the tax havens it has jurisdiction over, and the debts of poor countries held by some of its financial institutions.



What policy improvements are required in healthcare infrastructure to identify and manage the early stages of lifestyle-related diseases before they become visible disease?

This is a really important question, as NCDs (non-communicable diseases) are increasingly important globally, and expected to soon be the leading cause of death in Africa. There are four areas to pay attention to:

- Prevention
- Screening/Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Care

Obviously, investment in those at the top of that list reduces the cost of spending on those lower down it. It's important to look at the drivers of public behaviour (as opposed to simply blaming individuals for unhealthy practices). For example, soft drinks brands tend to market their low sugar versions primarily in the rich world.

Similarly, tobacco marketing has risen in poorer parts of the world. These practices need to be addressed, so that all public and regulatory policies are subjected to a public health impact assessment.



If you found value in this webinar, and loved it as much as we did, please register for our next exciting webinar at thrivabilitymatters.online.

We can't wait to see you there. Keep on thriving!



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