



Putting your second-best foot forward.

Have you ever felt painted into a corner, uncertain which way to turn and not wanting to make a decision that might make things worse?

This was how Ram's parents felt. As a child, Ram had difficulty walking due to a weakness in her right foot. She couldn't run and play sports like her friends. When she walked, she had to put her weight on the side of her foot rather than her sole.

Ram's parents sought treatment from a hospital, but they referred her to a fee-paying service who would be able to treat her. However, her parents could not afford the fees and so Ram did not receive the treatment. But they now felt painted into a corner. They couldn't afford treatment and were afraid to go back to the hospital in case they decided to amputate Ram's leg. After that, they stopped looking for treatment all together.

When it came time to find work, Ram knew she needed a job that did not require her to move too much. So, she started a small shop near her home in Nepal. A local cooperative manager knew of her circumstances and encouraged her to join their group. This was an important time for Ram. In the group she was able to access training that taught her about leprosy, disability, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and gender equality.

Ram was also able to take out a loan from the cooperative to expand her business and increase her income.

The IMPACT (Integrated Mobilisation of People for Active Community Transformation) project was able to support her physically too. An ankle foot orthosis (AFO) will help correct the position of her foot so she can walk on the sole of her foot again. It will also help reduce the pressure on her ankle when she walks.

Ram is very excited. After spending so much of her life walking on the side of her foot, she will now be able to wear proper shoes, which she received along with the AFO. Ram will need lots of practice with the AFO but she is looking forward to being able to walk with a normal gait for the first time in her life.

Pray for Ram as she uses her new AFO to walk with a normal gait. Give thanks for and pray for her inclusion in the cooperative which brings opportunities to learn and grow her business.

Give thanks for the IMPACT project as they support people with disabilities to improve their self-confidence and increase inclusion in their communities.

Show your compassion towards others in Nepal like Ram through the IMPACT project.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/IMPACTSA>



202311



The Leprosy Mission
Australia

From clawed hands to salted duck eggs.

Keeping in Touch • Issue 11, 2023

Overwhelmed by depression, Mulyati struggled to deal with the stress that leprosy brought to her life.

"I was just 13. The skin of my body turned reddish. There were pains in some parts of the body and my legs started to swell."

Mulyati, from Subang in Indonesia, was already starting to show signs of clawing in her hands when her father, who also had leprosy, first took her to a local Community Health Clinic.

Leprosy reaction during her 12-month treatment meant Mulyati often missed classes at school. While she had a kind teacher who allowed her to learn at home during these times, her neighbours were not so kind. This stress and depression triggered some of the leprosy reactions in her body.

It wasn't until Mulyati had finished her treatment and joined a Self-Care Group that she met others affected by leprosy from other villages and her life turned around. *"I didn't feel alone. I was taught how to take care of my fingers so that they did not get clawed. I also abide by advice...to pay attention to my eating diet, not to get stressed and to keep up high spirits."*

With new confidence, Mulyati, completed school, and found employment where she was not rejected because of her now cured leprosy. Today, at 23, Mulyati is married with twin boys (see inside) and sells ready-to-eat salted duck eggs door to door.

Mulyati hopes someday she can produce her own ready-to-eat salted duck eggs so that she can gain more profit. She also participates in programs to promote leprosy awareness.

"I encouraged the people to participate in the leprosy prevention program so that our village will be free from leprosy. If you feel or see something wrong with your skin, just go to Puskesmas (Health Clinic) for examination."

Pray for Mulyati to grow her business to become more independent and contribute further to the household income. Pray for further opportunities to encourage people to come forward for diagnosis and treatment.

Give thanks and pray for the Self-Care Groups which not only bring practical help and advice, but friendship and inclusion. Pray for many people who struggle with depression because of a leprosy diagnosis and rejection from others. Pray for more Self-Care Groups and places where people like Mulyati can feel accepted.

Show your love and help cure a child through a monthly gift of tlc (total loving cure). Together we can make leprosy a thing of the past.

<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/tlc-children>





We need your prayers for a leprosy friendly future!

Indonesia is a unique and beautiful country. It has more volcanoes than any other country; it is the largest country made up entirely of islands and is the fourth most populous country in the world. Sadly, it also has the world's third highest number of new cases of leprosy each year, 10% of whom are children. Your prayerful love and care mean we can support some of these children through the Leprosy Friendly Village project.

Children like Mulyati. In Year 8 of her schooling, Mulyati was diagnosed with leprosy at a village Community Health Clinic.

"The skin of my body turned reddish. There were pains in some parts of the body and my legs started to swell."
—Mulyati

Painful reactions to the bacteria often forced Mulyati to miss school. Her kind teacher allowed her to study from home for several months. However, her neighbours were not so kind. Fear of becoming infected meant they did not allow her to mix with their children or even leave her house. This was overwhelming for Mulyati who suffered depression because of this stigma.

The aim of the Leprosy Friendly Village project, run by The Leprosy Mission Australia's partner Yayasan NLR Indonesia, is to break down these stigmas and create inclusive communities. Your compassionate prayers help prevent young people from suffering unjust discrimination like Mulyati faced. By educating village leaders and influential community members, and continuing to train health care workers, the project aims to create inclusive and supportive communities where people have the confidence to be diagnosed, knowing their neighbourhoods and communities will be accepting of them. When this happens the number of leprosy cases can be properly known and discrimination and disability can be reduced.

Today, Mulyati is 23 and has a family of her own. *"Sometimes I feel worried if my twins will get leprosy someday like me. Therefore, we take care of their health and always listen to the guidance from the local health workers."*

Your loving and kind prayers for the Leprosy Friendly Village project can transform communities and help cure a person like Mulyati before the long-term consequences of stigma and disability can take hold.

Pray for Mulyati as she and her husband raise their children to understand leprosy and discrimination. Pray that the family will be



an example of inclusiveness towards people affected by leprosy, discrimination, and disability.

Pray for the staff, volunteers and villages participating in the Leprosy Friendly Village project. Pray for good relationships to form between the project, local government, village leaders, influential community members, and health care workers.

Pray that this goal of having inclusive, welcoming communities will become a reality, both in Indonesia and in other countries where discrimination towards people with leprosy still exists.

Pray for the October No Child with Leprosy appeal to increase awareness and fundraising for your projects in Indonesia. Pray that people will be inspired to show love and care to cure a child in Indonesia.

You can show love and care and help create Leprosy Friendly Villages for children in Indonesia like Mulyati!



Your action through The Leprosy Mission Australia goes to work in Kuningan West Java Province — one of 7 Provinces and 113 districts in Indonesia where leprosy is not yet eliminated. And your kindness is now being matched 5:1 by the Australian Government!



The 5:1 Grant enables The Leprosy Mission Australia to reach 20 villages in Kuningan, 10 villages in Bekasi, and 10 slum communities in high-risk areas. **Our aim is to make each of these communities a Leprosy Friendly Village!**

Your kindness is now being matched 5:1 by the Australian Government! Show your compassion today, and help create Leprosy Friendly Villages for children in Indonesia like Mulyati!
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/LeprosyFriendlyVillageDesaku>

