

ACTION

overturning
the
STIGMA
of leprosy

From stigma to self-confidence... thanks to you!

Imagine you're a woman like Tanka in Nepal. Married at 16, you're at the bottom of the family hierarchy. You're expected to do the hardest, heaviest work for your new husband and in-laws...

Then you notice the first sign of leprosy—a wound on your thumb that won't go away.

It gets harder and harder to do all the work expected by your in-laws. You work alone and there is no one to help... Even when your hands are bleeding. Your leprosy symptoms get worse over several years.

That's what life was like for Tanka. **"Because I was the daughter-in-law, I had to do the majority of the work in the household. The wounds in my hands got worse. I had to work the fields and care for a dozen cows... I would cut trees with thorns (for firewood) and it would make my hands bleed. My husband's family was not supportive of me at all."**

When her in-laws finally found out Tanka had leprosy, they believed she was highly contagious even

though she was undergoing treatment. The stigma of the disease further lowered her value in their eyes. Tanka eventually suffered severe muscle damage in her hands and several fingers had to be amputated.

But thanks to your support, Tanka joined a Leprosy Mission self-help group. She's learned about the rights of people with disabilities... and that she's not a lesser person because she had leprosy.

Tanka also learned how to save money and bought some goats. By raising them, she earns a good income. She's even become the treasurer for her self-help group. She only wishes she had learned these skills years ago. "If I had received this training earlier in life, maybe life would have been easier."

Best of all, Tanka has shaken off the stigma of leprosy. Her family has become a lot more accepting of her since she joined the group. **"I used to feel ashamed of my hands. Now I know there are people like me, I can face the community. We in the group are all like a family."**

Praise God! And thank you for your prayers and generous support to help overturn the stigma of leprosy!

From self-stigma and poverty to financial independence AND freedom from discrimination... thanks to you!



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Thank you for helping give Ibrahim a stigma-free life!

“When I found out I had leprosy I was in despair.”

Ibrahim had seen the stigma faced by others with leprosy. He was terrified the same would happen to him.

At first, it looked like his worst fears would come true. Like other people affected by leprosy, Ibrahim lost feeling in his hands. Then he lost his fingers because of infected ulcers. A blister on his foot turned ulcerous... then gangrenous... leading to amputation of his leg.

But because of supporters like you, Ibrahim was not shut out from his community. He received leprosy treatment and a prosthetic leg at

The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Sokoto, Nigeria. He also became part of a self-help group that stands up for the rights of people affected by leprosy and disability.

“I used to face discrimination but not anymore. If I wanted to take a taxi or bus I’d have to hide my hands and feet so people wouldn’t see I had leprosy. But now it is not a problem – people know leprosy is curable!”

Ibrahim says thanks to you for making this possible! *“I am greeting you. I pray that God will guide, protect and bless you abundantly.”*

You can help overturn the stigma of leprosy by holding a World Leprosy Sunday service at your church!



Kashi Aryal from Anandaban Leprosy Mission Hospital will be visiting Australia in January and February 2019 during World Leprosy Sunday events. Visit www.worldleprosysunday.org.au to find out where he will be speaking.

What would Jesus do to overturn the stigma of leprosy?

All over Australia, churches and church groups are helping to overturn the stigma of leprosy by holding a World Leprosy Sunday event service during January-April 28, 2018. If you haven't registered your event yet, it's not too late. **Get in touch today! Register your interest, book a speaker and receive your FREE resources toolkit with everything you need to run your event.**

Your FREE resources toolkit includes a DVD, Sermon notes, Bible study booklets, Prayer cards and Children's materials.



Use your phone to scan and view the 360 tour of Anandaban Hospital

<https://tinyurl.com/y7jsvqqm>

World Leprosy Sunday 2019

Start the conversation for zero leprosy discrimination

FREE call 1800 LEPROSY (1800 537 767), email engage@leprosymission.org.au or visit www.worldleprosysunday.org.au

HOW TO DONATE:



MAIL your donation coupon to
The Leprosy Mission Australia
Reply Paid 83988 Box Hill VIC 3128



1800-LEPROSY
1800 537 767

When rejection comes from those you love most

How would you feel if your own family would not eat with you... like Borea's?

This 55-year-old man is married with four adult children. When he was diagnosed with leprosy three years ago, his family were horrified. They tried to quarantine him within his own home.

"My family moved my clothes in the house so they were separate... I even had to use separate cutlery."

Borea also found himself the target of abuse. Others in his community taunted him about "The Beggar's Disease". Because of his clawed hands and ulcerated foot, he could no longer work as a labourer or provide for his family.

But because of your support, Borea received treatment and reconstructive surgery on his foot at The Leprosy Mission Community Hospital in Kothara, India. And physiotherapy means he's slowly learning to walk again.

"I am very thankful to The Leprosy Mission supporters in Australia who have enabled this to happen. Since having the surgery on my foot, I have a renewed sense of confidence..."

Thanks to you, Borea's family also received counselling. They learned that leprosy is curable and not contagious. Now his wife and family accept his condition and no longer exclude him.

Leprosy does not have to mean separation from loved ones... with your generosity.



Bless you for helping to tackle stigma within families. So people like Borea can continue their lives as loved family members... just how home was created to be!

Your help urgently needed to spread the word: It's curable not a curse!

Why did Felix miss out on leprosy treatment as a child... even though Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) was available where he lived in Papua New Guinea?

Because when he developed an ulcer on his right foot, his family believed the disease was a curse. Sadly, lack of understanding about leprosy led them to stop MDT treatment. Although Felix was diagnosed when he was in Grade 6, he remained untreated. This had major consequences for his future.

Without treatment, leprosy left him with disabilities in both legs and his right hand. This led to stigma from others—people would often say cruel things to Felix about his disabilities. As a result, he became very shy around others. After several years, his impairments became

so bad he had to seek treatment again. This time thankfully he completed a full course of MDT.

This situation happens all too often. Misconceptions mean young people like Felix miss out on crucial leprosy treatment. This is why your ongoing support is so important. Because leprosy is curable and not a curse! We must continue working with communities so they understand leprosy can be successfully treated and cured—before disabilities like Felix's occur!

Now Felix lives in a different village and works at a hospital part time. He's so happy to work and earn his own income. **Your support is a blessing** to Felix and others like him... but let's work to get to them earlier!

You can help parents and families to understand leprosy is curable. So young people like Felix can receive vital treatment.



www.leprosymission.org.au



hello@leprosymission.org.au



The Leprosy
Mission
Australia

Towards Zero Leprosy Discrimination... with your help!

Imagine you were banned from public places... because you have leprosy?

Yes, this actually happens all the time! Because laws that discriminate against people affected by leprosy still exist in many countries around the world.



Source: www.lepfederation.org/what-we-do/zero-discrimination

Your support helps overturn the stigma of leprosy! Stand up and help us fight to abolish laws and practices that discriminate against people affected by leprosy.

Highlighted in orange are countries where discriminatory laws against people affected by leprosy have been identified. With the help of donors like you, some of these laws have been repealed, amended or are under review.



ZERO DISCRIMINATION

In some of these nations, a leprosy diagnosis could mean you could be divorced without your consent or lose employment. You could be banned from travel, universities, marketplaces, entering politics or even places of worship. This discrimination is legal—even though leprosy is a treatable and curable disease!

Such rejection and exclusion is heartbreaking... and so different to Jesus' approach of compassion, acceptance and inclusion of people with leprosy.

That's why your support for Zero Leprosy Discrimination is so important. This strategy aims to:

- ✓ Challenge injustice and fight for the rights of people affected by leprosy
- ✓ Give a voice to those with leprosy so they can take part in all aspects of their communities – including social events, education and politics
- ✓ Provide livelihood opportunities so people affected by leprosy can be financially independent

- ✓ Change laws that exclude and discriminate against people with leprosy.

When you support Zero Leprosy Discrimination, you change attitudes and behaviour so people affected by leprosy can live without stigma and rejection.

World Leprosy Sunday 2019

Start the conversation for zero leprosy discrimination