



The Change Makers

For 110 years volunteers have been the backbone of The Leprosy Mission Australia (TLMA).

National Volunteer's Week from the 15th to the 21st of May is a chance to recognise and celebrate the contribution they make. This year's theme is 'The Change Makers.' It is a reminder that the lives of countless women, men, and children affected by leprosy, discrimination, and disability have been transformed through the contribution of volunteers. The contributions and commitment you and others like you make include advocating for change, speaking at churches and groups, raising funds for TLMA projects, serving through internships or as part of the Board. Volunteers around the country have found great joy and satisfaction through helping others.

We are incredibly thankful to the volunteers who so often go above and beyond to show their love, to show the love of Jesus, in all that they do. They are an inspiration for their faithfulness, for their determination and for their encouragement of one another, TLMA staff, and people around the world affected by leprosy.

Of course, volunteers are motivated by the great needs they see in the world. Many have seen first-hand the toll that diseases such as leprosy can take on people, their families, and their communities. Volunteering enables them to contribute to seeing people's lives change for the better. Some do this in Support Groups or Auxiliaries, which members find a great help. Regular meetings inspire them as they learn what is happening around projects, and as they pray for the many needs. They share ideas for fund-raising and bond together in real fellowship.

We thank God for all these groups joyfully serving those in need in the name of Jesus.

Volunteers have other motivations on top of the great need they see around them. For some it is the friendships they build, the support networks that go beyond meetings and fundraising events. For others it is the opportunity to learn new skills, or to share the great variety of skills they already possess. Whatever the motivation, these change makers are an important part of the goal of making leprosy a thing of the past.

Give praise for volunteers who follow Jesus' example to bring hope and light to the world. Pray for volunteers to be energised by the love of Jesus for the world. Pray that they will be joined by more volunteers to share the load and increase the joy.

Perhaps you, or someone you know, might be interested in becoming a volunteer. Maybe your passion is for people with leprosy, or maybe it is in public speaking, or organising events, or something else entirely. TLMA would love to hear from you. Email engage@leprosymission.org.au to learn more.

Follow this link or scan the QR code to find out more about volunteering to make a difference in the lives of people affected by leprosy, disability, and discrimination.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/get-involved/volunteer>



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The Leprosy
Mission
Australia

Love and understanding defeats stigma and myths.

Keeping in Touch • Issue 5, 2023

Bipana ran away at the age of 16 to marry the man she loved. Years later both her parents were diagnosed with leprosy. Then she too was diagnosed with this devastating disease.

Bipana was worried about what this might mean for her. How would people react? What would happen to her health? Through the support you provide, The Leprosy Mission Nepal has been able to conduct awareness-raising activities alongside the local healthcare centre.

As a result, Bipana has not had to face the fear from other people or the rejection that discrimination brings to so many affected by leprosy. The love and support of her husband gives great comfort. He has been screened for the disease and educated so that he will understand what his wife is going through.

Your ongoing support for people such as Bipana means that fewer people must live with the life-long disabilities that occur when diagnosis and treatment is delayed due to fear and stigma. Bipana has been taking Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) for five months. Because of leprosy she has a loss of sensation in both her feet and feels a tingling sensation through her whole body. Thanks to the MDT she is now recovering.

But Bipana must still be careful. She has a wound on her right foot where she burnt herself

with hot oil during cooking. If left unattended the wound could become infected and lead to irreversible damage. Bipana has been taught how to care for her wound and to regularly rub her feet with oil to prevent cracks and further wounds and injuries.

Thanks to the love of her family and your compassion Bipana lives a happy, contented life with her husband and two children. With your help, love and understanding can continue to defeat stigma and myth. Together we can defeat leprosy and transform lives.

Pray for Bipana and her family that they will continue to grow in their love for one another. Pray for Bipana as she completes her course of Multi-Drug Therapy that she will live a life free from disability, and full of hope.

Pray for The Leprosy Mission Nepal as they continue to address the many needs of people affected by leprosy. Pray they will break the chains of discrimination and build communities that support and encourage one another.

If you would like to support others like Bipana please consider giving regularly through our Total Loving Cure (TLC) program. Scan the QR code or follow the link.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/tlc>





Praise God for the transforming power of His love.

Once looked down on as a person who couldn't do anything for herself Biswopati has come a long way.

Blind in her right eye since the age of six from a needle injury, Biswopati lives on an informal settlement in Nepal as a squatter with her husband and two children.

The Integrated Mobilisation of People for Active Community Transformation (IMPACT) project helped to transform her life and allowed others to see and experience all that she is capable of.

Biswopati joined a Self-Help Group through which she obtained a loan to set up a business raising goats. She has participated in a lot of the training provided by the IMPACT project to increase her knowledge around good hygiene practices. Now she is also a board member of her cooperative.

How life has changed for Biswopati. Today people come to her for counselling and to help resolve conflicts within the community. Through the support of the IMPACT project Biswopati has achieved dignity and respect and is a valued member of her community. Praise God!

Biswopati's dream for the future is to set up a clothing shop selling designer items. Your prayers and support mean Biswopati has a future in which she has the freedom to work towards those dreams. Thank you!

Pray for Biswopati as she continues to flourish within her community. Praise God for this transformation and give thanks for the IMPACT project. Give thanks for our Prayer Partners for the impact they are making for people like Biswopati.

Pray that many more people will be supported to become thriving members of their communities through the IMPACT project. Pray for the Self-Help Groups and cooperatives which help create sustainable incomes for people dealing with leprosy and disabilities.

If you would like to help someone else like Biswopati scan the QR Code or follow the link.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/integrated-mobilisation-active-community-transformation>



The Leprosy Mission Global Day of Prayer – 10 May 2023 at 2pm

Please save the date for this very special event! The theme for the Day of Prayer is the Global Strategy.

The materials we will have available shortly and the sessions on the day will encourage each of us to listen to God's words of compassion for persons affected by leprosy and their need for justice. We hope the day will be accessible and moving for anyone who would wish to attend.

Self-care and caring for others.



Gopal has been connected to Anandaban Hospital for forty years!

As a ten-year-old, Gopal had painful sores and his right foot was starting to feel numb. He came to Anandaban where he was tested and diagnosed with leprosy. Doctors prescribed him medication for three years during which time he was admitted to hospital several times due to wounds on his foot. He also lost three fingers on his right hand. After that Gopal took self-care very seriously. He took his medicine on time and took care of his hands and legs to avoid further damage.

Gopal is now cured and hasn't needed medication for twenty-five years. He is married and has a son. However, he has found it difficult to hold on to a job in that time. He says, *"I worked in every odd job but, when people found out that I had leprosy in the past, they would start to behave differently."*

He adds, *"People still think that leprosy gets transmitted by touch and even after we have recovered, they think we are weak and won't be able to work. So, they never hire us."*

Gopal has regular follow-ups at Anandaban. During one of these visits about three years ago he shared his struggles with staff. Understanding his problems and knowing Gopal was well enough to work, the hospital administration hired him as the bus conductor and a self-care helper in the hospital.

Now Gopal and his family live near the hospital. His work allows him to support both staff and



patients. He is passionate in his work and cares deeply for the patients. Gopal says with a smile, *"I feel content working and taking care of patients here in the hospital. I can empathise with them as I too know how it feels."*

Pray for Gopal and his family as they support people affected by leprosy as they learn self-care and independence.

Pray for the staff and volunteers at the Self-Care Unit at Anandaban Hospital. Pray for their vital work in helping people rehabilitate and re-learn skills needed for daily living.

You can find out more about the Self-Care Unit and how you can support them by scanning the QR Code or following the link
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/Nepal-Self-Care-Unit>

